

1 Thessalonians 3

3:1 **Therefore, when we could no longer endure *it*** [Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica], **we** [Paul and Silas] **were pleased to be left behind at Athens alone** [Later Silas also departed for Macedonia].

Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι,

The Pauline team (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) after leaving Philippi, passed through Amphipolis, Apollonia and then to Thessalonica where they established a church. Because of the danger there, the brethren sent Paul and Silas by night to Berea (Acts 17:10) where they had a great ministry. Timothy remained in Thessalonica, but later joined Paul and Silas in Berea. Then, religious Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred up the crowds against the Pauline team, but mainly against Paul. So, the believers sent Paul out of the city and then escorted him to Athens while Silas and Timothy remained behind in Berea as per Acts 17:14, 15. When Paul arrived in Athens, he sent word that his team left in Berea were to join him as soon as possible as per Acts 17:15, 16. After Silas and Timothy arrive in Athens, Timothy delivers a report about the Thessalonians to Paul. After hearing this report, Paul sent Timothy back to the Thessalonians to teach the fundamentals of the spiritual life. Silas, awhile later also was sent back to Macedonia from Athens so that when Paul completed his ministry in Athens, he (only as per Acts 18:1) departed for Corinth. Possibly after a year in Corinth, Timothy and Silas arrived bringing some funds from the Philippian Church and a report (Acts 18:5). After hearing a report regarding the Thessalonians, Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians circa 53 A. D. and 2 Thessalonians around a year later.

3:2 **And we** [Paul and Silas] **sent Timothy** [from Athens], **our brother and fellow-worker of God, in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen you and to comfort you concerning your faith** [the whole body of doctrine namely the spiritual life],

καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν

Timothy, a young man is a recent member of the Pauline team with the spiritual gift of Pastor-teacher. Since he has a communicative gift, Paul sent him to Thessalonica to explain the spiritual life as he had learned from Paul. Some doctrines taught put emphasis on strengthening the believer whereas other doctrines tend to emphasize comforting the believer.

3:3-4 so that no one should be disturbed by these afflictions [dative of advantage]. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. (4) For indeed, when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction, and so it came to pass as you know.

τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις. αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα· (4) καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἶδατε.

As the believer grows spiritually, God will test him as he tested the Exodus Generation. The believer learns the Word for a semester, and then he is tested etc. The growing believer must be tested regarding the Filling of the Spirit namely will he remain under the omnipotent power of the Spirit under afflictions, and other pressures? The believer must also be tested regarding the Faith-rest drill, grace orientation and doctrinal orientation; all these tests must be passed to advance toward Spiritual Self-esteem.

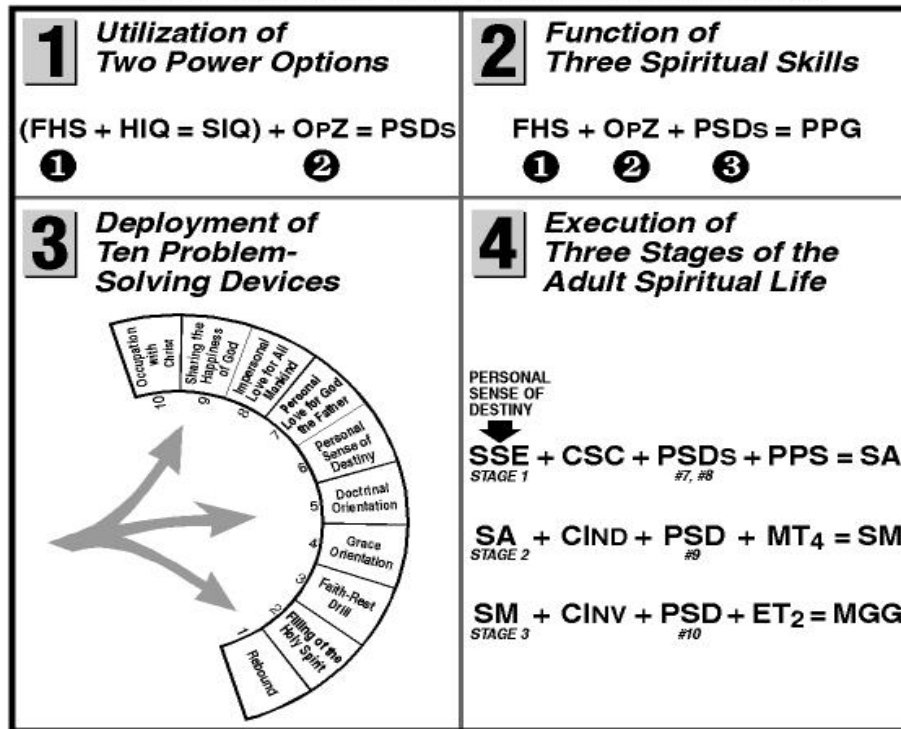
1 Corinthians 10:13, “No testing has caught up with you [has taken hold of you] except the human kind [no angelic tests], and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able [to handle], but with the testing, He will provide the way of escape [the Problem-Solving

Devices] that you may be able to bear up under the load [stay under the pressure of testing until the test is finished].”

πειρασμός ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος· πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἔάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε, ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.

In spiritual childhood, the believer is tested regarding the basic problems solving devices namely the Filling of the Spirit, the Faith-rest drill, Grace Orientation and Doctrinal Orientation. However, when the Christian reaches Spiritual Self-esteem, the first stage of spiritual adulthood, he will be tested regarding his level of spiritual adulthood namely Spiritual Self-esteem, Spiritual Autonomy and Spiritual Maturity. These tests are designated as undeserved suffering. These undeserved sufferings are formulated in the chart below.

THE FOUR SPIRITUAL MECHANICS



FHS = Filling of the Holy Spirit
 HIQ = Human IQ
 SIQ = Spiritual IQ
 OPZ = Operation Z
 PSDs = Problem-Solving Devices
 PPG = Protocol Plan of God
 SSE = Spiritive Self-Esteem
 CSC = Cognitive Self-Confidence
 PSDs #7, #8 = Problem-Solving Devices
 #7 (personal love for God the Father)
 #8 (impersonal love for all mankind)
 PPS = Providential Preventive Suffering
 SA = Spiritual Autonomy

CIND = Cognitive Independence
 PSD #9 = Problem-Solving Device
 #9 (sharing the happiness of God)
 MT₄ = Momentum Testing in 4 categories
 (people, thought, system, disaster)
 SM = Spiritual Maturity
 CINV = Cognitive Invincibility
 PSD #10 = Problem-Solving Device
 #10 (occupation with Christ)
 ET₂ = Evidence Testing in 2 categories
 (relationship with God, relationship
 with life)
 MGG = Maximum Glorification of God

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3:5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I also sent to find out about your faith [body of faith namely their spiritual life], lest by some means the tempter has tempted you, and our labor has come to be in vain.

διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γὰρ μηκέτι στέγων ἔπεμψα εἰς τὸ γινῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν, μή πως ἐπειράσεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.

This is a repetition of what he started to say in verse one. It was Paul who finally called the conference which decided to send Timothy to make sure that their labor was not in vain. The word for labor in the Greek is labor

to the point of exhaustion. When Paul was in Thessalonica, he worked day and night teaching the Word of God. He labored to the point of exhaustion, and he said it was possible that this labor could become in vain. The word “vain” means empty or void, no purpose is accomplished. There is a principle here we should not miss: It is possible for the Bible to be taught day after day, month after month, year after year, and that Bible teaching can be in vain, to no purpose, when it is not used by believers in their daily lives. That is why Paul was concerned and sent Timothy.

Satan has many ways of destroying the Christian’s spiritual advance. He can attack through emotionalism or legalism or a combination of both. He can attack the Recovery Procedure and in doing so remove the believer from God’s power system. He can attack the believer through some lust etc. Satan has numerous options.

3:6 But now when Timothy came from you to us and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you have good remembrance of us always, desiring to see us just as we also you,

Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφί ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν, καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνησίαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε, ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς,

Paul sent Timothy from Athens to Thessalonica to check out the situation there and to do some teaching, and now Timothy has returned to Paul in Corinth with a report as found in verses 6-9.

Timothy “brought us good tidings.” Paul had probably been a bit down since he possibly visualized that all his teaching had been voided and so useless, and that the whole church at Thessalonica was going to come unglued and fall apart.

As it turned out, the Thessalonians were doing quite well regarding the overall plan of God as found in I Corinthians 13:13, “Now, there remains [in the Church Age] faith, confidence and love, these three, but the

greatest of these is love.” Faith represents spiritual childhood and includes the use of the Faith-Rest Drill, Grace Orientation, and Doctrinal Orientation. Confidence represents spiritual self-esteem and is the entranceway into the advance stage of the spiritual life. Love represents the adult believer and includes love for the God the Father, Unconditional Love for all mankind, sharing the Happiness of God and Occupation with the Lord.

There was great rapport between the Thessalonian Christians and the Pauline team. When great rapport exists especially when that rapport is related to the spiritual life, there is a mutual desire to spend time together in the sense that Paul would like to teach them further, and they would like more teaching.

3:7 for this reason, brethren, we were comforted over you, through your faith [spiritual advance as explained in 1 Corinthians 13:13], **even in all our pressures and affliction;**

διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφί ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως,

Even under great pressure and affliction, there can be comfort and enthusiasm regarding the spiritual advance of others.

3:8 for now we live, [a term for animation and enthusiasm] **if** [more probable conditional sentence] **you should stand fast in the Lord** [keep advancing in the spiritual life].

ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ.

The Pauline team was not only comforted by this good report, but they responded with great enthusiasm for the Thessalonians. Their response reminds us of a principle namely no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself for there is a definite interrelationship between believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The relationship between believers can be so close that

Paul wrote to the Corinthians “weep with them that weep and rejoice with them that rejoice.” That is not surprising since we are all in the body of Christ. Paul had been down when he thought things were down at Thessalonica, but now the report indicates that things are going very well overall, and there are only one or two glitches which Paul dealt with.

3:9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the happiness with which we rejoice for your sakes before our God,

τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣν χαίρομεν δι’ ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν,

Paul makes it very clear that first of all he is thankful, and this thanksgiving is an expression of his inner happiness at getting this wonderful report from Timothy.

3:10 night and day praying exceedingly for me to see your face and to perfect the things lacking in your faith?

νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;

The Pauline team prayed for the Thessalonians as never before night and day. The middle voice is important since the subject participates in the results of the action which means that the Pauline team will personally be benefited by praying for them. They pray that they might have the opportunity of coming back to see them again, to be with them since they are applying so well what Paul and his team had taught them. What is the point? Any Bible teacher in his right mind wants to be where there is a response to the Word of God.

At the end of the verse, it tells why he wants to teach the Word there, “and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith [the whole realm of doctrine].” The word for “perfect” means to supply an army with equipment in order to prepare it for combat operations. It means to provide

weapons, ammunition, food, and uniforms. Paul wants to equip fully the Thessalonians for spiritual combat.

3:11 And may God Himself and our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way to you.

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς·

In their prayers, they recognize that God the Father is the author of the plan whereas the Lord Jesus Christ is the executor of the plan. When a Bible teacher prays to go to a certain people you can be sure of one thing, those people love the Word of God.

3:12 And may the Lord [God the Holy Spirit] make you to increase and abound in love toward one another [believers] and toward all [unbelievers], even as we also toward you,

Ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας, καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς,

The ministry of the Holy Spirit through the function of Bible teaching will bring about this increase in love. The primary components of love are as follows: righteousness, justice, knowledge of God and his plan and grace. As these characteristics increase in the soul, so does the believer's capacity for both personal and impersonal love. Remember that both personal and impersonal love are manifestations of the components of love. Romans 5:5, "And confidence does not disappoint, because the love for God has been poured out in our hearts [streams of consciousness] by the personal agency of the Holy Spirit who was given to us for our benefit." When they are filled with the Spirit they will increase and abound in divine love. "Increase" is an aorist optative, increase in a point of time, the point of time when they received the Word of God. The optative is an expression of a wish or desire. He wants to go to Thessalonica so that he can further teach them doctrine, so that in the point

of time when he teaches them doctrine, they will take it in through the Filling of the Spirit and increase and abound in the sphere of divine love.

And then he adds something — “even as we toward you.” We, the Pauline team appreciate and love you; we recognize your intake of the Word of God and its significance, and we just pray that we can come back and further provide you equipment for the combat of life and that we can have the joy of having a part in your ministry.

3:13 in order to establish your hearts [your stream of consciousness] **blameless in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** [at the 2nd Advent] **with all His saints** [as the bride].

εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ.

Blameless in Holiness:

1. The sin nature is left behind at death with the mortal body.
2. Wood, hay and stubble would be burnt at the Evaluation Seat of Christ just after the Rapture of the Church.
3. The Church age believer in Resurrection body will be set apart as holy (Ultimate Sanctification).

Chronology of the Rapture and the following events:

1. The Rapture takes place, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
2. The Big Genuflex occurs, Philippians 2:9-11.

3. The Judgment Seat of Christ (evaluation of all Christians) 2 Corinthians 5:10.
4. Bride returns with Christ at the Second Advent, 1 Thessalonians 3:13.
5. The manifestation of the Bride, Romans 8:19; Colossians 3:4.
6. Operation Footstool, Psalm 110:1; Zechariah 13:2; Colossians 2:15; 1 Corinthians 15:24-25.
7. The Coronation of Christ, Revelation 19:6.
8. The Wedding Supper of the Lamb, Revelation 19:7-9.
9. The purpose of the Rapture is to get the royal family of God prepared for the Second Advent and the Wedding Supper.

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Based on the scholarly work of R.B. Thieme Jr.

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