

## 2 Thessalonians 3

### Exhortation To Pray For Paul And Others 3:1-2

**2 Thess. 3:1 Finally, brethren [brothers], pray for us that the word [message] of the Lord will spread rapidly [may run] and be glorified, just as it did also [indeed] with you;**

1. "Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified"
  - a. "finally" is literally "for the rest."
    - 1) This is a word used several times by Paul in his writings.
    - 2) It has the meaning of "henceforth, from now on." (Phil. 3:1; 4:8; 1 Thess. 4:8).
    - 3) It did not mean he was concluding his remarks.
  - b. "spread rapidly" in the Greek is "may run" coming from "trecho" [treh koh] meaning "to run, rush, strive to advance, make progress."
    - 1) NASB and NIV have "spread rapidly."
    - 2) Paul was asking them to pray more and more would receive the soul-saving gospel and this would lead to the praise and glorification of God.
    - 3) Christians must always be interested in winning more to Christ.
    - 4) Our neighbors and the peoples of the earth will perish without the gospel - "power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16).
  - c. Paul coveted their prayers.
  - d. Paul always wanted the prayers of other Christians. (Rom. 15:30-32; 2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19; Col. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:22; Phile. 22).
  - e. We should constantly pray for our leaders, ministers, missionaries, etc.
    - 1) We cannot always give financial support.
    - 2) We can and should pray for God to bless the efforts of those seeking to save the lost.
    - 3) Prayer is the most important and the most powerful thing we do.
2. "just as it did also with you" - Lit. "as also [indeed] with you"
  - a. The gospel had been well faithfully spread and received by these brethren.

- b. Paul was urging them to pray that others will have the same obedience response to the gospel.
- c. Believers today need to constantly pray that others will receive the soul-saving gospel.
- d. Human effort without the blessing of God will fail.
- e. God can open doors that men cannot open.

**2 Thess. 3:2 and that we will be rescued [delivered] from perverse [wicked] and evil men; for not all have faith.**

1. “and that we will be rescued [delivered] from perverse [wicked] and evil men”
  - a. Paul and others faced constant opposition and persecution from the enemies of the Lord.
  - b. This most often came from Jews (Acts 17:5, 13), but it also came from Gentiles in various places.
2. “for not all have [the] faith” - NIV has “for not everyone has faith.” Lit. “for the faith [is] not of all [men]”
  - “the faith” is talking about Christianity, the system of faith in Christ. (Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23).
  - It had been once for all been delivered to the saints. (Jude 3).
    - a. The masses did not accept Christ as Jesus warned would be true. (Matt. 7:13, 14).
    - b. Many viewed Christianity as an apostate religion that must be eradicated by any means including force.
    - c. Paul had once been of the same mind frame and had vigorously persecuted Christians. (Acts 8:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:12,13).

**Paul Expressed Confidence In The Lord And These Brethren**  
3:3-5

**2 Thess. 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.**

1. “But the Lord is faithful”
  - a. Neither the Father or the Lord, His Son, will ever fail us. (1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; Jas. 4:8; Psa. 46:1; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Cor. 1:18).
  - b. Faithfulness is not always true of even the best of men, but it is always true of God and His Son. (Heb. 13:5,6).
  - c. See Rom. 3:3,4; 2 Tim. 2:12,13 contrasting God’s faithfulness with the faithlessness of man.
2. “and He will strengthen [confirm] and protect [guard] you from the evil one”
  - “One” is not in the Greek text. Literally it is “from the evil,” but this is understood by many to be an ellipsis with the word “one” being understood.
  - See 1 Thess. 3:2 and James 5:8 where the same verb is used meaning “to make firm.”
  - He had prayed for this in 2 Thessalonians 2:17.

2 Thess. 2:17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

- a. The “evil one” is the devil.
- b. Paul viewed the devil as man’s adversary who will use any disguise or means to overcome others.
- c. He frequently gave warnings in regard to the devil [Satan]. (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26; 2 Cor. 2:11; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Thess. 1:9).
- d. Peter gave this warning. (1 Pet. 5:8).
- e. James gave this admonition. (Jas. 4:7,8).
- f. John complicated the “young men” because they had overcome the evil one. (1 Jn. 2:13,14).

1 Jn. 2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

1 Jn. 2:14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

g. See also 1 John 5:18.

1 John 5:18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

**2 Thess. 3:4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command.**

1. “We have confidence in the Lord concerning you” - Lit. “And we are persuaded in [the] Lord as to you.”
  - a. This was a very faithful group of believers as a whole.
  - b. Paul was confident they would remain faithful to the Lord.
  - c. Being “in the Lord” was the basis of this full confidence. See Gal. 5:10; Phil. 2:19,24.
  - d. Being “in the Lord” was the basis of joy. (Phil. 3:1; 4:4).
2. “that you are doing and will continue to do what we command [charge]” - “Command” is an authoritative order.
  - a. They recognized the faithfulness and dedication of these loyal brethren.
  - b. There were some problems at Thessalonica, but Paul was very confident they would overcome these problems and glorify the Lord by obeying the gospel Paul and the others had been commissioned to preach by the Lord.

**2 Thess. 3:5 May the Lord direct [guide] your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.**

1. “May the Lord direct [guide] your hearts into the love of God” - “Kateuthuno” [kah too **thoo** noh] means “to make straight, lead, direct, guide.”
  - a. Paul used “the love of God” to denote God’s love for man in his writings. (Rom. 5:5; 8:39; 2 Cor. 13:14).

- b. He wanted them to have a deeper understanding and appreciation for God’s immense love.
  - c. This would then lead to a greater love for God.
    - 1) To know God is to love Him.
    - 2) The more we learn about God and His infinite love the more we will love and adore Him.
  - d. It is vital we recognize the great love of God and we constantly seek to grow in our love for God.
  - e. Our love increases as we come to a greater appreciation of His immense love for us. (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:19).
  - f. We should strive to love God with all our being. (Matt. 22:37, 38).
2. “and into the steadfastness [patience] of Christ” - Growing in appreciation of God’s love leads to greater love for God and “steadfastness” in Christ.

**Instructions In Regard To Disorderly Members**  
3:6-15

**2 Thess. 3:6 Now we command [charge] you, brethren, in the name [by the authority] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly [disorderly] life and not according to the tradition [inspired teaching] which you received from us.**

- 1. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” - See the same word “command” (2 Thess. 3:4).
  - a. “Command” is a suggestion, but a mandate.
  - b. This mandate was given “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” that is, by the authority of the Lord.
  - c. The authority of the apostles and our authority comes from Jesus Christ.
  - d. We are to do all things by the authority of Christ. (Col. 3:17).
  - e. He is the One who has all authority. (Matt. 28:18; Jn. 17:2).
- 2. “that you keep away [withdraw, to draw back] from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition [inspired teaching] which you received from us.”
  - a. Lit. “to draw back from every brother walking in a disorderly manner, lazily”
    - 1) This did not mean absolutely no contact. (2 Thess. 3:15).
    - 2) It prohibited close fellowship. (Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:11).

Matt. 18:17 "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Rom. 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them

1 Cor. 5:11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one.

3) A likely exception would be if the one disfellowshipped was one's husband or wife.

4) Other commandments would most likely modify the one given here in rare instances.

- A wife was to be in submission to her husband and honor him if he was a Christian or non-Christian. (Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1).
- Parents were to honor parents who whether they were faithful as Christians or unbelievers, etc.

5) This does not mean they were to side with the disciplined member in his/her sin.

b. There were some lazy Christians in the church at Thessalonica and this was inexcusable.

c. This laziness may have been motivated by the false expectation the Lord was coming quickly or had already come.

d. It seems, however, this attitude existed when Paul wrote his first epistle to these brethren. (1 Thess. 4:11,12; 5:14).

1 Thess. 4:11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,

1 Thess. 4:12 so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

1 Thess. 5:14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

e. This idle behavior was totally unacceptable for those following Christ.

f. Christians are expected to work and support themselves.

g. Christians are not to support the lazy, but to help those who were truly in need. (Eph. 4:28; Gal. 6:10).

**2 Thess. 3:7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,**

1. "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example"

a. These brethren were far from ignorant in regard to how they ought to live.

b. Paul frequently appealed to the knowledge of these Christians. (1 Thess. 1:5, 2:1,2, 5,9,10,11; 3:3; 4:2; 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:6).

2. "because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you" - Lit. "because we were not idly [lazy] among you."

a. They had been "an example" by laboring when among the Thessalonians.

b. They did not come to Thessalonica and demand others feed them. (1 Thess. 2:9).

**2 Thess. 3:8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;**

1. "nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it" - They did not beg or demand food, but they paid for it with wages from their own labor. NKJV has "eat anyone's bread free of charge."
  - a. The idea is they were not to depend on others to support them.
  - b. This does not mean Paul and the others never accepted someone's hospitality to eat or lodge.
  - c. We do not know what Paul did there, but we must assume he made money by making tents.
  - d. He was a tentmaker by trade. (Acts 18:2,3). See 1 Cor. 4:12.
2. "but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day" -1 Thess. 2:9
  - a. They did not work now and then, but constantly labored to support themselves and to evangelize.
  - b. The words "working night and day" emphasized they worked tirelessly while in Thessalonica.
  - c. They did this that souls might be won to Christ and God would be glorified.
3. "so that we would not be a burden to any of you"
  - a. No one could complain that they were a burden to them.
  - b. This was a rebuke to the believers at Thessalonica who were too lazy to work.

**2 Thess. 3:9 not because we do not have the right [authority] to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow [imitate] our example.**

1. "not because we do not have the right [authority] to this"
  - a. They had the right to be supported. (1 Cor. 9:1-12).

1 Cor. 9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

1 Cor. 9:2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1 Cor. 9:3 My defense to those who examine me is this:

1 Cor. 9:4 Do we not have a right to eat and drink?

1 Cor. 9:5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

1 Cor. 9:6 Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

1 Cor. 9:7 Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

1 Cor. 9:8 I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?

1 Cor. 9:9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "*You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.*" God is not concerned about oxen, is He?

1 Cor. 9:10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*.

1 Cor. 9:11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

1 Cor. 9:12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

- b. Paul did at times except support (Phil. 4:16), but usually refused support that no one could charge he was preaching for money or he was too lazy to work.
  - c. Those who preach the gospel have the right to be supported by the gospel. (Lk. 10:7).
2. “but in order to offer ourselves as a model [example] for you” - “mimeomai” [mee **meh** ah mi] means “imitate, follow.”
- a. They had supported themselves rather than depend on others.
  - b. The fact they preach the coming of Christ would come like a thief in the night did not mean they had an excuse not to work.
  - c. The fact they were God’s redeemed children did not mean they were not obligated to work.
  - d. Prayer or doing Christian deeds did not mean they were excused from working.
3. “so that you would follow our example”
- a. They were to imitate Paul, Silas, Timothy in their conduct and not depend on others to feed them.
  - b. They needed to heed the instructions Paul gave to the brethren at Ephesus, that is, to work and share with those truly in need. (Eph. 4:28). See also Jas. 2:14-17; 1 Jn. 3:17,18.

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