

# The Faithfulness of God in the Sanctification of the Believer

## 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5

### 2 Thessalonians 3:1–5 (NKJV)

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, <sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

<sup>3</sup> But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. <sup>4</sup> And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

<sup>5</sup> Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

## Introduction

Galatians 4:19 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

Paul had poured his life, at no small risk, into the establishment of the churches in Galatia, established out of paganism. He had preached the

gospel to them. He, like a pregnant woman, had endured the agonies of bringing the gospel and having it finally be believed, and they literally be born into the kingdom of light. He had labored intensely, painfully, to see that happen. They are now his children, and in a very strange set of circumstances he feels like he's in pain again, as if he's going through the birth pangs that he already experienced in bringing the gospel to them, the gospel that brought them spiritual life.

He is enduring pain again, the same kind of pain, the pain that longs for them to become what they are not yet. This time it is "labor pain until Christ is formed in you." At first it was "labor pain until Christ is in you." And now he longs that Christ be formed in them, or that they become Christlike.

They have become believers, Christ lives in them, but they have not taken on the form of Christ. He wishes that he could be present as he writes this letter, so that he could personally hands-on aid them in this Christ formation <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/48-23/the-primary-importance-of-sanctification>

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

1 Corinthians 1:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Corinthians 1:30 (NASB95)

<sup>30</sup> But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (NASB95)

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

1 Thessalonians 4:7 (NASB95)

<sup>7</sup> For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

## 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NASB95)

**13** But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

## 1 Peter 1:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:...

## Titus 2:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

## Hebrews 12:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

## 2 Corinthians 7:1 (NKJV)

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

### 1 Peter 1:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,

### 2 Peter 3:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

### 2 Peter 3:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

### 3 John 11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

John MacArthur said,

“...sanctification should be your preoccupation. As a believer, the election is done, justification is done, glorification is coming. And you’re living in the middle between justification and glorification, and the preoccupation of every believer must be

sanctification. That is the separation from sin, becoming increasingly holy. The kind of evangelicalism that we see so popular today has, in my judgment, a very low view of sanctification. It doesn't seem to be particularly preoccupied with sanctification at all. It's perfectly content to accept divine, sovereign election. It's very happy about the doctrine of justification. It looks forward to glorification, but has a very nominal, minimal, indifferent attitude toward sanctification.

That is a core sin. I mean, that is a monumental failure in the evangelical world, and it is precisely the reason why the evangelical world is so full of disappointment and sin and defection—because there is little, if any, interest in sanctification. People are interested in self-fulfillment, social issues. They're happy to embrace the sovereignty of God and know that they're saved and on their way to heaven. But very little is expected of people with regard to sanctification

The truth of sanctification, the truth of holiness, godliness is disappearing from popular Christianity. In some cases it's gone. Rarely do we hear any call from popular preachers for purity of life, for holy

living, for separation from the world, for self-denial, for resisting all fleshly desires. Instead, the church is now offering God up as the one who wants to fulfill everyone's desires. All the longings of the selfish human heart are being legitimized, and people are being told, "Whatever you long for or whatever you desire, whatever you want to be, whatever you can dream, this is what God wants to do for you. Come to Him. Come to Jesus, and you'll have everything that you want."

Things of the world are necessarily accommodating that message, so that things of the world are incorporated into the church as the necessary elements to fill out the church with its full attempt to satisfy the longings of fallen human hearts. The church will look more worldly. It'll be more worldly. It'll be more people-centered. It'll turn God into some kind of heavenly amazon that'll deliver to your door whatever it is you want. The new version of evangelical Christianity, even reformed, even those who say they're reformed, that new evangelical kind of Christianity is committed to import the culture, the fashion of the world, and appeal to people's consuming self-interests.

Prior to the '60s, nobody expected a church service to be rock concert. Nobody expected a church service to be entertainment. Nobody expected worship to be physical stimulation, emotional feelings without engaging your mind. Nobody expected church to be a manipulation of people's desires to fulfill their own self-styled identity. A church was a church, and it was a place where there was thoughtful, prayerful, biblical, sober-minded hearing from the Word of God, leading to conviction and edification and elevation. It was a heavenly encounter.

But to this modern generation of young people – serious, sober, thoughtful, scriptural preaching about God, and confrontation of sin, and a call to holiness, and a call to separate from the world and from iniquity is far too absolute and far too offensive. People who want to feel good about themselves the way they are don't want that, so the church caved in. The church caved in and gave them what they want. And now pastors continue to accommodate those same people – irresponsible, lazy, undisciplined rebels who want what they want – and the church, instead of confronting it, conforms to it. No preaching on sanctification, no preaching on



holiness can be done in those environments; they'd empty the place.

This is the situation today. Strong preaching on holiness against worldliness, confronting the desires of the hearts of the “me” generation as sin from which they need to repent is a far cry from the trend <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/49-14/sanctification-the-honorable-obsession>

## Review and Context

2 Thessalonians 2:9–3:2 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, <sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. <sup>11</sup> And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, <sup>12</sup> that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

<sup>13</sup> But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God

from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, <sup>14</sup> to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup> Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

**3** Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, <sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

## **Lesson**

- I. The Lord's Faithfulness in Preservation
- II. The Believer Participation in Sanctification
- III. The Apostles Prayer for Appreciation

### **I. The Lord's Faithfulness in Preservation**

**3** But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one.

Paul begins by firming the faithfulness of God in the preservation and sanctification of the believer.

“But” (*de*) marks the transition to a contrasted truth. From the depressing fact of man’s lack of faith, the thought turns to the cheering truth that “the Lord is faithful.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 363). BMH Books.

Although the Thessalonian Christians were under intense persecution and a rising hostility toward the Christian faith and were being confused by false teachers regarding the second coming of Christ which was affecting their daily work ethic, Paul nevertheless was not moved or discouraged by the attacks coming on the church. He knew that this was part of the perfect plan of God in perfecting the Saints. His confidence was not found in the Thessalonians but rather in the character and purpose of God.

The abrupt transition is suggested by placing two similar-sounding words in juxtaposition in the original: “for not of all the faith [*pistis*]. But faithful

[*pistos*] is the Lord.” Such a word play is common to Paul. This contrast between faithless men and the faithful Lord assures the readers that in spite of the wicked and pernicious opposition of satanic forces, the Lord’s purpose and plan will ultimately triumph

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 363). BMH Books.

The character of God should be the basis for a Christian’s confidence. Because God has promised to supply believers’ needs, Paul could rest in the assurance that He would provide

Constable, T. L. (1985). [2 Thessalonians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 722). Victor Books.

“The Lord” Jesus, the Ruler and Defender of His people, will always show Himself “faithful,” trustworthy and dependable, in fulfilling His promises and maintaining His covenantal commitments

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 363). BMH Books.

Three times in three verses Paul mentions his confidence in the Lord's work in the Thessalonians Christians.

- <sup>3</sup> But the Lord is faithful,  
<sup>4</sup> And we have confidence in the Lord  
<sup>5</sup> Now may the Lord direct your hearts

Sanctification is just as much a work of God as justification is. God does not impute the real righteousness of Christ to the believer and declare him righteous, call him a saint and then leave them to fend for themselves in sanctification. God's plan is to make you holy like His Son.

Romans 8:29 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

John 17:17;19 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

<sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

1 Corinthians 15:49 (NKJV)

<sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man*.

1 John 3:2–3 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

### **3** But the Lord is faithful

This follows the first 2 verses were Paul is requesting prayer for the advancement of the Word and the belief and submission to it.

2 Thessalonians 3:1–2 (NKJV)

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you,

Then, the request for pray to be delivered from evil men, because not all have faith.....

<sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

All may not have faith, and many are the adversaries of the Gospel as Paul was experiencing in Corinth. But Paul was convinced of the Plan of God which fueled his confidence in the Prayers of the saints.

#### Acts 18:4–11 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

<sup>5</sup> When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. <sup>6</sup> But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” <sup>7</sup> And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. <sup>8</sup> Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

<sup>9</sup> Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; <sup>10</sup> for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

## faithful

**pistos:** faithful, reliable

**Original Word:** πιστός, ἡ, ὄν

**Part of Speech:** Adjective

**Transliteration:** pistos

**Phonetic Spelling:** (pis-tos')

**Definition:** faithful, **reliable**

**Usage:** trustworthy, faithful, believing.

Cognate: 4103 *pistós* (an adjective, derived from 3982 /*peíthō*, "persuaded") – properly, faithful (loyalty to faith; literally, fullness of faith); typically, of believing the faith God imparts.

[The root of 4103 /*pistós*, "faithful" and 4100 /*pisteúō*, "faith," are the same (pist-), referring to persuasion.]

The Lord is the one who has planned and promised this great work of Sanctification and He is the one faithful to do it.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (NKJV)



<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will do *it*.

## 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, <sup>14</sup> to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leon Morris comments: “Paul turns away from the difficulties of man to the God on whom all men must depend.... He knows that the really significant factor is the character of his Lord, not the might of the enemy.”

Phillips, R. D. (2015). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; p. 382). P&R Publishing.

It would be very discouraging to be in ministry and believe that it was all up to me or it was all up to you. If all we had to depend upon was man and his willing participation, we would be most miserable.

What gives us confidence is not the best solution and indecisiveness and sinful inclinations of men, no, no,.... what gives us confidence is the great faithfulness of God who has perfectly planned the sanctification of the believer and is faithful to carry it out and to make sure that it happens.

Paul says that the Lord is faithful to do two things that will enable your sanctification and continuation of the faith.

1. God will establish and strengthen you.
2. God will protect and guard you

**3** But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

1. God will establish and strengthen you.

**3** ...the Lord is faithful, who will

**establish** you

stérizó: to make fast, establish

Original Word: στηρίζω

stērízō (from stēringks, "a support that fixes, plants down"; akin to 2476 /hístēmi, "to stand," having a duplication of the primitive Gk root/sta, "to make stand") – properly, set fast (fix); give support to

secure (firmly establish); solidly plant (which eliminates vacillation).

① to fix firmly in a place, *set up, establish, support*, ② to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, *confirm, establish, strengthen* fig. ext.

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 945). University of Chicago Press.

make them firm and solid

Romans 16:25 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup> Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,  
<sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

1 Peter 5:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

Some have taught over the years, a “Let Go and Let God” approach to sanctification. God is going to do what God will do, we and when God is ready, He will move us to the second level...or third etc.

It is a more passive approach than active.

“What is “let-go-and-let-God” theology? It’s called Keswick theology, and it’s one of the most significant strands of second-blessing theology. It assumes that Christians experience two “blessings.” The first is getting “saved,” and the second is getting serious. The change is dramatic: from a defeated life to a victorious life; from a lower life to a higher life; from a shallow life to a deeper life; from a fruitless life to a more abundant life; from being “carnal” to being “spiritual”; and from merely having Jesus as your Savior to making Jesus your Master. People experience this second blessing through surrender and faith: “Let go and let God.”

People who influenced Keswick theology include John Wesley, Charles Finney, and Hannah Whitall Smith. Significant proponents of Keswick theology include Evan H. Hopkins (Keswick’s formative theologian), H. Moule

(Keswick's scholar and best theologian), F. B. Meyer (Keswick's international ambassador), Andrew Murray (Keswick's foremost devotional author), J. Hudson Taylor and Amy Carmichael (Keswick's foremost missionaries), Frances Havergal (Keswick's hymnist), and W. H. Griffith Thomas, and Robert C. McQuilkin (leaders of the victorious life movement). People who were influenced by Keswick theology include leaders of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (A. B. Simpson), Moody Bible Institute (D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey), and Dallas Seminary (Lewis Chafer and Charles Ryrie).

You can tell that Keswick theology has influenced people when you hear a Christian "testimony" like this: "I was saved when I was eight years old, and I surrendered to Christ when I was seventeen."

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/why-let-go-and-let-god-bad-idea>

But I believe the bible teaches a more active role in Sanctification. Not a "Let go and Let God" but rather a "Let's Go and Let God".... it is not Just God, but God and man. It is not just man but must be God.

The Bible is full of examples of the responsibility of the believer in his own personal sanctification. Hundreds of commands are given directly to the will

of man. He is 100% responsible to obey and is held accountable to God for not obeying. In fact as we read through the New Testament we see not only the word that was used to “establish” as a reference to God doing the establishing and strengthening but also we find the same word used of the disciples strengthening one another and being strengthened in the faith.

Acts 14:21–22 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> **strengthening the souls** of the disciples, **exhorting them to continue in the faith**, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

1 Thessalonians 3:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,

James 5:7–8 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. <sup>8</sup> You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Revelation 3:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

Acts 18:23 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples

Both God and man are used in this verse to show the effort of both in sanctification and strengthening.

Luke 22:32 (NKJV)

<sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.”

1. God will establish and strengthen you.
2. God will protect and guard you

**3** But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and **guard** you from the evil one.

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## **phulassó: to guard, watch**

**Original Word:** φυλάσσω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** phulassó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (foo-las'-so)

**Definition:** to guard, watch

**Usage:** (a) I guard, protect; mid: I am on my guard, (b) act. and mid. of customs and regulations: I keep, observe.

5442 phylássō (akin to 5441 /phýlaks, "a military guard") – properly, preserve by "having an eye on" (J. Thayer), referring to the uninterrupted vigilance shepherds show in keeping their flocks (see Lk 2:8, used with 5438 /phylaké, "a military guard," i.e. exercising unbroken vigilance as a military guard).

5442 /phylássō ("keep watch over, keep secure") emphasizes the needed vigilance to keep what is entrusted. Thus 5442 (phylássō) is often used in the NT in the Greek middle voice meaning, "Personally be on guard against," stressing the constant, personal interest involved with the guarding.



[Examples: Lk 12:15, "Beware of," (RV, "Keep yourselves from," cf. Ac 21:25); 2 Tim 4:15, "Be thou aware" (see Vine, Unger, White, NT, 65).]

Matthew 6:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the  
glory forever. Amen.

John 17:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

2 Timothy 4:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

The verb “protect” conveys a military image, implying conflict and armed protection against violent attack. They are promised safety “from the evil one” (*apo tou ponērou*). Grammatically, the expression may be either neuter, “from the evil” or “all that is evil” (Phillips), or masculine, “the evil one,” the devil. The context must decide the meaning. The same

ambiguity appears in the identical expression in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13). Either makes good sense. If it is neuter, evil is conceived of generally, as one collective mass; if it is masculine, evil is thought of as exhibited in its personal head.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 364). BMH Books.

The masculine is more in harmony with the context. It places the victorious Lord in direct antithesis with the evil one. It marks the contrast between the Lord who protects and Satan who seeks to harm. This agrees with the problem pictured in the second chapter, where the conflict unquestionably was personal. Findlay observes, "The conflict of the Church and of the Christian life is not a matter of principles alone and abstract force; it is a personal encounter, and behind all *forces* there are living wills.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 364). BMH Books.

God not only establishes believers in faith but also protects them from Satan's attacks. True believers withstand mockery, social rejection, and even the kind of severe persecution that Paul's readers were facing, because God is faithful to guard their salvation in response to prayer. Leon Morris writes: "The faithfulness of the Lord means that His people

will not be left to the mercy of any and every temptation that may assail them, but they will be settled in the faith.”

Phillips, R. D. (2015). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; p. 386). P&R Publishing.

Although we have the divine assurance of the protection of God from the evil one, does that mean that we can be idle. Does that mean that we are never to actively engage in the battle against the devil and His demons. NO

James 4:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> .... Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Ephesians 4:27 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> nor give place to the devil.

Ephesians 6:11–13 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

### 1 Peter 5:8–9 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith,.....

Even with all of this the evil one can be used in our sanctification.

### 2 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

### Job 2:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, he *is* in your hand, but spare his life.”

### Job 2:7–10 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. <sup>8</sup> And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

<sup>9</sup> Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!”

<sup>10</sup> But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Genesis 50:19–20 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

The Devil is not allowed free reign in our lives but is on a leash held in the hand of a Sovereign benevolent and merciful God who has our good and His glory in view so that we are sanctified but not destroyed by the efforts of the evil one.

I. The Lord’s Faithfulness in Preservation

**II. The Believer Participation in Sanctification**

**4** And **we have confidence** in the Lord concerning you, both that

you do and will do the things we command you.

**Perf. Act Ind. We have been and are convinced**  
**peithó: to persuade, to have confidence**

**Original Word:** πείθω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** peithó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (pi'-tho)

**Definition:** to persuade, to have confidence

**Usage:** I persuade, urge.

3982 peithō (the root of [4102](#) /pístis, "faith") – to persuade; (passive) be persuaded of what is trustworthy.

**4** And **we have confidence** in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

It is another reminder that the work of the Lord in the believer does not leave the believer passive. In the grand plan of man's salvation, divine empowerment and human effort are united.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 364). BMH Books.

What a blessing as a pastor and leader of a church to have a group of people whom you are convinced will obey its leaders.

This is so critical in the growth and sanctification of the believer. A willing recognition and submission to the pastoral leadership of a church.

There are plenty of horror stories that I could share with you of churches going off the rails when the people of a local congregation refuse to follow the biblical instruction of the pastoral leadership. And I can equally share with you the horror of a leadership that is abusive and overreaching in its authority and causing the congregation to suffer.

Both are devastating to the sanctification of the people in the church.

To many stories abound of church members being discouraged thru their leadership and the leadership being discourage thru the membership. As a result of both, there are pastors out of ministry all together and there are true believers that have refused to return to an organized church.

So, when a pastor or elder has a congregation that is willing to obey and follow the leadership that God honors, it is a tremendous blessing.

There are plenty of biographies of men who poured their life into a church only in the end to be devastated.

The apostle Paul certainly had that experience with the church at Corinth who had a sad, tragic response to his faithful ministry....Others like, ...the story Arthur Pink, the great mind, gifted preacher, Bible student whose ministry was one tragedy after another, so that in the end of his life he found himself in some seaside village in Scotland, a recluse who wouldn't even go out the door, he had been so deeply grieved and wounded and hurt by people.

.....Charles Spurgeon who, after all of the power of his ministry, was basically voted out of the Baptist Convention and had a broken heart and a grieving spirit until his life ended.

Jonathan Edwards, in our own country, who was voted out of his church at the height of the..., great preaching ministry that probably had no equal in our history.

Not everyone is blessed with a congregation that responds the way.... <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-201/the->



marks-of-a-faithful-congregation  
believers did.

the way the Thessalonians

**4** And **we have confidence** in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

It is clear that Paul had apostolic Authority. He was commanding them to do things that had not yet been written down and canonized. His was unique in that sense as were the other apostles. But as their churches are established and founded and the Apostles would leave. They would hand that authority over to the elders of that local congregation.

Titus 1:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

These elders are pastors or overseers of the church. They carry biblical authority to instruct, command, exhort, rebuke and admonish the church.

Paul's confidence and blessing was that they would do what the leadership commanded them. They were like the Philippians

### Philippians 2:12 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

### Hebrews 13:17 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup> and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

**4** And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do **the things we command you**.

Barnhouse emphatically asserts this connection: “The confidence Paul has is not in the believers at Thessalonica; it is in the Lord ‘touching’ [concerning] them.” Their confidence is not in the reliability of human nature, but rather in the Lord who will work this willingness in them to obey voluntarily the commands laid upon them

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 365). BMH Books.

**the things we command you.**

The verb “we command” carries the thought of a message passed on to others from one in authority (cf. the cognate noun in 1 Thess. 4:2 and the verb in 4:11).

1 Thessalonians 4:1–2 (NKJV)

**4** Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;

2 for you know what commandments we  
gave you through the Lord Jesus.

The reference is not to mere suggestions or helpful advice but to binding orders. The present tense indicates that the reference is not to past injunctions given them. The things being commanded have reference not merely to the charge to pray for them (vv. 1–2) but specifically to the command to discipline the disorderly (vv. 6–15), which the writers already have in view

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 365). BMH Books.

Obedience to the commandments of our Lord, delivered by the Apostles, and expounded on by the pastors is essential to the sanctification of the believers. Their holiness is indirect proportion to their obedience to the Lord's commands.

God desires more than academics when it comes to the Bible. He wants us to obey and apply the Word.

Sanctification does not come with just knowledge. But knowledge and application.

I. The Lord's Faithfulness in Preservation

II. The Believer Participation in Sanctification

### III. The Apostles Prayer for Appreciation

**5** Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

It is the third prayer offered expressly for them in this brief epistle

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 366). BMH Books.

#### 2 Thessalonians 1:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power, <sup>12</sup> that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

**5** Now may the Lord **direct** your **hearts** into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

### **kateuthunó: to make straight**

**Original Word:** ΚΑΤΕΥΘÚΝΩ

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** kateuthunó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (kat-yoo-thoo'-no)

**Definition:** to make straight

**Usage:** (a) I make straight, (b) met: I put in the right way, direct.

2720 kateuthýnō (from [2596](#) /katá, "down, exactly according to," intensifying [2116](#) /euthýnō, "make straight") – properly, go straight down by the most direct, efficient route; to go in a direct (straight) course – avoiding all unnecessary delays, without any undue loss of time or achievement.[The prefix (kata) lends the idea "exactly direct or guide" – literally "down to without unnecessary deviation."]

The verb “direct” conveys the picture of opening up the way by the removal of obstacles so that the desired goal may be reached. Its New Testament usage implies that this is brought about by the divine providential controlling of human action. (See the verb in 1 Thess. 3:11.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 366). BMH Books.

## 1 Thessalonians 3:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.

**5** Now may the Lord **direct** your **hearts** into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

the *heart* is the center of their lives; the *Lord* guides their hearts so that his purposes are accomplished in them

Green, G. L. (2002). [The letters to the Thessalonians](#) (p. 339). W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

## 1 Chronicles 29:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You.

Solomon prayed

## 1 Kings 8:54–58 (NKJV)

<sup>54</sup> And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, that he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. <sup>55</sup> Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying:

<sup>56</sup> “Blessed *be* the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. <sup>57</sup> May the Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, <sup>58</sup> that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.

1 Kings 8:61–62 (NKJV)

<sup>61</sup> Let your heart therefore be loyal to the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.”

Psalms 119:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Oh, that my ways were directed  
To keep Your statutes!

Psalms 119:36 (NKJV)

<sup>36</sup> Incline my heart to Your testimonies,  
And not to covetousness.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;

<sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him,



And He shall direct your paths.

**5** Now may the Lord direct your hearts **into the love of God** and into the patience of Christ.

In the expression, “God’s love” (*tēn agapēn tou theou*, “the love of God”), “of God” may be interpreted as either an objective or subjective genitive. As an objective genitive it means their love for God. In support of this view, Gloag comments, “This love of God is the fulfillment of the Law; and hence the apostle prays that the Thessalonians may be directed into it as the source and essence of all acceptable obedience.”<sup>22</sup>

But other interpreters hold that in harmony with the prevailing sense of the phrase in Paul’s writings, the genitive should be viewed as subjective, God’s love for them (NIV, NEB). Then the prayer means “that they may be led to a fuller appreciation of the divine love as manifested in Christ.”

But Lightfoot seems to be right when he insists that “the Apostles availed themselves, either consciously or unconsciously, of the vagueness or rather comprehensiveness of language, to express a

great spiritual truth, and that both meanings “are so combined and interwoven, that it is very seldomly possible, where the expression occurs, to separate the one from the other.”<sup>24</sup> This gives us the comprehensive truth that God’s love for us, as it is experienced by us, produces a reciprocal response of love in our hearts for Him (cf. 1 John 4:9–10). Only our love for God, produced and stimulated by our experience of His love for us, will motivate us to joyously obey the commandments of God.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 366–367). BMH Books.

**5** Now may the Lord **direct** your hearts into the love of God and into **the patience of Christ.**

### **hupomoné: a remaining behind, a patient enduring**

**Original Word:** ὑπομονή, ἡς, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** hupomoné

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hoop-om-on-ay')

**Definition:** a remaining behind, a patient enduring

**Usage:** endurance, steadfastness, patient waiting for.

5281 hypomoné (from [5259](#) /hypó, "under" and [3306](#) /ménō, "remain, endure") – properly, remaining under, endurance; steadfastness, especially as God enables the believer to "remain (endure) under" the challenges He allots in life.

They also pray that the readers may be directed into “Christ’s perseverance” (*tēn hupomonēn tou Christou*). Here again the genitive (*tou Christou*) may be objective or subjective. If objective, it means the patience that looks to Christ, hence “the patient waiting for Christ” (KJV). It is held that this is in harmony with the fact that “the dominant theme of both Epistles is the Second Coming of Christ.... They should learn patience in waiting for the great consummation. The chief purpose of our Epistle is to inculcate patience with that end in view.”<sup>25</sup> Hauck, who holds that “the patience of Christ” here means “expectation of the Christ who will come again in glory,” recognizes that in most New Testament passages *hupomonē* “refers to the steadfast endurance of the Christian under the difficulties and tests of the present evil age.” Being a compound form, this significant term (*hupomonēn*) has the root meaning of “remaining under, standing fast,” and thus its prevailing significance is “steadfastness, endurance, perseverance.” This basic significance well suits the interpretation of the genitive as subjective, “the endurance of the Christ” (Rotherham), the perseverance He displayed. The definite article with *Christ*, “the Christ,” indicates that it is not the historical person, Jesus, that is thought

of but rather the suffering Messiah as foreseen by the prophets and now known to believers. “The endurance of the Christ” thus may mean the endurance that the Messiah displayed (subjective genitive) or the endurance that He inspires in the hearts of His followers (genitive of the author). It seems best to accept that both truths are involved in the prayer here. The steadfast endurance displayed by the Master must challenge them to have this same characteristic wrought in their own lives.

Hiebert, D. E. (1996). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (Revised Edition, p. 367). BMH Books.

### 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, <sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

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### 1 Thessalonians 5:12–24 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup> and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

<sup>14</sup> Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. <sup>15</sup> See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies. <sup>21</sup> Test all things; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will do *it*.