

Worksheet #4: 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:13 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. ¹⁸ Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹ For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? ²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

³ Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, ² 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, ³ that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. ⁴ For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

⁶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see* you—⁷ therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. ⁸ For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

⁹ For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

¹¹ Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, ¹³ 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.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Note the one thing that prevented Paul and his team from returning to Thessalonica (2:18). What does this say about the earnestness of Paul's desire to return?

2. List the phrases Paul uses to describe the Thessalonians in 2:19–20, and reflect upon the significance of these descriptors.

3. Notice the ways that Paul describes Timothy in 3:2. What does this communicate about their relationship with each other? What does it tell us about the nature of ministry?

4. What is the purpose for Timothy's visit, according to 3:2b–3? In what way might Timothy's efforts produce the result described in 3:3?

5. Whose "afflictions" does Paul describe in 3:3? What does Paul understand to be the purpose of these afflictions?

6. Notice Paul's pastoral concern in 3:5 and 3:7–8. What was Paul's burden, and what reassured him?

7. List Paul's prayer requests in 3:9–13, and explain how this prayer relates to the situation described in this passage.

8. Compare Paul's prayer in 3:11–13 with the earlier prayer of thanksgiving in 1:2–10. Can you find any common themes in these two passages?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
