

Holiness Means Preparedness
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Text: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

1 Thessalonians: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: Paul's Desire to Visit the Church Again

Central Idea of Message: God directs the way, increases the love, and establishes the holiness of believers.

Introduction: In this passage of Scripture Paul discusses God directing the way, God increasing the love, and God establishing the holiness of believers. In so doing, Paul prays for the Lord's direction in his life, increasing love on behalf of his readers, and a holy readiness of believers in anticipation of Christ's return. Holiness inspires preparedness for the Second Coming of Christ.

I. Directing the Way (v. 11)?

- A. Who is directing your way?
 - 1. Are you directing your own way?
 - 2. Is the world directing your way?
 - 3. Are your friends directing your way?
- B. Are God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ directing your way?
 - 1. God and Father
 - a) God: sovereign, self-existent
 - b) Father: how he relates to believers
 - 2. Lord Jesus
 - a) Lord: divine
 - b) Jesus: human
 - 3. Prayer can be addressed to either
 - 4. For Paul there is only one appropriate answer
 - 5. **We must not be led around by the world or our own fleshly desires, because they are spiritually blind**
 - 6. Be directed by the One who sees
 - a) Two definite articles
 - b) God and Jesus
 - c) Two persons of the Trinity

- d) Unity within distinct personhood within the Godhead [Trinity]

II. Increasing the Love (v. 12)

- A. These Christians were already loving one another
 - 1. Where do you direct your love? Stage one
 - a) Toward yourself?
 - b) Toward your parents?
 - c) Toward your spouse?
 - d) Toward your children?
 - e) Toward your friends?
 - 2. **Paul asked that the Lord cause the Thessalonian Christians to increase and abound in love for one another**
 - a) Stage two
 - b) Other believers
- B. **Paul asked that the Lord cause the Thessalonian Christians to increase and abound in love for all people**
 - 1. Stage three
 - 2. Regardless of race
 - 3. Regardless of economics
 - 4. Regardless of religion
- C. Paul and his companions were increasing and abounding in their love for the Thessalonian believers and for all humans
 - 1. **When Paul came to faith in Christ, he abandoned his Jewish prejudice against Gentiles and all other prejudices [racial, social, etc.]**
 - 2. Unconditional love [*ἀγάπη*] never wanes, on the contrary, it always increases because it is constantly produced by the Holy Spirit
 - a) In scope
 - b) In intensity
 - c) Love
 - (1) More than sentimentality
 - (2) More than warm, fuzzy feelings
 - (3) Selfless desire for the total welfare of others

III. Establishing the Holiness (v. 13)

- A. Increasing in love for all others shows that God is establishing our heart unblamable in holiness
 - 1. The heart is here regarded as the seat of the intellect and the will

2. Paul was speaking of maintaining and strengthening of commitment
 3. Paul was talking about dedication to holy living
 4. Lasting change begins in the heart and comes only from the Holy Spirit
 5. God wants believers to be spotless
 6. God and Christ are the only qualified judges of holiness
 7. **God's standard of holiness is unattainable without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ**
 8. This needed to be written then and needs to be preached now
- B. If our heart is not blameless, we stand condemned when Jesus returns with all his saints
1. The contents of every heart will be revealed at the Second Coming of Christ
 2. The time of reckoning is approaching
 3. **Jesus is coming back with all his saints [believers, Christians] who have died and gone to heaven**
 - a) The Thessalonian Christians were troubled about the condition of those who had died
 - b) The deceased, but now glorified, people of God are with him even now and will return to earth in glory and victory with him
 - c) None of God's people who have died will be missing from this glorious event!
 4. Jesus is coming back to establish his millennial kingdom
 5. **The return of Jesus will be both a time of joy for some and a time of fear for others**
 - a) Joy for believers
 - b) Fear for unbelievers
 - c) Grandeur for believers
 - d) Shame for unbelievers

Conclusion: Who is directing your way? Is your love for all others increasing? Will your holiness stand up to God's scrutiny at the time of the Second Coming of Christ? You better be prepared. Holiness means preparedness.