

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers slightly spread, reaching out towards the viewer. The hand is set against a soft, out-of-focus background of blue and teal light. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of the hand.

Grace Prayers

1st Thes 1:2-3 (Topical Message)

What is the definition of Prayer?

Prayer (Websters Definition) - A solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or an object of worship.

Websters narrows prayer down to (1) requesting help, or (2) expressing thanks to God (Obviously if you are a Christian you have no other object of Worship).

Prayer is so much more than (1) requesting help, or (2) expressing thanks. Prayer is also worship, praise, and listening to God. God communicates back to your spirit (Listening Pray) for example.

Prayer is simply communicating with God – It's not only a one-way communication, but a two-way communication (Back and Forth). God hears our prayers, and answers our prayers. There are only 3 answers to our prayers (Yes, No, Wait).

The Apostle Paul records **43** prayers in his epistles. They can be categorized into 3 types:

1. Prayers of Praise & Worship

2. Prayers for Other Believers

3. Prayer for Himself

It is a great study to look at these prayers and see how Paul prayed, the requests he made for himself and other believers, and how he worships God in prayer.

Paul is a great example for us to follow in his prayer life.

I see prayer as being neglected in the life of many believers. I also see corporate prayer being neglected as well.

Let's change that! Amen!

So today, I would like to examine one of Paul's 43 prayers from 1st Thessalonians 1:2-3. Paul prayed for the Thessalonian believers. Specifically, he prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to God in 3 areas. I want to look at these 3 areas today: Thus, the title of my message **“Grace Prayers”**.

Area (Thankful for)

1. Work of Faith

2. Labor of Love

3. Steadfastness of Hope

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NASB)

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; ³ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

Background

Paul visited Thessalonica on his 2nd missionary journey around 49 AD. It was a major city of about 200,000, had a sea port and many traveled through this location to other parts of the region (Hub). Most of the inhabitants were Greek. Paul shared the Gospel there and many got saved. Paul stayed there for a short time and left. Several years later Paul wrote 1st Thessalonians.

The purpose of the letter was to encourage the Thessalonian believers to persevere in the faith despite persecution. Paul also gave instruction on the subject of what would happen to Christians who would die before the Lord's return (Rapture of the Church).

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NASB)

¹ Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

Paul – Apostle

Silvanus (Silas) – Silas was a leader of the church in Jerusalem who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey.

Timothy - Timothy was one of the most constant travel companions of the Apostle Paul. The first reference to Timothy is found in Acts 16:1-3 at the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey when he revisited Derbe and Lystra in Lycaonia. Timothy later became a leader in the Church of Ephesus. Paul wrote 1st & 2nd Timothy to him which are regarded as Pastoral Epistles. These letters focus on teaching Timothy about leading the church.

Paul's Prayer

1 Thessalonians 1:2 (NASB)

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of *you* in our prayers;

Paul is praying a pray of thanks. Specifically, being thankful for the Thessalonians.

1. Work of Faith

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NASB)

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; ³ **constantly bearing in mind your work of faith** and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

Amp – continually mentioning you when engaged in prayer

Paul just didn't pray one time and leave it there. He prayed **continually, consistently** and **constantly** for the Thessalonians.

Your Pray Life

This is a good example for us as believers today. Continual, consistent, and constantly praying. Now that doesn't mean to pray all day long, 24/7 and to never sleep. But it does mean a consistent time to be in prayer. Paul was consistent in praying, and in this case the subject of his prayers was being thankful for the Thessalonians.

I think many of us Christians only pray when trials and difficulties come into our live (Emergency Prayers). That's ok, but ***why not pray consistently & often and communicate with God (Daily)***. Not only for your supplications and requests, but to LISTEN to GOD (Listening Prayer).

We can all hear the voice of God. This is not some special privilege for the so-called super Christian. Its available to all. We are one spirit with the lord. God speaks to our spirits.

1 Corinthians 6:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith

Paul is thanking the God for the Thessalonians **“Work of Faith”**

James 2:26 (NASB)

²⁶ For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

I want to make it very clear. Works doesn't save a person. One cannot be made spiritually alive by works, only by faith in the Gospel message. But James tells us that once one is made spiritually alive, they produce works.

The Question Becomes:

Our works one produces from the Flesh (My Own), or from the Spirit (Christ) or God.

If they originate from you (Flesh) – they profit nothing. If they originate with God, they are fruitful.

Brothers & Sisters – We don't work **FOR** God; we **work FROM** God! Amen. There is a big difference here.

Paul is thanking God – for their Work of Faith. We don't know what that work of faith was, just that Paul was thankful for it.

Question:

Are you thankful for the work of faith of your ministry leaders & fellow Brothers & Sisters in Christ? This especially holds true today with the Evil Ones stepped up Spiritual attack on Christians.

2. Labor of Love

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NASB)

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; ³ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and **labor of love** and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

Paul is also thankful for the Thessalonians ***“Labor of Love.”***

What could this be? What is their labor of love?

We get a hint by looking ahead at chapter 1, verse 8:

1 Thessalonians 1:8 (NASB)

⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

We could say that their “Labor of Love” is their Love of God, and their Love of people who need to hear the life changing Gospel message.

Question – What is your “Labor of Love”?

Is it your Career?

Is it your Family?

Is it your Physical Fitness?

Brothers & Sisters – The **Thessalonians** labor of love was to share the life changing message of the Gospel. That Christ died for man’s sins and offer man (Forgiveness of Sins = Eternal Life = Spiritual Life = Christ’s Life). By faith man is regenerated to new life!

Titus 3:5 (NASB)

⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

This is so desperately needed today, as it was in the 1st century. Unless man’s heart is changed and made new, their lives will never change, their families will lives will never change, their towns & counties will never change , States will never change, countries will never change, and the world will never change.

3. Steadfastness of Hope

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NASB)

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; ³ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and **steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ** in the presence of our God and Father,

Paul is also thankful for the **Thessalonians steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Steadfastness – Also Translated (Patient Endurance, Perseverance, Endurance).

Of Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Thessalonians placed their hope in Jesus Christ, not for salvation, they were already saved. But a hope knowing that Christ will work in them and thru them to His Glory.

Waiting on Him to work thru them, sharing, serving, directing, guiding, teaching, and using them.

They had enduring hope in Christ,

What are you hoping in? Brothers & Sisters – There is no hope in any other thing than Jesus Christ!

Paul was thankful that the **Thessalonians** had steadfast hope in Jesus Christ.



Grace Prayers

Be Thankful for Others

Work of Faith

Labor of Love

Steadfastness of Hope

1st Thes 1:2-3

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