

# Why Your Spiritual Growth Matters

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Sunday, July 7, 2024 ▪ Brad Manley

Your spiritual growth matters because it \_\_\_\_\_ others in Gospel faith. 3:6-8

Your spiritual growth matters because it \_\_\_\_\_ God through thanksgiving. 3:9

Your spiritual growth matters because it \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ in the church. 3:10-13

## ***1 Thessalonians 3:6–13***

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<sup>[6]</sup> But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—<sup>[7]</sup> for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. <sup>[8]</sup> For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. <sup>[9]</sup> For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, <sup>[10]</sup> as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

<sup>[11]</sup> Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, <sup>[12]</sup> and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for 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 with all his saints. (ESV)

## ***Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions***

**Open:** What are some valuable skills you have that you could teach other people? If you have ever taken that opportunity, share what you learned along the way.

**Read & Discuss:** 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

1. On behalf of Paul, Timothy went back to visit the Thessalonian believers out of concern for their spiritual wellbeing in the face of afflictions (vv. 1-5). Timothy brought back good news regarding their faith and love (v. 6). Are you surprised that someone as spiritually mature as Paul experienced anxiety over these believers (vv. 1, 5) and was comforted by Timothy's report? Why or why not? Can you recall a time when someone else was encouraged by your spiritual growth? Explain.
2. What do you think Paul means by saying, "For now we live, if you are steadfast in the Lord" (v. 8)? Share about a time when you found your sense of fulfillment strongly attached to the spiritual well-being of others? How does the connection between the spiritual state of the Thessalonian believers and Paul's well-being speak to our interconnected with other believers? What should this mean for our how we live?
3. Ultimately the conversion and growth of the Thessalonian believers caused Paul to respond to God in joyful thanksgiving (v. 9). What proportion of thanksgiving in your life is rooted in the spiritual health of others? How might we increase the abundance of that source of joy/thanksgiving?
4. Verses 11-13 record Paul's prayer for these Christians. How does his prayerful wish in verse 12 reflect the importance of personal presence in discipling others? (*See also 2:17-18.*) How has personal contact with people been significant in your efforts to disciple others (or to be discipled by them)?
5. In verse 12 Paul prays that their love for one another would increase. Why do you think this an important focus point considering the report Timothy has given them (v. 6)? How should we understand the emphasis of "love for *one another*" and "love for *all*" in Paul's prayer?
6. Paul prays for the continued growth of these believers, with a view to their ultimate presence before God at the return of Jesus (vv. 12-13). Why do you think Paul speaks of it here? What might help us more frequently reflect on the return of Jesus in ways that impacts our lives today?

**Application & Prayer:** Spend some time in prayer actively seeking God's direction as to whom you might invest in spiritually. Take time again to seek God's wisdom and guidance on how you might go about that investment. Ask that God would give great fruitfulness to your efforts. Confess any apprehension, fear, or laziness that might be preventing action in this area of your life. Praise God for the investment others have made in your spiritual growth.