

How Do You Pray for Others?

The *International Sunday School Lesson* for Sunday, June 20, 2010
1 Thessalonians 3:1-12

“So that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints” (1 Thessalonians 3:13—NASB-U).

“And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints” (1 Thessalonians 3:13—NRSV).

“To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (1 Thessalonians 3:13—KJV).

Paul’s letter to the church in Thessalonica teaches by example how to pray for our fellow believers. Paul prayed that none of them would have their faith shaken because of persecution, suffering, or temptation. When with them, he had forewarned that those who obey the Lord Jesus would suffer persecution; so today, we need to pray that the faith of all believers around the world will remain steadfast.

Following Paul’s example, we can pray for the opportunity to see someday those for whom they pray, whether we have ever met them personally or not. We can also pray that when we see our fellow believers that we will be able to encourage them and give them even more reason to keep trusting in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We can almost use Paul’s very words when we pray for others; for example, “may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all” (1 Thessalonians 3:12). Because we love God, we will ask Him to strengthen our own commitment to lead a holy life. We will pray for divine power to live honestly before God our Father and transparently before others, so the Lord can use us to represent His true character before the world. We can pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will give us, and all believers, the wisdom and strength to overcome temptations and sins. Today especially, we need to pray that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be ready to receive Him when He comes with all His saints. — Copyright 2010 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Questions for Further Thought or Discussion

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1. Think of the forms of communication we have today. How has communication changed in your lifetime? Do the newest forms of communication draw you closer to people and enlarge your circle of good friends? How can the newest forms of communication lead to sharing too much information or lead to superficiality in relationships? How have new forms of communication helped your church?
2. Some of Paul’s letters were preserved in the Bible for our edification today. How are letters written today being preserved for the edification future generations (not implying that these letters we write are the same as Scripture)? How can old letters be valuable to subsequent generations?
3. How can you help others in your church think of themselves as “co-workers for God”? What difference would it make in relationships among Christians if they considered each one, and themselves, as “co-workers for God”? What qualifies someone to be a “co-worker for God”?
4. How do we communicate the full reality of what it means to be a Christian to unbelievers we share the gospel with today? How do we share with them the promise of eternal life with the real possibility of suffering and persecution in this life for being a follower of Jesus? See also the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12.
5. What can happen to a believer when persecution comes that they were not expecting? What can happen to a believer when success and wealth come to them beyond what they were expecting?