

## *Study Notes For I Thessalonians* **(Chapter Three)**

**I Thessalonians 3:1-3** - At the end of the previous chapter we read that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wanted to come see their brethren in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 2:17). However, they were hindered from doing so (I Thessalonians 2:18). The saints in Thessalonica meant a lot to these three brothers in Christ (I Thessalonians 2:19-20). What we are going to study through in this article picks up from where we left off in the previous chapter. Notice: *“Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto”* (I Thessalonians 3:1-3).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus reached a point wherein they could no longer forbear not seeing how the saints in Thessalonica were doing. In the fifth verse of this chapter these brothers stated this: *“For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain”* (I Thessalonians 3:5). In both passages of Scripture, the word translated “forbear” [στέγω] means: “to roof over, that is, (figuratively) to cover with silence (endure patiently): - (for-) bear, suffer” (Strong’s # 4722). From these passages and the wording used, we can see these brothers were really worried about whether or not the saints in Thessalonica were continuing in the faith. So, they needed Timotheus to go and personally see how things were going.

From what we have read we can see that Paul and Silvanus decided to stay in Athens alone while sending Timothy to Thessalonica. There are several recorded times in the New Testament wherein Paul sent Timothy to places in his absence (Acts 19:21-22, I Corinthians 4:17, and Philippians 2:19). There were times wherein Timothy also was left in places to continue the work he and Paul started (Acts 17:14 and I Timothy 1:3-7). Timothy was a fellow-laborer with Paul and Silvanus. Think about what Paul said regarding Timothy to the saints in Rome: *“Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you”* (Romans 16:21). Strong’s defines that term translated “workfellow” [συνεργός] as: “a co-laborer, that is, coadjutor: - companion in labour, (fellow-) helper (-labourer, -worker), labourer together with, workfellow” (# 4904).

Once Timothy arrived in Thessalonica, the expectation was that he would establish the brethren concerning their faith. The word that is translated “establish” [στηρίζω] is defined as: “To set fast, that is, (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain

direction, or (figuratively) to confirm: - fix, (e-) stablish, stedfastly set, strengthen” (Strong’s # 4741). It is the same word translated “strengthen” in an instruction for Peter to “*strengthen thy brethren*” (Luke 22:31-32). Later in this chapter of Thessalonians, it is stated that the Lord would make them increase, abound in love, establish their hearts, etc. (I Thessalonians 3:11-13; cf. II Thessalonians 2:13-3:3). When we put all of that together, we see such was done through Timothy coming to Thessalonica.

Timothy would also come to comfort the brethren in Thessalonica. In part, this was needful so that the saints in Thessalonica would not fall due to the suffering of Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. We will consider more on that shortly. There is more to their need of being comforted that is later revealed in this letter. For example, there was some confusion regarding what will happen when the Lord returns (I Thessalonians 4:13). Once clarifications were made (I Thessalonians 4:14-17), this was written: “*Wherefore comfort one another with these words*” (I Thessalonians 4:18). After further instructions (I Thessalonians 5:1-10), this was written: “*Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do*” (I Thessalonians 5:11). From that, we can deduce that these brethren needed to be comforted from within and without the local body for at least a couple of reasons. Having faithful teachers certainly can help with that (Colossians 4:7-8; 4:11). The Scriptures are also a source of comfort (Romans 15:4). Just remember, they did not have all of the Scriptures in their hands as of yet as they were not all written. Furthermore, what was written was not widely published or distributed. That brings us back to this context and why they needed established and comforted.

These brethren were dependent heavily upon Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus to teach them. These three brothers could not be in all places at all times. As an Apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul had a much greater work and concern than just one congregation (Mark 16:14-20, Acts 9:1-15, and II Corinthians 11:28). Since the brethren in Thessalonica knew what Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were facing there was reason for concern. Think about at least one reason for concern among the saints in Thessalonica. What if Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were all killed? Who would teach them? Who could pick up where Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus left off? While we could reason that the Lord would send another Apostle, how soon would that be? Would the relationship be the same?

We cannot relate to the stress the saints in Thessalonica faced. If faithful teachers of the word of God today were to die, everyone still has the Scriptures readily accessible. Sure, having faithful teachers of the word of God is very helpful especially to those who are unlearned (Acts 8:30-38). However, it is the Scriptures that make us wise unto salvation and fully equip us to do all good works (II Timothy 3:15-17). Even without a teacher you can search, read, and understand the Scriptures on your own to continue in the faith (John 5:39, Acts 17:10-11, and Ephesians 3:1-11). You have all the

revelation of God. They did not. Be thankful that you have an advantage in having the full revelation of God today.

**I Thessalonians 3:4-5** - *“For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain”* (I Thessalonians 3:4-5). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were concerned that the saints in Thessalonica would be moved by the sufferings they (Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus) were facing (I Thessalonians 3:3).

Knowing that brethren are suffering or are going to suffer rightfully impacts the faithful (John 11:33, Romans 12:15, and I Corinthians 12:26). Consider this text: *“And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done”* (Acts 21:8-14).

Both letters to the saints in Thessalonica are accredited to Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus (I Thessalonians 1:1 and II Thessalonians 1:1). However, the language in verse five singles out Paul in this portion of this letter. Paul wrote, *“when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith...”* We know from what we have seen earlier in this chapter that Timothy was sent to know the state of the saints in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 3:2). Paul would have been the one to send him (cf. Acts 19:21-22 and I Corinthians 4:17). Prior to this, it is most often the language of “we” (I Thessalonians 1:2; 1:5; 1:8-9; 2:2; 2:4-11; 2:13; 2:17; 3:1; 3:3-4). After this verse both letters will continue with “we” (I Thessalonians 3:6-10; 3:12; 4:1-2; 4:6; 4:10-11; 4:15; 5:12; 5:14 and II Thessalonians 1:3-4; 1:11; 2:1; 2:13; 3:2; 3:4; 3:6-12). Having said that, we will see the occasional “I” in these letters (I Thessalonians 4:9; 4:13; 5:1, 5:23; 5:27 and II Thessalonians 2:5; 3:17). So, we can deduce from this that there was a main penmen of these two letters. Paul was, as moved by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:1-13), the main penman of the letters to the saints in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 2:18 and II Thessalonians 3:17). So, we can say Paul wrote these two epistles. However, we can also say all three wrote these letters because that is stated too.

Paul sent Timothy to know the faith of the saints in Thessalonica. The Greek word that is translated “faith” in this verse is “πίστις” (Strong’s # 4102). That word appears over two hundred times in the New Testament. Strong’s definition of that term is: “Persuasion, that is, credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly constancy in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself: - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.” Here is a question for us to consider. How would Timothy be able to know their faith? Well, faith is visible when one inspects the actions and fruit of another person (Matthew 7:15-20 and James 2:14-26). We can see this clearly when you study through the history of people of faith (Hebrews 11:1-40).

When we see Paul’s concern that “the tempter” would tempt them, we do not have to wonder who Paul was talking about. Notice: *“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread”* (Matthew 4:1-3). If the definite article “the” was not present, this would be a more obscure passage. For, temptation [being tested; proved; examined], did not just come through Satan (Matthew 16:1, Matthew 19:3, Matthew 22:15-22, Luke 11:16, John 8:1-6, Acts 15:1-10, II Corinthians 13:5, Hebrews 3:9, etc.). Each of the passages I just cited have the same Greek word [πειράζω] (Strong’s # 3985) that is translated “tempter” AND “tempted” in I Thessalonians 3:5.

Had the saints in Thessalonica fallen away, the work of Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus would have felt to them to have been in vain. As an evangelist I understand that feeling all too well. When faithful men pour all of their being into teaching lost souls and that person obeys the Gospel only to later turn from the faith, it feels like a huge waste of time. The Galatians for example were soon removed from the Gospel of Christ unto a perverted message (Galatians 1:1-7). In that letter, Paul wrote: *“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain”* (Galatians 4:9-11). To the saints in Philippi, Paul wrote: *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain”* (Philippians 2:14-16). If we fail, God of course is hurt (Genesis 6:5-6). However, so are those that taught us. Remember that! Don’t make the work done to help you spiritually seem to be in vain.

**I Thessalonians 3:6-8** - In our previous article, we discussed Paul's concern for the brethren in Thessalonica. We looked forward in the text to him sending Timothy to find out how the brethren were doing. Now, we find out about Timothy's report. Notice: *"But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord"* (I Thessalonians 3:6-8).

Timothy brought "good tidings" back to Paul and Silvanus. That phrase is also translated as preaching the Gospel, preaching, and similar wording related to preaching (Matthew 11:5, Luke 3:18, Luke 4:18, Luke 4:43, Luke 7:22, Luke 9:6, Luke 16:16, Luke 20:1, Acts 5:42, Acts 8:4, Acts 8:12, Acts 8:25, Acts 8:35, Acts 8:40, Acts 10:36, Acts 11:20, Acts 14:7, Acts 14:15, Acts 14:21, Acts 15:35, Acts 16:10, Acts 17:18, Romans 1:15, Romans 10:15, Romans 15:20, I Corinthians 1:17, I Corinthians 9:16, I Corinthians 9:18, I Corinthians 15:1-2, II Corinthians 10:16, II Corinthians 11:7, Galatians 1:8-9, Galatians 1:11, etc.). So, when Timothy brings back "good tidings" it was similar to the preaching of the soul saving message of God's word. Think about that. Think about why that wording was used. Think about how spiritually beneficial it was to Paul and Silvanus to hear good news from Timothy about the saints in Thessalonica. Solomon wrote: *"The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat... As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country"* (Proverbs 15:30 and Proverbs 25:25).

The good report from Timothy was concerning the faith and charity [love] of the saints in Thessalonica. In the second epistle to the saints in Thessalonica this was written: *"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure"* (II Thessalonians 1:3-4). Faith and love are tied together (I Corinthians 13:1-13 and II Timothy 2:22). Think about what Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia and the saints in Colosse: *"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love... Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints"* (Galatians 5:6 and Colossians 1:4). So, Timothy's report indicated good things in Thessalonica.

Timothy's report also included the fact that the saints in Thessalonica had a good recollection of Paul and Silvanus. They desired to see these two brothers as much as Paul and Silvanus desired to see them. We know that Paul and Silvanus had a great desire to see these brethren (I Thessalonians 2:17). So, it is good for them to see that feeling reciprocated. This was not always the case for Paul. Do you recall from your

studies how the Corinthians treated Paul? When you read the letters to the saints in Corinth you find that there were brethren that cared for Paul (II Corinthians 7:6-7). However, not all of them. Notice: *“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved”* (II Corinthians 12:15).

The report from Timothy comforted Paul and Silvanus. Paul was emotionally invested in those he taught. To the Corinthians he wrote this: *“But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you”* (II Corinthians 2:1-4).

All too often the only measuring stick of brethren is whether or not a teacher teaches the truth. Of course, that is of great importance (Ephesians 5:6-11). However, there is more to measuring faithful teachers of God’s word. What about his conduct, his love, his faith, his purity, etc. (I Timothy 4:12-16)? How about his emotional investment in those he is teaching? Will he care if that person or group of people fail? Jesus was emotionally invested. Think about what Jesus did as He looked upon the city of Jerusalem: *“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation”* (Luke 19:41-44).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were invested in the saints in Thessalonica. Such is made clear in how their being alive was tied to whether or not their brethren stood fast in the Lord (cf. Philippians 1:27). Being a preacher of God’s word has to be an unselfish service. All the energy and emotion involved has to be towards the salvation of others far beyond one’s own well-being. Think about this: *“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all”* (Philippians 2:17). The teacher’s life is all about others. Evangelists must be willing to die in service to those he is teaching. It even goes beyond the physical. Remember, the soul of the teacher is at stake too (I Thessalonians 2:7-8; cf. James 3:1). Therefore, a teacher is very much alive when his students are standing fast!

## I Thessalonians 3:9-10 -

*“For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith”* (I Thessalonians 3:9-10)? Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were always thankful for their brethren in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 1:1-3 and I Thessalonians 2:13). So, why did they have this question about what thanks they could render to God again for the Thessalonians?

The idea being conveyed in this context is that there is no thanksgiving that is sufficient in comparison to the joy that the Thessalonians had brought to Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. Remember what we read in chapter two: *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy”* (I Thessalonians 2:19-20). For those teaching the Gospel, our purpose in this life is found in those we teach. That was pointed out in one of the verses we covered in our last article (I Thessalonians 3:8). Think carefully about the following: *“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men... Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation... For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again” (II Corinthians 3:1-2, II Corinthians 7:2-4, and Philippians 1:21-26).*

The brethren in Thessalonica were a source of joy for Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. They joyed before God for their sakes. Think about what that means. The phrase “we joy” is translated from the Greek word “χαίρω.” One definition of that term is this: “To be full of ‘cheer’, that is, calmly happy or well off; impersonal especially as a salutation (on meeting or parting), be well: - farewell, be glad, God speed, greeting, hail, joy (-fully), rejoice” (Strong’s # 5463). When considering the wording it shows the depth of joy Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus had over their brethren in Thessalonica. It is similar to what Jesus said about Abraham looking forward to His [Jesus] day. Take thought on this: *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”* (John 8:56).

They (Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus) prayed night and day, with thanksgiving, that they might see the faces of their brethren in Thessalonica. I am going to hold off on addressing why they prayed to God for that. We will address God's role in their coming to Thessalonica more in depth when we look at verse eleven in our next article. God did have a role in where men went to preach and teach. To the saints in Rome, Paul wrote: *"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed"* (Romans 15:30-32). Why didn't they just keep writing letters? Why was it so important to come to Thessalonica in person? They already had a report from Timothy (I Thessalonians 3:5-6). Wasn't that enough? Obviously, it was not enough to just hear about them. They had a great desire to see the saints in Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 2:17).

Writing is a good way to teach. However, it is far inferior to teaching in person. Notice what was written in second and third John: *"Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full... I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name"* (II John 1:12 and III John 1:13-14).

The reason Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wanted to see the saints in Thessalonica was to perfect that which was lacking in their faith. Remember, the New Testament writings were not complete at this time. That is obvious as this is the first letter of two to this congregation besides the letters written afterward. Congregations did share the epistles that were written to them (Colossians 4:16). However, this is still in the age of miracles wherein things were not completely revealed as of yet. So, they only had partial knowledge at that period of time (I Corinthians 13:8-13). The word translated "might perfect" [καταρτίζω] means: "To complete thoroughly, that is, repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust: - fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect (-ly join together), prepare, restore" (Strong's # 2675).

Growing in knowledge is significant for all Christians (II Peter 3:18). It was much more difficult when all things were not revealed and that which was revealed was not easily obtainable. What was lacking though was not just knowledge. Their lack was in their faith. However, the two are tied together. Faith comes through the word of God and teachers are a significant part in that process (Romans 10:14-17). So, these brethren wanted to complete that which lacked (cf. Colossians 1:27-28). That needed to be in person.



**I Thessalonians 3:11-13** - *“Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 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”* (I Thessalonians 3:11-13). These great passages give us insight into the role of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ in the work of teaching in the first century. That included the fact that God was behind where men went to teach (I Corinthians 4:19; 16:7).

How did the Lord direct Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus unto the Thessalonians? Fortunately, there is a clear context in the New Testament that shows us how that process worked. Notice: *“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them”* (Acts 16:1-10). As you can see from the example above, the Holy Spirit directed the Apostles where to go as well as who they were supposed to teach (cf. Acts 11:1-14).

Once Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus arrived in Thessalonica the Lord would work through them to help the Thessalonians increase and abound in love. In fact, even before they came, they began the teaching process in this same letter. Notice: *“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more”* (I Thessalonians 4:9-10). When you take a look at the second letter written to the saints in Thessalonica, you find that they did grow in their love toward one another (II Thessalonians 1:3).

Christians need to grow in love toward one another (II Peter 1:3-11). One of the ways the world can see Christ in us is in how we love one another (John 13:34-35). There are times wherein we are presented with clear opportunities to show our love

toward one another (Proverbs 27:5-6, Romans 16:3-4 [cf. John 15:12-13], Hebrews 10:24, I John 3:14-18, etc.). However, brotherly love is not just something that should be shown when occasions arise. Brotherly love is to be continual (Hebrews 13:1).

The love that these brethren were to grow in was not just towards brethren. They were to grow in their love towards “all” as well. “Love thy neighbor” has been taught since the days of the Law of Moses (Leviticus 19:18). Jesus taught to “love thy neighbor” (Matthew 22:37-40) and so it was taught after He departed this world too (Romans 13:9-10 and James 2:8-13). For those that question if “thy neighbor” includes someone of the world that you do not know, they should read the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were able to use themselves as examples of abounding in love. Certainly, teachers of the Gospel should be and must be good examples that can be followed by others (I Corinthians 4:16, I Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, II Thessalonians 3:7-9, and I Timothy 4:12-16). This principle is not just true for those teaching the Gospel. All Christians need to be good examples that can be followed (Matthew 5:14-16, Philippians 2:14-16, Titus 2:2-8, and I Peter 3:1-6).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were going to be sent by God to Thessalonica to the end that they would “stablish” the hearts of the saints in Thessalonica. The word translated “stablish” [στηρίζω] is defined as: “To set fast, that is, (literally) to turn resolutely in a certain direction, or (figuratively) to confirm: - fix, (e-) stablish, stedfastly set, strengthen” (Strong’s # 4741). Timothy had already come for that purpose (I Thessalonians 3:2). The need for these three to come together showed there was still work to do.

The goal was for the saints in Thessalonica to be unblameable when Jesus returns with His angels (Colossians 1:12-23 and II Thessalonians 1:7-10). We all need to be in such a state when Jesus returns the second time (II Peter 3:9-14). We have to be stedfast enough in the faith to be holy even as God is holy (I Peter 1:13-16). In Christ Jesus, we are to be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:3-4). Now come back to an earlier point for a moment. Remember that Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus were citing themselves as examples for the brethren in Thessalonica to follow. Do you recall what they said in the second chapter of this letter? Notice: “*Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe*” (I Thessalonians 2:10). They lived in a manner in which others could see it was possible to be holy and unblameable!