



STANDING FAST IN THE LORD

Thank God for All Who Stand Fast in Him!

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Seeing others stand fast in the Lord is a comfort and joy to the soul (6-10).

- *Seeing faith stand fast brings comfort in affliction and distress (7-8).*
- *Seeing faith stand fast brings joy and thanksgiving to the Lord (9).*

Timothy went to Thessalonica to check on the church there, and when he came back to Paul, his report was an encouragement to Paul's heart in the midst of the hard work and hardship in Paul's work for the Lord. Timothy's report first and foremost was a report that the church in Thessalonica was standing fast in their faith in the Lord. Additionally, they were also remaining strong in their love for one another and for Paul and his companions. Just as Paul longed to see them, they longed to see Paul. This report was an encouragement to Paul! In fact, the report of the faith of the Thessalonian church brought comfort to Paul's heart that had experienced affliction and distress. The news of their continued faith allowed Paul to continue to live without the burden of wondering if they were still standing firm. This brought joy to Paul's heart that poured out in praise and thanksgiving to God! All of this stirred Paul's heart even more to see the Thessalonians face-to-face in order to continue to encourage and to equip them in the faith.

1. Take time to think about others you've seen stand fast in the Lord through tough times and trials in their lives. Discuss.
2. How does seeing others stand fast in the Lord bring comfort and joy to you? Share.
3. How can the faith of others bring comfort when you are going through times of affliction and distress? Discuss. Have you ever experienced this in a specific way that you can remember? If so, share.
4. How can the faith of others bring joy to your heart and thanksgiving to God? Take time to focus on others in your group. Whose faith is an encouragement to you right now? Share, and then take time in your group to allow people to pray, thanking God for faith that stands firm and for the comfort and joy that results from seeing that kind of faith.

Pray for one another to continue to stand fast in living for the Lord (11-13).

- *Pray for God to increase our love for one another and for all (12).*
- *Pray for God to establish our hearts blameless in holiness (13).*
- *Pray for the Lord's return to be a motivation for standing fast today (13).*

Paul ended this part of his letter with a prayer for the Thessalonian church. The main purpose of the prayer was to ask the Lord to continue to help the Thessalonians stand fast in living for him, but there were some important details in Paul's prayer related to the fundamental characteristics of a life that's standing fast in the faith. One of those characteristics is an ever growing love for one another and for all. Paul prayed for this, and this characteristic is only second to the first Great Commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Second, Paul pointed to the characteristics of a heart that's blameless in holiness. What a powerful characteristic that's only possible by God's grace and presence and is one of the key reflections of his character. Paul is simply pointing to a life that is truly and consistently living in the Spirit, imitating the God of our faith. A heart that is blameless is a heart that is surrendered in worship to live in the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit, and submitted to the direction and purpose of the Spirit. This is all connected to Paul's reminder to the Thessalonians that Jesus Christ is coming again! As his



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church, we must live in light of his return, motivated to stand firm in the faith today so that we may be found ready and awake when Jesus Christ returns.

1. For the remainder of this series through the letters to the Thessalonians, will your group commit to pray for each other to stand fast in living for the Lord? How can you do this weekly in your small group time together?
2. What does it look like to grow in loving one another? Is your heart moving in the right direction in your love for your church family? What about for all? How do we love other believers in other churches as well as the lost world around us?
3. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies on blameless and holiness in verse 13. What is Paul saying? What does it mean to be blameless in holiness? Are you praying for this for one another? What does this look like in your heart? Share, and pray for one another.
4. Is the Lord's return something you think about? Does it motivate the way you worship and live for the Lord everyday? If not, why not? How can your group help one another stay motivated by the Lord's return?