

1 Thessalonians 3:4 – 4:1

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 ⁴For when we were with you, we kept telling you
2 beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has
3 come to pass, and just as you know. ⁵For this reason, when I
4 could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for
5 fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our
6 labor would be in vain.

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

17 ¹¹Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus,
18 direct our way to you, ¹²and may the Lord make you
19 increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as
20 we do for you, ¹³so that he may establish your hearts
21 blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the
22 coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

23 **4** Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord
24 Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk
25 and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more
26 and more.

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Underline the negative concerns or fears Paul expresses.
- Circle the positive hopes or expectations Paul mentions.
- Other observations?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- Compare v. 4-5 and v. 6-7. What makes the difference in Paul's outlook?
- How would you describe Paul's desire to see how others are doing? Healthy interest? Overly dependent? High expectations? Demanding?
- How does this compare with what we saw of Paul's reactions in his letter to the Galatians?
- If you were in the church in Thessalonica, how would you have reacted to this letter?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What has been your experience of the hope or expectations that others have for you?
- What has been your experience in having hope or expectations for others?

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)