

11-12 – To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Yeshua will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Yeshua Messiah.

To this end also we pray for you always, – Having emphasized in the previous verses that the believers in Thessalonica had demonstrated their genuine faith and salvation by their changed lives and consistent application of the means of grace, Paul now encourages them to maintain steadfast lives of faith and obedience to the Lord.

He therefore emphasizes that he, along with his colleagues, consistently lift up in prayer the believing community in Thessalonica. Here, once again, we see that the common perspective presented to us in the Scriptures is that those who are called by God to be overseers and teachers in the local assembly of believers must commit themselves to do all in their power to: (1) teach the truth of God's word, (2) help those who are being taught, to apply it to their own lives, (3) remaining diligent in prayer for those they shepherd, and (4) to do so for God's glory, not for their own self-aggrandizement.

...that our God will count you worthy of your calling, – Here we see what ought to characterize all who are leaders and teachers in a given community of faith, i.e., doing the work God has given them to do, not for their own glory but fully for the glory of God. It ought to be the primary goal of leaders and teachers in the ekklesia to do the work God has given them in order that those they lead and teach would grow in their faith and thus be "worthy" children in God's family, living lives that give Him the glory He deserves.

We must remember what the previous verses teach us regarding the situation of the believing community in Thessalonica. It is clear that there was much persecution and affliction placed upon those who openly confessed Yeshua to be the true Messiah and who were living in accordance with His teachings and those of His Apostles. Yet in spite of the persecution they were receiving, they were persevering in their faith, which is one of the true marks of being born again unto eternal life.

Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (Matt 24:12-13)

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. (Rom 2:5–7)

... *count you worthy of your calling* – In this phrase, the pronoun “you” (ὁμᾶς, *humas*) is put first in the phrase, being placed before the verb “to be worthy” (ἀξιόω, *axiao*), which gives it emphasis. By this, the Apostle is adding additional emphasis upon the fact that the believing community in Thessalonica was indeed living out their faith in Yeshua and it is this that Paul wants to emphasize, namely, that having one’s life aligned with the truth of God is the only true and enduring mark of genuinely being born again unto eternal life.

The English “count worthy” actually seeks to translate the single word ἀξιόω *axiao*, but there is a question whether in this context the word should be understood as “consider worthy” or “make worthy.” The first option (“consider worthy”) seems to fit well in other texts where this verb is found,¹ yet in our text, the second option fits better since the immediate context stresses the sovereign role of God in saving sinners. Marshall notes:

God cannot deem worthy any whom He himself has not made worthy by His action rather than by their good works; hence the force of the verb is tantamount to “make worthy.”²

Thus, to be “counted worthy of your calling” means to progress in one’s life of faith in accordance with God’s will and by His grace and power. That this is a sure inevitability for all who are truly born again is clear from the Scriptures.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13–14)

1 1Tim 5:17; Heb 3:3; 10:29; Lk 7:7, cf. *BDAG*, p. 523

2 Marshall, I. H., *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (New Century Bible Commentary: Eerdmans, 1983, p. 182)

Who will separate us from the love of Messiah? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written,

FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH
ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP
TO BE SLAUGHTERED.

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord. (Rom 8:35-37)

Thus, all who are chosen and truly born again by the gift of faith in Yeshua, will be enabled and strengthened by God's power, the intercession of Yeshua, and the indwelling Ruach, to persevere in their faith unto eternal life. This, of course, is truly a cooperative effort, the believer being strengthened and endowed with the power of the Ruach to submit to the Almighty, to grow in faith and spiritual strength in order to persevere unto eternal life. This is precisely what Paul emphasizes in the next phrase of our verse.

...and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power – Paul was praying for the believers in Thessalonica in these two general areas: one's inner desires and one's engagement in living out one's faith with the power to resist and defeat the desires of the sinful flesh as well as the draw of the fallen world.

Here, once again, we see Paul teaching us that the true believer in Yeshua has undergone a radical change. While the sinful flesh still remains, the child of God has been granted the desire and ability to overcome the sinful desires of the flesh and willingly to submit to the urgings of the Ruach and thereby to be a living witness of God's love, grace, and power to transform.

In writing "fulfill every desire for goodness," Paul emphasizes several realities which take place in every true believer in Yeshua. First is a change of perspective by which the believer now desires to please the Lord and thus to fight against and subdue the pull of the sinful flesh. This, of course, requires growing in one's understanding of what does and does not please the Lord, which comes only by the study and application of the Scriptures, fellowship with other believers, and a life marked by regular prayer. This, of course, is a process which is why regular fellowship in a community of faith is essential. For it is in one's regular fellowship in a believing community that one is encouraged and enabled to grow in one's faith, and in doing so, to serve and help others as the Lord commands.

Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the Torah of Messiah. (Gal 6:2)

... *and the work of faith with power* – Here it seems clear that Paul is teaching that “the work of faith” and “with power” relate specifically to the ongoing work of the Ruach in the life of every believer. For saving faith is a gift of God.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph 2:8-9)

Briefly, the issue in this text from Ephesians is to what the word “that” in the phrase “and that not of yourselves” applies. What is “not of yourselves?” Generally demonstratives (such as the word “that” τοῦτο, *touto*) usually agree in gender with the word it is describing, but in the Ephesians text, both “grace” (χάρις, *xaris*) and “faith” (πίστις, *pistis*) are feminine nouns, and the demonstrative “that” is neuter. However, the best explanation for Paul’s words here is that the neuter demonstrative can be used to refer back to an entire clause.¹ Thus he states in this inspired text that faith is, indeed, a gift from God.

Thus, it is by submitting to the leading of the Ruach that believers are empowered to accomplish that which the Lord is leading them to accomplish.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

Yet it is obvious that obedience to the leading of the Ruach will also result in treasuring the Scriptures, having the word of God in our hearts and minds, memorizing scripture in order to have it readily available, and to live by its precepts, for this is the will of God. Only when our lives are patterned after the eternal and applicable word of God will we be enabled, by the Ruach, to live out the truths of God’s inspired word, and this will inevitably include being a witness to others of God’s love, saving grace, and eternal kingship.

Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You. (Ps 119:11)

1 See Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, pp. 334-35.

... so that the name of our Lord Yeshua will be glorified in you, and you in Him, – Here, Paul gives us the ultimate and final purpose for God’s gracious gift of salvation, namely, that He would be glorified, Father, Son, and Spirit. For in saving a host of people no one can number, some from every people group, God will be fully seen as the omnipotent, loving, and holy Savior. As John writes in Revelation:

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:9-10)

In this text we see, once again, that the Trinity, while surely composed of “Father, Son and Ruach,” may also be known as infinitely one. Thus, such infinite unity is here describe by Paul by including the name “Lord” (κύριος, *kurios*) with “Yeshua” (Ἰησοῦ, *Iēsou*), showing unity of the Father and Son. Moreover, in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, he clearly teaches that Father, Son, and Spirit are one God, as does Matthew in his Gospel.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:4-6)

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name [*singular*] of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:19–20)

It may be that Paul, who was no doubt familiar with the Septuagint translation of the Tanach, had Is 66:5 from the Lxx in mind when he penned these words.

Hear the words of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; speak ye, our brethren, to them that hate you and abominate you, that the name of the Lord may be glorified, and may appear their joy; but they shall be ashamed. (Is 66:5 -Lxx-Brenton translation)

If this is the case, then for Paul to add the name Yeshua (Ἰησοῦ), “our Lord Yeshua,” to the text of Isaiah, would be yet another clear example

of the early apostolic teaching of the Trinity.

...according to the grace of our God and the Lord Yeshua Messiah. – Here, once again, we see clearly the scriptural teaching that eternal salvation is a gift of God's grace and not something that a sinner can "earn" or in some way acquire on their own strength or ability. This truth is emphasized by the fact that the "grace" (χάρις, *xaris*) of God is the very "fountain" from which God's forgiveness flows, purchased by the price of Yeshua's infinite sacrifice.

Since "grace," by the very meaning of the word, is something that cannot be won or purchased, but is as its primary reality, a "gift," this highlights the fact that when a sinner gains right-standing with God, it is a entirely the work of the Almighty and not something earned or purchased by the sinner.