



## COMFORT AND COMPASSION

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(Isaiah 61:2)



hy me . . . why did this happen to me?"  
Has anyone gotten all the way through life without asking that question at least once or twice? (For some of us, maybe it's twice a day!)

"Why me? Why us? Why did two young boys get taken from our family?" I asked all those questions quietly in my heart for two years. I even continued to go out to speak and share comfort and hope with other parents. I wanted to believe that life would get better.

Looking back, I can see how Romans 8:28 and other verses that were quoted to me *are* all true. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Yes, it's true. God *is* faithful. God does work all things together for good. Unfortunately, the timing of these reminders was all wrong. Nice little plastic, spiritual phrases do not help people unlock their grief. It is better just to put your arm around a grieving person and say, "I love you. . . . God loves you." Beyond that, it might be best just to shove a sock in your mouth and keep quiet. When grief is the freshest, words should be the fewest.

### HELPING OURSELVES

There comes a time in each of our lives when trouble and difficulties seem to gang up on us. When this happens—when life gets hard—what is the creative way to handle things?

1. We must not try to do it all ourselves. We must not struggle and fret. Instead, we should do all we can about the situation and then put everything into God's hands, trusting Him. We can depend on God. He will not fail us. We need to "let go and let God."

2. We need to pray for guidance and believe that direction is being given to us. We must believe that this guidance can be trusted. We need to depend on it, because it will not fail us.

3. We need to pray for and practice a calm attitude. Disturbing situations will remain disturbing as long as we are disturbed. But when we become peaceful, conditions will begin to iron themselves out.

4. We need to saturate our lives with faith that the situation will turn out right. We should say aloud, every day, several times. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You" (Is. 26:3), and "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Is. 30:15).

5. We need to remind ourselves of one great truth: Hard experiences will pass away. They will yield. They can be changed with God's help.

6. We must always look for the light in the darkness. That light is the love of God. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105).

7. We must ask the Lord to release our own creativity, ingenuity, strength, and wisdom so we can handle the problem successfully.

8. We must never forget that God loves us. He wants to help us. We must turn to Him and gratefully accept His help.

9. We need to remember that all human beings experience troubles similar to our own. We are not alone in our struggles.

10. We must hold on to this great promise "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). God will

see us through, and a brighter day will dawn for us.

### **HELPING OTHERS**

As Christians, we are Christ's bride, His church. When we show compassion in His name, we demonstrate His love to others. These kindnesses that we show to others don't have to be daring or costly. An encouraging word—or simply an attitude of joy—can often make all the difference to people who have given up hope. A little smile can brighten their day. And while we are smiling, we might as well go one step further and share a chuckle or two.

C. S. Lewis said that the best argument for Christianity is Christians: their joy, their certainty, and their completeness. Lewis also warned, however, that Christians can also be the strongest argument against Christianity when they are somber and joyless, or self-righteous and smug, or narrow and repressive. Then, said Lewis, Christianity "dies a thousand deaths." Let's resolve to be happy people, angels of joy and missionaries of mercy wherever we go today—and every day!

### **OUR GIFT TO OTHERS**

One day, we will approach heaven empty-handed, with all our earthly goals littering the roadway behind us. We'll have nothing to show for our toil on earth except the life we have lived for God and the investment we have made in others by our compassion. While we can take nothing with us to heaven, we can leave a lot of important things behind that will encourage and comfort our friends and loved ones. What we really take with us to heaven is the lives we touched for God. Above all, we can pass on the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. It's something we don't deserve and can't buy at any price. It's God's gift to us by faith. And we can share it with others if we

have the love and compassion it takes to do so.

### **FURTHER MEDITATION:**

Other passages to study about the issue of compassion include:

- Psalms 23:4; 145:8
- Isaiah 40:1, 2, 27-31
- Lamentations 3:22, 23
- Micah 6:8
- Matthew 9:36
- 2 Timothy 1:12; 4:18
- Jude 24, 25

## GREETING

**1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## COMFORT IN SUFFERING

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup>For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. <sup>6</sup>Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation. <sup>7</sup>And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also *you will partake* of the consolation.

## DELIVERED FROM SUFFERING

<sup>8</sup>For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure,

above strength, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup>Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup>who delivered us from so great a death, and does<sup>a</sup> deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, <sup>11</sup>you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our<sup>a</sup> behalf for the gift *granted* to us through many.

## PAUL'S SINCERITY

<sup>12</sup>For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. <sup>13</sup>For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end <sup>14</sup>(as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

## SPARING THE CHURCH

<sup>15</sup>And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit— <sup>16</sup>to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you,

1:10 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *shall*. 1:11 <sup>a</sup>M-Text reads *your behalf*.



Compassion

## KEY PASSAGE

## SHARED COMFORT

(1:3-5)

In times of trouble and difficulty, people long for comfort. The church in Corinth was facing severe problems. Clearly, those problems needed to be handled, but the "God of all comfort" would give needed comfort and encouragement.

God never wastes a wound. Through them, we learn the ability to empathize with others who suffer, and we learn firsthand the comforting power of God. Then we can come alongside the sufferer, knowing exactly what they need. We can also assure them of God's comfort, for we have experienced it ourselves. God comforts us so that "we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." What a glorious picture of the body of believers, comforting one another as difficult times arise! When facing difficulty, we should trust God and rest in His compassionate arms. Then we will be ready to offer compassion to those in need.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about compassion on pages 950, 951. See also the personality profile of the Good Samaritan on page 1334.

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spirits are subject to you, but rather<sup>a</sup> rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

#### JESUS REJOICES IN THE SPIRIT

<sup>21</sup>In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>22</sup>All<sup>a</sup> things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

<sup>23</sup>Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; <sup>24</sup>for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see,

and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."

#### THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

<sup>25</sup>And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup>He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

<sup>27</sup>So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,'<sup>a</sup> and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"<sup>b</sup>

10:20 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text and M-Text omit *rather*.

10:22 <sup>a</sup>M-Text reads *And turning to the disciples*

*He said, "All . . ."* 10:27 <sup>a</sup>Deuteronomy 6:5

<sup>b</sup>Leviticus 19:18



#### PERSONALITY PROFILE

### THE GOOD SAMARITAN: ABOVE AND BEYOND

(LUKE 10:33)

Jesus had a pointed way of upsetting the prejudicial beliefs of His day. He had been speaking to a lawyer about eternal life and about obeying God's law. The lawyer understood that all of God's law boiled down to loving God and loving one's neighbor. But that led the lawyer to another question: "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29).

Jesus responded with a parable that included a Jewish man, a Samaritan man, and two Jewish religious leaders (a priest and a Levite). Jews despised Samaritans as a half-breed race, since the Samaritans were descended from Jews who had intermarried with foreigners.

The Jewish man was attacked by thieves. As he lay on the roadside dying, two Jewish religious leaders walked right by. Perhaps they were concerned about becoming unclean according to the law; perhaps they were in a hurry. In any case, they left him to die. Along came a despised Samaritan. Given the state of race relations and the precarious situation, he could have felt justified in walking by. Instead, he showed true compassion when the Jewish religious leaders would not.

We easily show compassion on those we love, but compassion can be difficult to offer to strangers or to people against whom we might feel a trace of prejudice. It can be easy to justify a lack of compassion—we are too busy, we don't want to risk helping, we don't want to give too much, we don't like "those" people. But Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question reveals that a neighbor is anyone of any race, creed, or social background; and a neighbor in need requires our compassion.

We can show compassion on others by releasing our agenda to help them. It may mean giving time or resources; it may mean going out on a limb. As we follow God's guidance, we can be wise in our compassion, doing what will really help others. The first step is to see every person as God's creation and to be willing to be available when a need arises. God will show us how to do the rest.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about compassion on pages 950, 951. See also the key passage note at 2 Corinthians 1:3–5 on page 1518.

And a small one a strong nation.  
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time."

#### THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION

**61** "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,

Because the LORD has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the  
brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the prison to *those*  
*who are bound*;

<sup>2</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the  
LORD,

And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all who mourn,

<sup>3</sup> To console those who mourn in  
Zion,

To give them beauty for ashes,  
The oil of joy for mourning,  
The garment of praise for the spirit of  
heaviness;

That they may be called trees of  
righteousness,

The planting of the LORD, that He may  
be glorified."

<sup>4</sup> And they shall rebuild the old ruins,  
They shall raise up the former  
desolations,  
And they shall repair the ruined cities,  
The desolations of many generations.  
<sup>5</sup> Strangers shall stand and feed your  
flocks,

And the sons of the foreigner  
*Shall be* your plowmen and your  
vinedressers.

<sup>6</sup> But you shall be named the priests of  
the LORD,  
They shall call you the servants of our  
God.

You shall eat the riches of the  
Gentiles,

And in their glory you shall boast.

<sup>7</sup> Instead of your shame *you shall have*  
*double honor*,

And *instead of confusion* they shall  
rejoice in their portion.

Therefore in their land they shall possess  
double;

Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

<sup>8</sup> "For I, the LORD, love justice;  
I hate robbery for burnt offering;  
I will direct their work in truth,



#### SOUL NOTE

**Compassion (61:1, 2)** Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would heal those with broken hearts and liberate spiritual captives and prisoners. God's chosen One would announce His grace to a desperate humanity as an expression of His compassion. From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus said that His purpose was to seek out lost sinners and restore them to a relationship with the Father (Luke 4:16-21). Jesus quoted Isaiah 61 to substantiate His claim to being the Messiah and to restate the purpose of His life and ministry. Jesus came to heal, teach, minister, and serve. His compassion reveals the character of God. **Topic: Compassion**



#### SOUL NOTE

**Oil of Joy (61:3)** God's love and understanding reach out to those who are depressed and discouraged. He promises to give consolation, beauty in place of ashes, oil of joy in place of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness. The Bible recognizes the heaviness of depression. God's Word brings hope and encouragement to those who are weighed down, and God's people stand with those who struggle, to bring relief and restoration. God promises that He will bring restoration "that He may be glorified." **Topic: Depression**

the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city.

<sup>26</sup>And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. <sup>27</sup>Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

<sup>28</sup>These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; <sup>29</sup>in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; <sup>30</sup>in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons. All the persons were four thousand six hundred.

#### JEHOIACHIN RELEASED FROM PRISON

<sup>31</sup>Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach<sup>a</sup> king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. <sup>32</sup>And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon. <sup>33</sup>So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. <sup>34</sup>And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

52:31 <sup>a</sup>Or Awil-Marduk

#### SOUL NOTE



**A Ray of Hope (52:32)** If the Book of Jeremiah were a movie, the last four verses would be the scene that leaves the door open for a sequel—one with a happy ending. The compassion that Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon, showed to Jehoiachin (52:31, 32) symbolizes God's compassion for His people. Just as

Jehoiachin was restored to a position of power and cared for, the nations of Israel and Judah would be restored to their homeland and cared for by the Lord. God's holiness and justice should never be underestimated, but thankfully, neither should His compassion. God's compassion never fails. **Topic: Compassion**



the house of God,<sup>6</sup> to pray before the LORD, <sup>3</sup>and to ask the priests who were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and the prophets, saying, "Should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I have done for so many years?"

<sup>4</sup>Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, <sup>5</sup>"Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? <sup>6</sup>When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves? <sup>7</sup>Should you not have obeyed the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South<sup>a</sup> and the Lowland were inhabited?' "

#### DISOBEDIENCE RESULTED IN CAPTIVITY

<sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, <sup>9</sup>"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Execute true justice,  
Show mercy and compassion  
Everyone to his brother.

<sup>10</sup> Do not oppress the widow or the  
fatherless,  
The alien or the poor.  
Let none of you plan evil in his heart  
Against his brother.'

<sup>11</sup>"But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. <sup>12</sup>Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. <sup>13</sup>Therefore it happened, that just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out

and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts. <sup>14</sup>"But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate."

#### JERUSALEM, HOLY CITY OF THE FUTURE

<sup>8</sup> Again the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal;  
With great fervor I am zealous for her.'

<sup>3</sup>"Thus says the LORD:

'I will return to Zion,  
And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.  
Jerusalem shall be called the City of  
Truth,  
The Mountain of the LORD of hosts,  
The Holy Mountain.'

<sup>4</sup>"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Old men and old women shall again sit  
In the streets of Jerusalem,  
Each one with his staff in his hand  
Because of great age.  
<sup>5</sup> The streets of the city  
Shall be full of boys and girls  
Playing in its streets.'

<sup>6</sup>"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the  
remnant of this people in these  
days,

7:2 <sup>a</sup>Hebrew Bethel 7:7 <sup>a</sup>Hebrew Negev



#### SOUL NOTE

**Showing Compassion (7:8-10)** Although the Israelites had rebelled against God and had been exiled to Babylon, God had brought a small group of them back to Jerusalem. The exiles knew what it was like to experience God's compassion. Now, through Zechariah, God asked them to "show mercy and compassion" to each other. What did that mean? To look after widows, orphans, the poor, and those who were strangers in the land. All who have experienced God's mercy—the forgiveness Christ freely offers (Titus 3:4, 5)—need to show that same type of compassion to others. **Topic: Compassion**

plored *them* all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. <sup>34</sup>Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." <sup>35</sup>And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. <sup>36</sup>Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. <sup>37</sup>And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. <sup>38</sup>So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

#### SHIPWRECKED ON MALTA

<sup>39</sup>When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. <sup>40</sup>And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. <sup>41</sup>But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

<sup>42</sup>And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. <sup>43</sup>But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, <sup>44</sup>and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

#### PAUL'S MINISTRY ON MALTA

**28** Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was

called Malta. <sup>2</sup>And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. <sup>3</sup>But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. <sup>4</sup>So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live." <sup>5</sup>But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. <sup>6</sup>However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

<sup>7</sup>In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. <sup>8</sup>And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. <sup>9</sup>So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. <sup>10</sup>They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

#### ARRIVAL AT ROME

<sup>11</sup>After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. <sup>12</sup>And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. <sup>13</sup>From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, <sup>14</sup>where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we

#### SOUL NOTE



**The Power to Heal (28:7-10)** Even as a shipwrecked prisoner, Paul continued to minister to others. On the island of Malta, many were affected by the gospel, including Publius's father, who was healed from his illness. Even though Paul had just experienced several difficult weeks at sea and then a frightening shipwreck, he was never too self-focused to see a need and seek to meet it. He was always willing to share the message of the Good News with anyone he met. Paul's compassion on Publius changed his life. We never know what results our compassion might have on others.

**Topic: Compassion**



became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, <sup>15</sup>who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, <sup>16</sup>forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

#### LONGING TO SEE THEM

<sup>17</sup>But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. <sup>18</sup>Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. <sup>19</sup>For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? <sup>20</sup>For you are our glory and joy.

#### CONCERN FOR THEIR FAITH

**3** Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, <sup>2</sup>and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, <sup>3</sup>that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. <sup>4</sup>For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. <sup>5</sup>For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

#### ENCOURAGED BY TIMOTHY

<sup>6</sup>But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see you*—<sup>7</sup>therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. <sup>8</sup>For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

<sup>9</sup>For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup>night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

#### PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

<sup>11</sup>Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup>And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, <sup>13</sup>so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

#### PLEA FOR PURITY

**4** Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; <sup>2</sup>for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup>For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup>that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, <sup>5</sup>not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup>that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of



#### SOUL NOTE

**Encouraging Words (3:2)** Paul was so concerned for this young congregation that he sent Timothy to check out the situation, and to establish and encourage the believers in the faith. The church was being persecuted, and Paul wanted to make sure that they would hold on to the truth. When Christians are facing difficulties because of their faith, other believers should hold them up in prayer, offering words of compassion and encouragement as they seek to follow God. Whether it is a child with an unsympathetic teacher or a church in a persecuting country, we can pray for them and offer encouraging words. **Topic: Compassion**

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