

Today Apostle Paul teaches us about what Christians focus on in their lives in 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10. He teaches us that as we grow and mature in Faith, Love, and Hope, we can enjoy all the blessings and fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. So, I would like to share three things we need to grow and mature as God's children. Paul says in verses 2-3, "We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope."

The first thing in which we have to grow is Faith. The phrase "your work of faith" shows us that faith and works go together. Good works are the product of living faith. We can measure our faith by what we do. When we respond to God's grace by believing in Jesus Christ, we are saved. Then when we are saved, we love God so much that we want to serve Him for the rest of our lives.

Francis Beaumont expressed it, "Faith without works is like a bird without wings; though she may hop with her companions on earth, yet she will never fly with them to heaven." We have to grow in faith with good works.

We can find the second thing in Paul's statement, "labor of love." You can serve without loving, but you can't love others without serving. Some people serve because it's their job. If you go to a restaurant, a server will take your order and bring your food, not because he or she loves you. They are being paid to do it. You can serve without loving, but you can't love others without serving.

I love the lesson for children in our service. A few weeks ago, we learned that Jesus washed His disciples' feet. What do you think Jesus was trying to teach them by washing their feet? Jesus wants us to serve others and to think of others.

Jesus was showing His disciples how much He loved them and that they should serve others.

Like Jesus, sometimes we have to get our hands dirty when we show others the love of Christ. We may not be washing literally dirty feet. But look around us. There are a lot of people who need our care and touch. They need the refreshing, cleansing touch that we give them to show them the love of Jesus.

The third thing can be seen when Paul wrote about “steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Hope is the power to hold on when we want to quit. Many of us have pandemic fatigue. We feel exhaustion stemming from the effects of the coronavirus on our lives. It’s normal to feel burned out. However, we have hope in God. We know God works for us in the pandemic. We know we can overcome the coronavirus if we work together. So, it’s important not to give up but to work together to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Likewise, if you’ve been struggling for a long time with a problem, and you’re sick and tired of keeping on, you may be tempted to give up and quit, but don’t give up. Maybe God has given you a dream or a vision, and it hasn’t happened yet. You want to give up but don’t. Hang in there. Maybe you’ve been praying for something to happen for a long time, and God hasn’t answered your prayer, don’t give up. Keep on praying. Keep on trusting. You may be in a bad situation, and you don’t know how you’re going to make it. Hang in there and hang on. Don’t give up!

Paul assures us in Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” We are beloved by God, and God is holding us. I hope you and I grow and mature with our work of faith, labor of love and steadfastness of hope in Jesus Christ.

