

Troubles that Tempt and Expose

[1 Thessalonians 3:1-5](#)

Paul encourages the Thessalonians as they endure a crucible experience in their lives—one where their faith has an opportunity to be exercised, strengthened, and established. When we go through these life-changing experiences, our weaknesses are revealed, the gaps in our faith are exposed, and we are tested in ways that keep us from being shaken.

Application

1. There is a crucible experience in every season of our lives. When we turn to God in its midst and we choose to trust him in spite of our experience, we are never the same. What is a crucible experience you have been through in the past that turned you in a new direction and strengthened your faith? How might you be in one now, and what decisions do you need to make to respond well and establish your faith?
2. When an old sin or temptation whispers the lies of its comfort to us apart from the reality of its consequences, we have to decide in that moment if we will believe the promise of Jesus or the promise of sin. Every time we choose the promise of Jesus, our faith is strengthened. How have you experienced this? What are the lies, the old ways, that most consistently whisper to you? What are practical ways that you choose Jesus?
3. Who in your life is responsible for you in a way that you would you consider them “God’s coworker” (as Paul considered Timothy for the Thessalonians)? In what ways do they speak into your life to strengthen your faith, encourage you, and keep you from being shaken?
4. Have you grown up with or believed the transactional view of salvation? How does it compare to the ongoing and repentant faith that Paul is talking about in the Bible? Why is it important to trust in a person, Jesus, rather than in an event?

Key Points

- Weakness is woven into our frame.
- We are strengthened and established in the enduring faith in hardship, not only in the transaction of one prayer.
- Suffering and struggle in this life are certain, and we are fragile. Will you suffer with God or without him?
- Great leaders don't try to control the future; they equip by predicting the future in concern (e.g. parenting).

Scripture References

[1 Peter 4:1-2 \(ESV\)](#)

[1 Peter 5:10](#)

[Romans 1:11-12](#)