Grace Fellowship Church Series on 1 Thessalonians Rick Griffith

November 9, 1986 Message #5

NIV 30 minutes

**The Encourager**

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

**Introduction**

### If you're one of the lucky few you've been able to attend a performance of one of the Japanese schoolchildren who have been trained by the Suzuki method of learning to play violin. It is fascinating! It's amazing too--imagine seeing children as young as four, three and even two years old being taught how to play the violin--one of the most difficult musical instruments.

### How do the instructors do it? Well, the very first thing the children learn is a proper stance. And the second thing they learn--even before they pick up the violin--is how to take a bow. One instructor notes, "If the children just play the violin and stop, people may forget to show their appreciation. But when the children bow, the audience invariably applauds. And applause is the best motivator we've found to make children feel good about performing and want to do it well" [ENCOURAGEMENT everyone needs (Suzuki training)].

### Adults love applause too. Being affirmed makes us feel wonderful because for some reason we all need encouragement. This need is universal, no one is exempt, it's in our blood. I need encouragement and you need encouragement, so why don't we do it more often?

### I recently read of a congregation in Salem, Oregon, who decided to get serious about this idea of encouraging one another in the church… (Swindoll, *Strengthening Your Grip*, 48-49).

### When you think of Biblical characters who had this kind of encouraging spirit, who comes to mind? Barnabas is usually on the tip of my tongue, but he's not the only one. You see, Paul once was in a difficult situation needing to encourage the Thessalonian church but couldn't go in person--and there was no Barnabas to send. So he sent Timothy, another faithful traveling companion of the apostle. We'll take a look at Timothy in today's passage…

### But first, let's take a look at this man Timothy from the book of Acts. Who was he?

#### Acts 16:1-3 will give us some background on this man, so I invite you to turn there. Here we find Paul just beginning on his second missionary journey. Let's see what verses 1-3 reveal about Timothy…

##### He lived in the city of Lystra, a city in modern day Turkey (v. 1a).

##### When Paul met him he was apparently already a disciple (v. 1b).

##### He was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish (but Christian) mother, the product of an intercultural marriage, if you will (v. 1c).

##### He had a good reputation not only among the Christians in his own city but also in the neighboring city of Iconium (v. 2).

##### Paul viewed him as an asset to his second missionary journey so invited him to come along (v. 3). This action began a long friendship that would last over fifteen years.

#### The next time he's mentioned in Acts is Acts 17:14 .

##### This is after the establishment of the church in Thessalonica (vv. 1-9) when Paul and Silas had been kicked out of the town (v. 10).

##### Apparently Timothy was kicked out too since we find him in the next town, Berea, which happened to be the next city which also exported the Apostle Paul (v. 14).

### With that background we can better understand today's passage in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5. Here we'll see how Timothy encouraged the church a few months after where we left off in Acts. We'll observe Timothy, the encourager, and make some applications to our own lives.

# I. Paul and Silas sent Timothy to the Thessalonian church (3:1-2a).

#  [The church needed encouragement so young Timothy was dispatched.]

## Paul and Silas were left alone in Athens (3:1).

### The "so" ("therefore") looks back to the preceding section in 2:17-20. Since Paul wanted to see the church very much but couldn't, he thought it best to be left alone in Athens by sending a representative to the church.

### Timothy was dispatched to Thessalonica from Athens, leaving Paul and Silas alone (Eadie).

#### The word for "to be left" literally means "to be abandoned." Paul uses the same word in Ephesians 5:31 where he quotes the Old Testament passage saying that a "man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife…"

#### Paul willingly sent away Timothy (probably with all the men who had accompanied them to Athens) which left himself alone with Silas.

#### Charles Ryrie notes regarding this word for leave, "It is emphasized by the word alone (v. 1) showing the sense of desolation which overcame Paul in Athens as he faced the philosophers of that city. Yes, even ministers of the gospel feel depressed and alone at times. However, it was important to let Timothy go."

#### By the way, Ryrie brings out an interesting point here about depression among ministers of the gospel. Do you think your pastor struggles with depression? He sure does. I need encouragement as much or more than anyone else in this room. Many pastors have noted that Monday is the most depressing day of the week--after pouring their hearts out all day Sunday it can get lonely.

#### This is why I'm committed to not being the only pastor here at Grace. I can almost hear some of you saying, "Oh, we can't afford another pastor right now. Don't start talking about additional staff!" Well, that's exactly what I'm saying--additional staff like you! Who says we need more paid staff? I need you, each one of you. I can't handle the work of this church alone. Let's pastor one another, O.K.?

#### I think for the most part we have grasped this principle of all of us being gifted by God for ministry so that it doesn't all fall on the pastor's shoulders. I'm grateful for that. In fact, soon we'll begin a new Sunday night series on spiritual gifts where we'll take a closer look at one another to see what areas God has uniquely blessed us with divinely ordained abilities.

(How were Paul and Silas left alone? Look at the first part of verse 2 where it says that…)

## Paul and Silas sent Timothy due to his admirable traits (3:2a-c).

### He was a brother in Christ to Paul (3:2a).

#### This suggests equality in God's work with Paul and Silas (which might have been necessary to point out since Timothy was apparently much younger; *BKC* ).

#### Here at Grace Fellowship we're equal also. I've appreciated you all treating me as an equal brother in Christ even though several of you are older than my own parents. This demonstrates spiritual maturity within this body of believers!

### He was a fellow worker with God (3:2b). There is a confusing variety of readings here in the manuscripts with some manuscripts reading "God's fellow worker" and others "God's servant (or 'minister')."

#### The NASB and NIV have "fellow worker."

#### The KJV has both: "minister of God, and fellow laborer."

#### It looks like the NASB and NIV is the better reading since the same phrase, "God's fellow workers," is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:9 in reference to believers who are full time Christian workers.

#### It's vital that we understand that we are God's fellow workers in His work here in Fort Worth. He's the Chief Worker, all the glory for what has happened so far in this church goes to Him; however, for some reason the Lord has chosen to do His work through us!

#### A mouse and an elephant once developed a very close relationship, which is not generally common in the animal kingdom between mice and elephants. The two creatures knew each other so well and had such a mutual trust that the mouse often would ask the elephant is he could ride on top of his head, and, of course, the elephant would always say "yes." One time when the mouse was riding on top the huge mammal the elephant decided it was time to make a new trail through the meadow, so, starting on the edge of the trees he began plowing his way through the meadow the whole time with the mouse hanging on for dear life. The huge feet smashed plants, the strong trunk uprooted trees and tossed them aside like a used toothpick, the massive weight of the animal knocked down anything in the way through the length of the forest until it came through to the clearing on the other side. Then the elephant turned around and faced the forest. At this point the mouse pulled himself out from behind the elephant's ear and exclaimed as he eyed the clearing through the forest, "Wow! Just look at what we did!"

#### That's what it's like to be a fellow worker with God. We look at the tremendous things He's done in our midst and can only exclaim, "Look, Lord, at what we did!" And God doesn't rebuke us by saying, "No, it was all Me." He says, "You're right! We have accomplished much for eternity, haven't we?" God delights in our partnership with Him in His service!

### The partnership that Timothy had with God was in sharing the gospel (3:2c).

#### It's the same partnership we have with God as well, to be those who are involved in "spreading the gospel of Christ."

#### Do you ever feel like you're out there all alone when you seek to share Christ? Do you ever feel like you're outnumbered by those who oppose the gospel? Remember that you are not alone. You are in partnership with the living God.

(So what specifically was Timothy to do as God's fellow worker in the case of the Thessalonians? Why did Paul send Timothy to the church? What was his mission?)

# II. Timothy was sent to encourage the church during difficulty (3:2d-5).

**[The church received Timothy during an intense time of persecution.]**

## He was sent to strengthen and encourage the church so that their trials wouldn't tempt them to quit (3:2d-4).

### Notice the two words depicting his job description in verse 2 (3:2d).

#### "Strengthen" has the idea of "establishing" or "confirming" and comes from a root meaning "a support." It's used in reference to cities which are "shored up or buttressed" against attackers. Therefore, Timothy was sent to enable the Thessalonians to stand strong against the onslaught of persecution.

#### "Encourage" is from the well-known word *parakaleo*, which also has that idea of comforting, helping, or even imploring. It's really two words put together: *para*, meaning "alongside," and *kaleo*, which means "to call." So it has the idea of calling alongside to help someone in times of trouble. Remember the term *paraclete* ? That's the word used of the Holy Spirit identifying Him as our "Helper" or "Comforter" in the gospel of John. That's the noun form of this same word.

(Oftentimes it's tempting to encourage another to tough it out in those difficult times out of sheer gut power and individual dogged determination from a strong willpower. Timothy was to do no such thing…)

### Timothy was to encourage them in their faith that God would bring them through their difficulties (3:2e).

#### It says he was supposed to encourage them in their faith. Faith in what? Faith that God would sustain them through their trials.

#### Trials have a way about unsettling us, which can go either way, depending upon our response: it can be an excuse to shake loose our moorings in Christ, or it can draw us closer to Christ (ILL: Tom in 7th grade).

### The result of Timothy's encouragement was to draw them closer to Christ (3:3a).

#### "Unsettled" is an interesting word, partly because this is the only place it appears in the New Testament. A few hundred years earlier than this letter the great Greek poet Homer used the word to refer to "physically moving forward and backwards, here and there, just as a dog wags his tail." Later the meaning changed from wagging the tail to being "moved in mind, disturbed" (Eadie).

#### Paul's point in using the word here is as if to say, "I'm sending Timothy to help you stand firm in the fact that you're God's children even though these trials are upon you. Don't give up."

#### World War II was a period of some of the darkest days of England's history, especially as the Germans moved further and further across Europe until they finally occupied the French coast just on the other side of the English Channel between France and England. The country morale was low and Sir Winston Churchill was called upon to give a speech at this crucial time when the country was in the crucible. Stepping to the platform, Churchill paused and said, "Never give up. Never give up. Never give up! Never give up!!" then sat down. Many historians record this as his greatest speech which changed the entire course of history in that country.

#### Paul sent Timothy to tell the Thessalonians, "Never give up!"

#### Perhaps the Lord has directed us to the this passage today to tell you, "Never give up!" You're in the crucible because of your faith at work, at home, among your neighbors or relatives.

#### His message for you is the message of Susan's song earlier:

 "There is a Savior, what joys express.

 His eyes are mercy, His word is rest.

 For each tomorrow, for yesterday, there is a Savior who lights our way.

 Are there burdens in your heart, is your past a memory that binds you?

 Is there some pain that you've carried far too long?

 Then strengthen your hearts with His good news:

 There is a Savior and He's forgiven you."

(God's comfort is available during those difficult times, and in particular His comfort normally comes through other members of the body of Christ. We need to be encouraging "Timothys" to one another because trials come upon all of us…)

### Notice that trials are the normal experience for the Christian (3:3b-4).

#### It seems that the "we" here refers to both Paul and the Thessalonians. Why were Paul and the Thessalonians destined for trials? Because it's the norm in the Christian life!

#### A very dangerous, I mean very dangerous, I mean very, very extremely dangerous teaching is going around nowadays. It goes like this:

"If you're a Christian, then you're a King's Kid! You're linked up with the One who holds the riches of the world in the palm of His hand, so just ask, ask, ask!

And well, if you're experiencing a difficult time then just get the demon out of you. God never has a purpose in allowing financial troubles, so cast out that demon of debt.

The Lord won't allow you hardship if you're really His, so get rid of that demon of depression, or that demon of temptation."

#### Does this sound familiar? Right here in the Fort Worth area such teaching is being propounded by Lake Country Baptist Church. This is very dangerous teaching.

#### In fact, the opposite teaching is Biblical. Trials are the norm for the Christian:

##### 2 Timothy 3:12 says clearly, "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

##### Philippians 1:29 reads, "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

##### 1 Peter 4:12-16 encourages us, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation…"

#### Are we honest about the cost of being a Christian? Or do we sugar-coat the gospel to make it so palatable that we don't present the real thing--the wonder of being forgiven, which inevitably follows with trials?

#### I guess the reality is that whether we're Christians or not we'll experience difficulty. The question is, "Do you want to go at struggles in life all by yourself as a non-believer or do you want to have the aid of an all-powerful, all-caring Father (who often sends His children on assignment to encourage those in difficulty)?"

(So this was Paul's first purpose in sending Timothy to the church, to build them up during those difficult times. Not only did Paul send Timothy to encourage and strengthen the church, but secondly…)

## He was sent to report back to Paul whether they still resisted temptation so that Paul's work was not in vain (3:5).

### Paul felt the need to check up on them (3:5a).

#### Whenever you make a significant investment you do follow-up if you have any wits about you. If you invested in sugar, you're looking regularly at the sugar index to see if the price is rising or falling. If you purchased stocks or mutual funds you're constantly checking into them to find out how your investment is doing.

#### If this is the kind of care we give towards the things of the world, how much more so when we make investments in people! When the spiritual well-being of new believers is at stake we must be there to encourage, strengthen, nurture.

#### This especially applies when converts are going through difficult times, which is the reason Paul wrote "for this reason… I sent to find out about your faith…"

(Why was Paul so concerned about checking up on them?)

### Paul feared that his efforts to minister to them could be undone by Satan (3:5b).

#### Paul wasn't afraid of the believers losing their salvation since they already were chosen by God to be saved (1:4).

#### However, he was concerned that they might have succumbed to Satan's temptation to give up their faith in Christ. This could have occurred by the Devil luring them away from what they knew to be God's will (to persevere in temptation) and buckling under it.

#### If the church went back to their old, pagan manner of life this would have made Paul's work in vain. What a heartache!

#### As a small church, what areas do you think Satan is going to attack us through his temptations? I think he's already tempting us to expect less than we should because we're small. It's easy to think, "Oh, we're small. We can't have a Christmas program. Oh, we just aren't large enough to get a super music ministry going yet. Well the Sunday School is just a little, struggling effort, but what do you expect from such a small church?"

#### Do you know what we really are saying when we say these things? We're telling the King of Kings, "Well, God, anything's good enough for You Lord!"

#### Are you willing to let the tempter get ahold of us through this kind of weak faith in an omnipotent God? I'm sure not! We will, by His grace, have an excellent Sunday School. We'll celebrate Christmas in a way honoring to Him this year. We are making efforts to make our music and worship have excellence through and through!

#### Let's not lose heart that we're not any larger than we are right now. Let's enjoy this time when we're small, but let's do things with excellence since whether small or large, as a church we still serve the same great God. Like Timothy we need to be nurturing and encouraging one another to "give of our best for the Master."

# Conclusion

### Today's message in this passage has simply been this: We should demonstrate care for struggling believers by seeking to be an encouragement to them (Main Idea).

### I wonder if you know of someone who is going through the crucible like the Thessalonians were. Who do you know right now who's struggling in his walk with Christ? Perhaps someone who has come to one of our services but hasn't returned yet?

### Get that person clearly in your mind. Now what is the Lord telling you to do for him or her? How can you be a Timothy to that one, sent by God with the express purpose to encourage? What would you want someone to do for you if you were in that person's shoes? A visit? A card? A letter? A call on the phone just to say, "I care about you. How have you been doing?"

### I really appreciate notes of encouragement from people, so lately I've been trying to make it a habit to send others little letters telling them how much they mean to me.

### Whatever ministers to you the most will probably be the most effective means that you can best minister to someone else!

### In the early 1950's a little black baby was born with crooked feet. Since his birthplace was the ghetto, it was a luxury to have any medical treatment at all, and besides, the boy had no father to support him.

In hope that someday her son might be able to walk, his mother purchased a small 2 X 4, cut it into enough pieces to make a brace, and nailed the boy's shoes to the wood. With this "brace of wood" between his feet she forced her young son to walk.

The road was a long one, but through perseverance that boy finally did learn to walk. In fact, he learned to run. And in the mid 1970's this man received the highest award in professional football--the Heisman trophy. His name was O. J. Simpson (ENCOURAGEMENT leads others to success).

### "Lord, you have designed us to be braces for one another because we're all weak, feeble and crippled in so many ways. Paul called Timothy a fellow worker with God, but we realize that together we also are partners with You in ministry. Like the little mouse on the elephant we pray that in the months and years to come we might be able to look back at each step of the way and see how You have worked here in this church. We thank You that as Your workers You have given us a ministry of encouragement toward one another and other believers going through difficult times right now. Help each one of us this week to step out and be a ministry of comfort to another who's going through deep waters. For Your glory and Your name's sake, Amen."

SBC Evening Chapel Floor Captain Appointments Dr. Rick Griffith

12 November 1998 & IBCH 6 June 2010 Single Message

NIV 8 Minutes

**The Encouragers**

***1 Thessalonians 3:1-5***

**Topic:** Encouragement

**Subject:** Let’s encourage one another

**Complement:** like Timothy did.

**Purpose:** The students will encourage their floor captains and vice versa.

# Introduction

### [Suzuki instructors teach by encouragement.]

#### Have any of you attended a performance of Japanese schoolchildren trained in the Suzuki method of learning to play violin? I hear it is amazing! Imagine children as young as four, three and even two years old playing the violin—one of the most difficult musical instruments!

#### How do the instructors do it? Well, the very first thing the children learn is a proper stance. And the second thing they learn—even before they pick up the violin—is how to take a bow. One instructor notes, “If the children just play the violin and stop, people may forget to show their appreciation. But when the children bow, the audience invariably applauds. And applause is the best motivator we've found to make children feel good about performing and want to do it well.”

### Adults need applause too.

#### Affirmation makes us feel wonderful because we all need encouraging. Don’t you need encouragement?

#### I need encouragement, you need encouragement—why don't we do it more often?

### Paul once was in a difficult situation needing to encourage the Thessalonian church but he couldn't go in person. So he sent Timothy, his faithful traveling companion. This is recorded in 1 Thessalonians 3:1.

### Subject: Let’s take a look at Timothy to learn from him how we also can encourage… What qualities did Timothy have that we should emulate? From this text I see three principles on how we can encourage others. The first is…

# I. Minister as a peer with people.

## Timothy was a brother in Christ to Paul (3:2a).

### This suggests equality in God's work with Paul and Silas (which might have been necessary to point out since Timothy was apparently much younger).

### Imagine the great apostle referring to shy Timothy as “brother”—not even assistant, son, or church worker!

## Remember that the floor captains minister to you as equals.

### Lecturers are also peers in the sense that God has no grandchildren.

### Floor captains must remember that they aren’t the big bosses and you the servants—but students must remember not to abuse the floor captains’ servant leadership too.

# II. Minister as a partner with God.

## Timothy was a fellow worker with God (3:2b).

### A mouse and an elephant developed such a close relationship that the elephant let the mouse ride on top of his head. Once the elephant decided to make a new trail through the forest, so, starting on the edge of the trees he began plowing his way through the forest—the whole time with the mouse hanging on for dear life. The huge feet smashed plants, the strong trunk uprooted trees and tossed them aside like used toothpicks, the massive weight of the animal knocked down anything in the way through the length of the forest until it came to the clearing on the other side. Then the elephant turned around and faced the forest. At this point the mouse pulled himself out from behind the elephant's ear and exclaimed as he eyed the clearing through the forest, "Wow! Just look at what we did!"

### We are fellow workers with God. We look at the great things He's done in our midst and exclaim, "Lord, look at what we did!" God doesn't rebuke us by saying, "No, it was all Me." He says, "You're right! We have accomplished much for eternity, haven't we?" God delights in our partnership with Him in His service!

## Whether floor captain or floor private, we all partner with God.

### If God was your partner in cleaning the toilet, how would you clean it?

### If God was your room partner (roommate), how would you treat Him?

(So we can imitate Timothy’s attitude as a peer and partner. Once we have these qualities, then…)

# III. Minister as an encourager during other’s trials.

## Timothy was an encourager of the church during difficulty (3:2c-5).

### "Encourage" means comfort or help—it's two words together: *para* means "alongside," and *kaleo* means "to call." So it means calling alongside to help someone in trouble.

### Trials are the normal experience for the Christian (3:3b-4)—and SBC student!

### Paul wanted Timothy to check up on the church because he cared for them (3:5a).

#### I once had an investment in Kemper Mutual Funds. Do you think I looked them up in the newspaper? You bet I did! If you purchased stocks or mutual funds you're constantly checking on them to see how your investment is doing.

#### If we show this care towards worldly things, how much more so when we make investments in people! That’s why…

## SBC appointed floor captains to check up on the spiritual well-being of students.

### This shows not so much distrust in you—it shows how valuable you are!

### You can help these captains by encouraging them and allowing them to encourage you.

# Conclusion

### Let’s encourage one another like Timothy did (M.I.).

### I wonder if you know of someone who is going through the crucible like the Thessalonians were. Who do you know right now who's struggling in his walk with Christ? Perhaps someone who has come to one of our services but hasn't returned yet?

### Get that person clearly in your mind. Now what is the Lord telling you to do for him or her? How can you be a Timothy to that one, sent by God with the express purpose to encourage? What would you want someone to do for you if you were in that person's shoes? A visit? A card? A letter? A call on the phone just to say, "I care about you. How have you been doing?"

SBC Evening Chapel Dorm Captain Appointments (15 minute ed.) Dr. Rick Griffith

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NIV 15 Minutes

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**Subject:** Let’s encourage struggling believers

**Complement:** like Timothy did.

**Purpose:** The students will encourage their dorm captains and the dorm captains will encourage the students.

# Introduction

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### Adults love applause too.

#### Being affirmed makes us feel wonderful because for some reason we all need encouragement. This need is universal, no one is exempt, it's in our blood. I need encouragement and you need encouragement, so why don't we do it more often?

#### I recently read of a congregation in Salem, Oregon, who decided to get serious about this idea of encouraging one another in the church… (Swindoll, *Strengthening Your Grip*, pp. 48-49).

### When you think of Biblical characters who had this kind of encouraging spirit, who comes to mind? Barnabas is usually on the tip of my tongue, but he's not the only one. You see, Paul once was in a difficult situation needing to encourage the Thessalonian church but couldn't go in person--and there was no Barnabas to send. So he sent Timothy, another faithful traveling companion of the apostle.

### Subject: As we take a look at Timothy in today's passage we’ll learn some tips from him how we also can encourage…

# I. Paul and Silas sent Timothy to the Thessalonian church (3:1-2a).

#  [The church needed encouragement so young Timothy was dispatched.]

## Paul and Silas were left alone in Athens (3:1).

## Paul and Silas sent Timothy due to his admirable traits (3:2a-c).

### He was a brother in Christ to Paul (3:2a).

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#### The dorm captains are also equal with you.

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### The partnership that Timothy had with God was in sharing the gospel (3:2c).

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#### Remember that you are not alone. You are in partnership with the living God.

# II. Timothy was sent to encourage the church during difficulty (3:2d-5).

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#### 1 Peter 4:12-16 encourages us, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation…"

## He was sent to report back to Paul whether they still resisted temptation so that Paul's work was not in vain (3:5).

### Paul felt the need to check up on them (3:5a).

#### Whenever you make a significant investment you do follow-up if you have any wits about you. If you invested in sugar, you're looking regularly at the sugar index to see if the price is rising or falling. If you purchased stocks or mutual funds you're constantly checking into them to find out how your investment is doing.

#### If this is the kind of care we give towards the things of the world, how much more so when we make investments in people! When the spiritual well-being of new believers is at stake we must be there to encourage, strengthen, nurture.

(Why was Paul so concerned about checking up on them?)

### Paul feared that his efforts to minister to them could be undone by Satan (3:5b).

#### Paul wasn't afraid of the believers losing their salvation since they already were chosen by God to be saved (1:4).

#### However, he **was** concerned that they might have succumbed to Satan's temptation to give up their faith in Christ. This could have occurred by the devil luring them away from what they knew to be God's will (to persevere in temptation) and buckling under it.

#### Campus duties must be done as unto God.

# Conclusion

### Let’s encourage struggling believers like Timothy did (M.I.).

### I wonder if you know of someone who is going through the crucible like the Thessalonians were. Who do you know right now who's struggling in his walk with Christ? Perhaps someone who has come to one of our services but hasn't returned yet?

### Get that person clearly in your mind. Now what is the Lord telling you to do for him or her? How can you be a Timothy to that one, sent by God with the express purpose to encourage? What would you want someone to do for you if you were in that person's shoes? A visit? A card? A letter? A call on the phone just to say, "I care about you. How have you been doing?"

### "Lord, you have designed us to be braces for one another because we're all weak, feeble and crippled in so many ways. Paul called Timothy a fellow worker with God, but we realize that together we also are partners with You in ministry. Like the little mouse on the elephant we pray that in the months and years to come we might be able to look back at each step of the way and see how You have worked here in this church. We thank You that as Your workers You have given us a ministry of encouragement toward one another and other believers going through difficult times right now. Help each one of us this week to step out and be a ministry of comfort to another who's going through deep waters. For Your glory and Your name's sake, Amen."

**Preliminary Questions**

**Verses Questions**

Context What did the author record just prior to this passage?

Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible?

Background What historical context helps us understand this passage?

1

**Tentative Subject/Complement Statements**

Text

**Possible Illustrations**

Text

**Title**

***Passage***

**Exegetical Outline**

***Exegetical Idea:***

# I.

# II.

# III.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Subject:

# I.

# II.

# III.

# Conclusion

###  (M.I.).

# Discussion Questions: