



Paul's Passionate Prayers
"Faith Exposed Through Life"
2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

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"To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 ESV

1. Something Old – *“That God would count you worthy of His calling.”*

- According to Ephesians 1:3-6, God’s calling occurred before the foundation of the world.
- ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”***
- The Westminster Shorter Catechism defines effectual calling as the work of God’s Spirit that convinces people of their sin, enlightens their minds to know Christ, and renews their wills so they can embrace Jesus Christ as offered in the gospel.
- This supernatural work is not based on human merit but on God’s grace and power, which gives the elect the ability to respond to the gospel.
- The Holy Spirit makes individuals aware of their sin and misery, a state they would otherwise ignore.
- The Spirit gives a clear understanding of Christ and the glory of God, illuminating the mind to see the truth of the gospel.
- The Spirit changes the person’s will, replacing a “heart of stone” with a “heart of flesh,” enabling them to genuinely desire God and respond to His call.
- This call is an act of God’s sovereign grace, and not a result of anything foreseen in the person.
- It is a powerful work, similar to the power that raised Christ from the dead, and is therefore the work of God is irresistible.
- While the external or general call is to all, **the effectual call** is a special work of God on the hearts of the elect.
- God has called every believer out of darkness and into light.
- So, Paul prayed that God would make the new believers in Thessalonica worthy of that effectual call.
- When we see what God had already done for us, through Jesus Christ, as Christians, we should live in a specific way.

2. Something New – *“That God would fulfil every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power.”*

- To live worthy of our effectual calling, we should exhibit the fruits of that calling.
- The church in Thessalonica was being severely persecuted.
- However, Paul said that, while he was aware of their suffering, if they had truly received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, they should treat their persecutors as Jesus treated those who persecuted Him.
- Paul always prays that God will strengthen the believer to do what only God can do, for that is the essential evidence of our effectual calling.
- **ESV: *“To this end, for this reason we always pray for you.”***
- John Piper: **“Perseverance is the evidence of our regeneration.”**
- Paul prayed that the Holy Spirit would enable the Christians in Thessalonica to persevere, even in the midst of

affliction, to the point that they would bless those who were persecuting them.

3. Something borrowed – *“So that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.”*

- Glorifying God means feeling, thinking, and acting in ways that reflect God’s greatness, that gives evidence of the supreme greatness of all His attributes and His manifold perfections.
- To glorify God is to obey Him and therefore to proclaim His greatness by our thoughts, words, and deeds.
- To glorify God is to display God’s character, God’s reputation, God’s attributes, God’s honor; to do that which Jesus did while He was on earth for those three years.
- Paul said, believers ought to act in such a way that our faith would be fleshed out for all to see; that Jesus may be glorified in us and through us.
- Knowing the level of our depravity, and realizing that God has chosen the likes of us to be the reflectors of His glory, we should humble ourselves before Him.
- However, considering what God had to do to make us the reflectors of His glory, it should humble us even more.
 - He had to transform us from a vessel destined for God’s wrath to a vessel destined for God’s mercy.
 - He has to transform us from those who are inherently wretched and unrighteous into a vessel filled with His righteousness and with His own goodness.
- In 2 Corinthians 3:18, the Apostle Paul wrote: ***“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”***
- This is a twofold miracle, that God would have His wonderful goodness to shine forth in us who are covered with shame and disgrace and wretchedness; and yet, He has ordained that His glory is to shine forth through us.
- David Jeremiah wrote: ***“I strip off every evil garment placed on me by the enemy—garments of shame, reproach, delay, and limitation! I reject every satanic identity and decree that I am clothed in glory, honor, and divine favor. I wear the robe of righteousness and the garment of praise. No power of darkness can cover my star or destiny. I shine with heaven’s brilliance. I walk in authority, beauty, and purpose. My life is marked by God’s glory—now and forever!”***

4. Something True – *“According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

- Everything that enables us to glorify God in word and deed is by God’s own power and grace, which He has freely bestowed on all those who receive Him as their Savior and Lord.
- His grace is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the entire work of salvation. It is totally devoid of human merit. It is a work of God, it is of Him and through Him, and therefore also leads to Him and serves to glorify Him.
- When we try to glorify God in the flesh, it is always tarnished with selfishness and pride. When God glorifies Himself through us, we may not even be aware of it, but others will be.