

In 1 Thessalonians 3, Paul shares how he was concerned for the Thessalonians' well-being in the midst of their persecution and because he had to leave them in a hurry. So, he stopped in Athens and sent Timothy to check on them. He shares how relieved he was when Timothy returned with the good news of their strong faith and ongoing love and support for Paul. In that moment of hearing this update, Paul admits to feeling relieved: "For now we live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord" (1 Thess 3:8). The NLT puts it this way: "It gives us NEW LIFE to know that you are standing firm in the Lord." It reads as if Paul's heart had stopped when he feared for their well-being, and it was jolted back into action again (REVIVED) when he came to know they were okay. This is a small reminder to us that life is often found in the vitality and health of a community where the group shares its ups and downs—where the life of the other is my own life and vice versa. This is also a beautiful reminder that "life" isn't something we are waiting to experience in an "afterlife." (Notice the irony of trying to wait until "after life" to have "life.") Jesus Christ gives new life today, in communion with himself and others through His life giving Spirit, and we can look forward to an even greater experience of life in the consummation of new creation.

PRAY 1 Thess. 3:9-13: Father we thank you for our brothers and sisters in the household of faith. Thank you that we have great JOY as we enter God's presence in worship together each Sunday. I pray earnestly, that God will fill any gaps in our faith and may the LORD Jesus make our love for one another and for all people grow and overflow. May our hearts be strong, blameless and holy as we stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen.

Link to all devotionals: [iccbrisbane.org/journaling](http://iccbrisbane.org/journaling)