

## 2 Thessalonians 1: Perseverance and Prayer

March 8, 2015

As Paul opens this letter to the Thessalonian church (1:1–2, he thanks God for working through persecution to make the believers more like Jesus Christ (1:3–12).

### **Believers ought to thank God for his work in their lives through persecution (1:3–4).**

*God uses trials to grow our trust in him.*

- Difficulties wean us from depending on our own strength, putting us in a position where our utter weakness causes us to cry out to God for help and relief.
- Difficulties adjust our focus and our priorities, exposing the idols of our hearts.
- Difficulties give us an unquenchable thirst for heaven.

*God uses trials to increase our love for other believers.*

- Persecution drives us to our brothers and sisters—our “partners in tribulation.”
- Persecution highlights the fellowship we have in Jesus Christ.
- Persecution forces us to admit our need for one another.

*God uses trials to encourage other believers to imitate our perseverance.*

- Trials remind us that Jesus’ disciples follow Him to death (Mark 8:35–36).
- Trials remind us that Jesus’ disciples expect opposition and persecution (John 15:20).
- Trials remind us that God’s power is highlighted by our weakness (2 Cor 12:9).

### **Believers ought to thank God for his righteous judgment evidenced in persecution (1:5–10).**

*God’s righteous judgment demonstrates the believers’ perseverance (1:5).*

- God tests and tries us so we will be counted worthy for his kingdom (cf. 1 Pet 4:17).
- God enables believers to pass the test (cf. 1 Thess 5:23–24; Jude 24).

*God’s righteous judgment will vindicate his children and punish his enemies (1:6–10).*

- Jesus will return to afflict those who afflict his church (cf. Acts 9:4). His enemies will be reminded that there is one righteous Judge, and it is Jesus Christ.
- Jesus’ return comforts his church now. His children are reminded that there is one righteous Judge, and it is Jesus Christ.

### **Believers ought to pray for God’s continued work in their lives for the glory of Jesus Christ (1:11–12).**

- God’s continued work in making you worthy of his calling (Christlikeness) may very well involve persecution and trials (cf. 1:5).
- God’s sanctifying work in our lives produces faith and obedience.
- God’s gracious work in us will bring glory to Jesus Christ through us.