

2 Thessalonians 3:13–18

My Brother's Keeper

Study 07 · 2 Thessalonians 3
Small Group Bible Study Series

Source: Dr. C. Norman Sellers ThD (SellersBibleInstitute.com; used by permission)

Editor: The Gospel Vault

① TEXT	② DEVOTIONAL	③ COMMENTARY	④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE
Foundation	Personal preparation	Teacher / Leader preparation	Group meeting
<i>Everyone</i>	<i>All group members</i>	<i>Teacher / Leader</i>	<i>Small group</i>

⑤ Application closes each study and draws from all sections above, plus FGR.docx.

① THE BIBLICAL TEXT

2 Thessalonians 3:13–18 · New King James Version (NKJV)

13 *But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.*

14 *And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

15 *Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

16 *Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.*

17 *The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.*

18 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

② DEVOTIONAL

Personal preparation · Drawn from the teaching and outline

“Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” — 2 Thessalonians 3:15

Cain asked, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Paul’s answer is yes. To the faithful majority he says, don’t grow weary of doing good — the problem is never the good, only the circumstances around it. Keep on keeping on.

Being a keeper sometimes means doing something hard: not enabling a brother in his sin, but stepping back so he may see his error — and then going to him, after prayer, as family: “Brother, we are children of God. I’m concerned about you. May I show you what the Word says?” Discipline in the church is never destructive; it is always meant to restore.

Then Paul surrounds it all with peace and grace. We have peace with God forever, the peace of God when we pray, and a Lord who will never, ever leave us.

For Reflection

1. Where have you grown weary of doing good, and what circumstances are wearing you down?
2. Is there someone you have been enabling rather than truly helping?
3. How would you approach a brother as family rather than as a foe?

He is my brother, not my enemy — and I must not become his enemy by the way I handle the job the Lord gave me.

③ COMMENTARY

Teacher preparation resource · Full text organized under outline headings

PROPOSITION

Am I my brother's keeper? Yes. Paul tells the faithful brothers not to grow weary in doing good, and to withdraw fellowship from the disobedient brother — not as an enemy, but as family — so that he may be ashamed and restored. He surrounds that hard duty with peace from the Lord of peace, the validation of his own signature, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that saves, shares, and serves.

Outline: My Brother's Keeper — 2 Thessalonians 3:13–18. Teacher's text is merged under the outline headings; "From the outline" lines carry outline notes, and shaded Study Notes are supplemental material drawn from the FGR resource library.

Introduction: Am I My Brother's Keeper?

A. The First Time the Question Was Asked — Genesis 4

"My brother's keeper." Did you ever hear that before? "My brother's keeper." Well — I'm not going to be able to see this. Recently a politician said — "I am my brother's keeper." Oh. I have my choice on this too.

Ah — the first, you've probably heard about it, was in Genesis chapter 4. Remember Cain and Abel? Cain brought a sacrifice of his own hands, and Abel brought the proper sacrifice. And Cain rose up against Abel, and he slew him — King James says; he killed him. And apparently covered him up in dirt. Then, when the Lord came looking for him, He says, "Where is your brother Abel?" And Cain says, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Well, the answer to that is found in this passage. Yes, you are. You are your brother's keeper, and you have a responsibility in that area.

B. Helping, Not Enabling

Some of the brothers in the Thessalonian church were not working. We saw that last week. They weren't working because the Rapture's near: "Paul said the Lord's coming. Why should we work? Let's sit around and wait." And in the process, they were meddling in other people's business. Well, Paul said, "That's not good."

Well, then you say, "Well, shouldn't I help my brother?" Well, yeah, you should help him, but you should make sure that it is help. I've been trying to think of a word for what happens when you give somebody money to go out and buy drugs or whatever. You're helping him, you're facilitating it, you're doing all kinds of things — but there's a word — oh, that's the word: enable. I couldn't think of it, and I said, "I'm going to keep on going." Anyway — yeah, you enable. And that's what they were doing. Some of them were enabling these people not to work and then to go ahead and mess around.

I. Confirmation — 3:13 (or “Foundation”)

A. “But as for You, Brethren” — The Faithful Majority

Well, today Paul, sensing that these people — the ones who were working — again he calls them brothers: “But as for you, brethren” — you faithful brothers — “as for you, do not grow weary in doing good.”

Well, Paul starts the section with a “but.” I like that “but” — in contrast to the negative, to what they’re doing. “But you, brothers, don’t grow weary.” In contrast to what the others are doing, you do it. But they’re brothers — all are brothers. And then these brothers are brothers, and Paul — because Paul’s writing to believers. You know, the Scriptures are written to believers. I stress that when I’m in Hebrews — stressing that it’s written to believers. This book also is written to believers.

And so he’s saying to them, “You’re doing the work of the church, and then you’re also working to feed your families. You are the good brothers.”

From the outline: Paul starts this section with “But” (*de*) in contrast to those who prefer not to work so that they have time to stick their noses into the business of others. These are the faithful majority. Paul called them brothers. These are brothers also. Paul is writing to believers.

B. Don’t Be Weary — Doing Good

And so — don’t be weary in doing good. I’ve heard that so many times in the King James: “be not weary in well doing.” Well — but the word is “doing good.” Don’t be tired of that. Even if doing good makes you weary, don’t hate it. Don’t hate doing good. See, the problem is not with the doing good. The problem is with the attendant circumstances. So just keep on keeping on. Do what the Lord is telling you to do. You work and take care of your family, and then do the work of the church as well. Keep on keeping on, he’s saying. Then that’s the confirmation, or the foundation, of the Word.

From the outline: Paul’s word to them was (lit.) *kalopoiountes* — “Don’t be weary — doing good.” Even when you grow tired in doing good, don’t be tired of doing good.

II. Admonition — 3:14–15

Now there’s an admonition for them, verses 14 and 15.

A. Warning — 3:14

1. This Epistle — 3:14a

First he warns them. Verse 14 says, about this epistle, “And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle.” Now, so he considered his word — and properly so — he considered the word he’s writing, and the word he speaks to them, as being God’s word: both the written words and the spoken words.

Peter calls Paul's writings Scripture. I'm thinking about 2 Peter 3. He said, "our beloved brother Paul" has written some things, and they're sometimes "hard to understand." And we all said amen! And yet, he says, some are hard to understand, and some people twist them — twist them, make them say something else other than what they are saying. And he says they twist Paul's writings "as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." What does that tell you? Paul's writings are Scripture. So it isn't just Paul saying this. Peter is saying Paul's writing is Scripture.

Well, he says, don't disobey Paul's words. If you do, you're disobeying God. Hmm. Can we do that? Wouldn't we say that to people — "Do what I say; if you don't, then you're disobeying God"? Yes — if I'm saying what the Scripture says. I'm saying God's Word — not my word, but God's Word. If you're quoting God, then you can say, "If you don't do that — these words are from God." That's the epistle. The epistle is God's Word.

2. That Person — 3:14b

And then "that person": "note that person and do not keep company with him." See? God asked this question in Amos chapter 3, verse 2 [3:3]. He says, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" It's a rhetorical question. He doesn't answer it. It doesn't need to be answered. Of course not. They can't walk together unless they're in agreement. Oil and water don't mix. Light cannot have any fellowship with darkness, Paul says. So, though he's a brother, he's not in fellowship with God. And if he's not in fellowship with God, he's not in fellowship with you. So he says, mark that man. Don't have any fellowship with him.

3. The Purpose — 3:14c

And then the purpose — the epistle, that letter, and then the purpose. So what do we do? "Well, we're going to toss him out of here. Get rid of him." No, not that. The purpose of church discipline is never destructive. Church discipline is always constructive. In this case, the purpose is "that he may be ashamed" — when he realizes his error. And he'll realize it when you don't fellowship with him. The fellowship back in those days was a little bit different, but he's still talking about having fellowship, because you have nothing in common with him.

Now, you can help him back into the fellowship — but unless you do it in such a way, you may turn him aside. So he says, okay, there's a warning, but here's a caution. Be cautious when you do that.

B. Caution — 3:15

1. Don't Consider Him a Foe — 3:15a

Don't consider him as a foe: "Yet do not count him as an enemy," he says. He's not your foe. He's not your enemy. He's not perfect. He has his faults. So do you. So do you. No — these faults must be pointed out to him, I think, so that he can see his faults. He can confess them. He can be forgiven of them. And that's what we want. We want him to be forgiven, because he's not our foe. He's not our enemy.

2. Do Counsel Him as Family — 3:15b

a. “When You’re Here, You’re Family”

He is family. Counsel him as family: “but admonish him as a brother.” You know — you’ve been to the Olive Garden, I think. I know some of you have; I ate with you last Sunday there. But the Olive Garden has a slogan. You know what it is? “When you’re here, you’re family.”

Well, that’s our slogan. When you’re here, you’re family. When you’re in the universal church, you’re family, no matter where. I met that lady yesterday; she said she wanted to come to church here. And she’s from Philadelphia. But she’s coming here, and she wants to, because she found a family. She’s part of the family. And I would welcome her as part of the family. Well, that’s when you’re here — you’re family. When you’re in the church, you’re family. When you’re in the local church, it’s a closer-knit family, and we’re all family members together. So, on that basis — on the basis of being in the universal church — you’re welcome to fellowship here as a member of this local church.

From the outline: When you are in the Universal Church, the Body of Christ, you are family. On that basis you are accepted as a member of this local church, Twin Lakes Baptist.

b. When the Lord Lays It on Your Heart

And when the Lord lays on your heart —

- something that’s going amiss — that He says to you, there’s a problem in someone else’s life;
- and you’re convinced that it’s your assignment from Him for you to approach that brother — you got this from the Lord;
- and after you have prayed hard — make sure you know what to do and how to do it — praying hard;
- and you have a clear path from the Lord to approach the subject — He’s clearing things away; He’ll make it possible for you to get to that brother, talk to him, whatever —

c. “Brother Horatio ...”

Now, when you do that — you get there — what do you do? Well, it seems to me the best — maybe the only — approach to this erring brother is: “Brother Horatio —” See, I’d use that; I didn’t use any names here. Anybody here named Horatio? So: “Brother Horatio, we’re brothers.” It’s a good way to start. “We’re brothers. We’re children of God. And I’m concerned about you” — and then name that area; name the offense. And then ask him — ask permission: “May I show you in the Word of God what God says about that, and where you have fallen short of God’s best for you?”

That’s the question. You’re asking permission. If you get the permission, then you have a chance to counsel your brother and restore him to fellowship. If he says no,

it's no. But you have another step. Then you go to Matthew 18 and take the next step — take another brother with you, and so forth. But here we're talking about: if he gives you the opportunity, then you have gained your brother. And he's able to confess it and to get right with the Lord; then he's right with you. And you have done the Lord's work in that. So that's our confirmation, our admonition.

Study Note — Still a Brother: Fellowship, Not Eternal Life

Paul calls the disobedient man a “brother” three times in this chapter (3:6, 15). Withdrawal of fellowship does not question his eternal life; it addresses his walk. Free Grace writers stress the difference between a believer's relationship with God, settled forever at the moment of faith, and his fellowship with God, which can be broken by sin and restored by confession (1 John 1:9). Galatians 6:1 gives the same spirit as 3:15: “you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” The teacher's “Brother Horatio” approach — brotherhood first, the specific concern, then permission to open the Word — is that restoration in practice, with Matthew 18:15–17 as the next step if he refuses.

Sources (FGR): Zane C. Hodges, The Epistles of John: Walking in the Light of God's Love (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999); Charles C. Ryrie, Balancing the Christian Life (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1994); Charles C. Bing, Simply by Grace (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009).

III. Benediction — 3:16

Now the benediction, verse 16: “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.” Question: do you have the peace of the Lord — always, in every way? Well — yes. In some way you do.

He also talks about the love of God — remember, from last week — and the patience of Christ. Well, here he adds the peace of God. Now you can have the peace of God. In verse 18 he's going to talk about the grace of God. So, four things that we have from God.

A. Peace with God — Romans 5:1

But the first one is the peace with God. In Romans 5:1 we read that, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” What a wonderful thing. And this is something to hang on to. We have peace with God. God is not against us. We have no ruffle with Him in our relationship. We have peace with Him. And we have that, of course, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The Peace of God — Philippians 4:6–7

But the peace of God is something else. The peace of God — in Philippians 4 he says, “Be anxious for nothing.” What's the antidote for anxiety? “But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” That's it. If I don't have peace — the peace of God in my life — I'm anxious about something, or more things; then I'm supposed to take it to God. By prayer and supplication, I tell God about it. I'm telling you, talking with God is a wonderful thing. I

can do it anywhere, at any time. And when I do, I have the opportunity to have the peace of God in that whole situation, whatever it is.

1. Peter Asleep in Prison — Acts 12

Remember Peter, Acts 12? Peter was thrown in prison for preaching the gospel, and the next day they were going to take him out and kill him. So God sent His angel. And the angel came right into the prison. And what do you think Peter was doing? Walking the floor — “Well, I don’t know what I’m going to do”? No, he wasn’t. The angel had to strike him on the side to wake him up, to lead him out of there. He was asleep. How’d he do that? By prayer and supplication. He made his request known to the Lord. That’s it.

2. Paul in the Storm — Acts 27

And then Paul did the same thing, remember? He was on a ship in the Mediterranean Sea, in the middle of a storm. He stood up in the ship and said, “Men, I’ll tell you what: nobody is going to lose his life.” They thought everybody was going to lose his life. Paul said, “Not a one is going to be lost.” And they got to shore. How do you do that? An angel of God appeared to him — but trusting in the Lord.

So the peace with God is guaranteed. The peace of God is something we ask for. We let our requests be known to Him, and we leave it there.

C. The God of Peace — 3:16b

1. He Will Never Leave a Believer

Now, there’s the God of peace — the God of peace. “The Lord be with you all,” he says. So how will the Lord of peace be with us? Well, Paul’s not implying that God would ever leave a believer — because it sounds like He’s going to leave, you know. But being with you — Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

And then Hebrews 13:5 — one of my favorite verses: “I will never, ever, ever, ever, ever leave you nor forsake you.” Five negatives. In John 10:28, when He says no one will ever snatch them out of My hand — they shall never perish — two negatives. “I’ll never leave you” — five negatives. And that makes it stronger. Each one makes it stronger.

Study Note — The Emphatic Negatives of Hebrews 13:5 and John 10:28

The teacher’s count reflects the Greek of Hebrews 13:5: *ou mē se anō oud’ ou mē se enkatalipō* — literally “I will not, not leave you, nor will I not, not forsake you.” The doubled negative *ou mē* with the subjunctive is the strongest form of denial in New Testament Greek, used for something that will certainly never happen. John 10:28 uses the same construction: “they shall never perish” (*ou mē apolōntai eis ton aiōna*), followed by “neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” For Free Grace theology these are among the plainest promises of eternal security: the believer’s eternal life does not depend on his performance, because the Lord has piled up negatives to say He will never

let go.

Sources (FGR): Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); Robert N. Wilkin, Confident in Christ (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999); Joseph C. Dillow, The Reign of the Servant Kings, 2nd ed. (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle Publishing, 2011).

2. The God of Peace Will Be with You — Philippians 4:9

In Philippians 4 he says, “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do” — practice these things — “and the God of peace will be with you.” That again means that we are to follow Paul’s leading in what we learned and received and heard, and practice it. But then he also gives a whole list there in Philippians 4: if there’s anything good, anything proper — all through there — those are the things we are to do. And the God of peace will be with you.

3. “With You All”

So notice he says, “The Lord be with you all.” This is not just for somebody — some people — not just for the good brothers, but to all. Because now he’s broadening it out. In verse 13 he says, “you, brethren” — he’s talking to the group. But now he says, “with you all.” He wants all the brothers to see that everyone is included in the desires for the church. Everybody. Everybody here is given this ability to have that kind of fellowship with the Lord. So that’s the confirmation, the admonition, the benediction —

IV. Validation — 3:17

— and the validation, verse 17. Validation is in verse 17. It says, “The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.” He signs it. He apparently took the pen from whoever wrote for him — his amanuensis, secretary — and he took the pen and said, “I’m writing this myself, so you’ll know that it’s from me,” validating it.

He did this in several of his epistles — stated it. He did it in all of them, obviously, but he states it in some. Like in Romans chapter 16, verse 22: “I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.” Tertius wrote it. Oh — and then in 1 Corinthians 16:21: “The salutation with my own hand — Paul’s.” And [Colossians 4:18]: “This salutation by my own hand.” Someone else wrote while Paul dictated, and then at the end he signed it.

Probably because of Paul’s bad eyesight. In Galatians 4:6 [4:15] he says, you loved me so much you would have taken your own eyes out and given them to me. Well, why would he use that illustration unless his eyes were bad? He needed eyes.

Study Note — Paul’s Signature and the Forged Letter

Verse 17 answers the problem raised in 2:2, where a letter “as if from us” had unsettled the church. Paul normally dictated to a trained secretary (an amanuensis), as Romans 16:22 shows, then added

a closing line in his own hand as proof of authenticity (1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18). In Galatians he calls attention to “what large letters I have written to you with my own hand” (Galatians 6:11) — which, together with Galatians 4:15, many have taken as a hint of poor eyesight. By saying “which is a sign in every epistle,” Paul gives the Thessalonians a simple test: a letter without his own handwriting is not his.

Sources (FGR): Constable, Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians; Walvoord and Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament.

V. Salutation — 3:18

So then we come to the salutation: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

A. Saving Grace — Ephesians 2:8–9

We think of grace concerning salvation. And if you don’t think of it, you haven’t been listening. Grace — salvation by grace — is the framework, the very foundation, of all that we do. Grace: God has graced us with salvation. And if that gets tainted in any way, it reflects into the rest of our lives. And so that’s very important — that it’s saving grace: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

B. Sharing Grace — 2 Corinthians 8:7

And then beside that, there is sharing grace. Interesting that one of our hymns — the hymn just before the offering — said, “Take my silver and my gold.” I didn’t notice that, but I’ll take credit for it. “Take my silver and my gold” — yeah, that’s sharing grace.

In 2 Corinthians 8:7, after praising the Macedonians for their great sacrificial giving for the poor saints in Jerusalem, he’s writing to the Corinthians, and he says — boy, those people in Macedonia, they really did a great job — and then he says, “see that you abound in this grace also.” Giving is a grace. It’s a grace that we are allowed to exercise when we give to the Lord. Sharing grace.

C. Serving Grace — Hebrews 12:28

There’s also serving grace. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 28: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us hold fast to grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

You can’t serve God acceptably except by grace. If you’re serving God with your works — “Oh, I’ve got to do this because I’ve got to keep my salvation, got to get my salvation,” whatever it is — if we say, “I’m doing this because the Lord makes me do it” — no, no, not that. We do it by grace. Because of God’s grace, we are able to give, and we are able to serve.

Conclusion: Yes, I Am My Brother's Keeper

Second Thessalonians is at the end. Now, the question, of course, for this section: am I my brother's keeper? Yes. True — and I'm my sister's keeper as well. Yes, I am.

Then I have to do the good things — the good things of fellowship together, and we enjoy our time together with one another. But sometimes my love for my brother requires me to do things that are distasteful to me — and maybe to him. But there are things that have to be done in order to help that brother, and not enable him in his sin.

So, in the process, we need to remember: he is my brother. He is not my enemy, and I'm not his enemy. Make sure I don't get to be an enemy by the way I handle the job the Lord gave me.

Lord, we thank You for Your grace, for Your power.

④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE

For use during the group meeting · Focused on the commentary text

Greek Word Study — 2 Thessalonians 3:13–18

Grammar and parsing: Blue Letter Bible. Definitions cite only the sources that add clarity (STR · THAY · VINE), with significance in context for every word.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.13	ἐκκακέω <i>grow weary</i>	G1573 <i>eklakeō</i> Verb — Aor. Act. Subj. 2nd Pl.	THAY: to lose heart, become faint or weary (cf. Galatians 6:9; Luke 18:1). Significance: don't give up — even when the circumstances of doing good make you tired.
v.13	καλοποιέω <i>doing good</i>	G2569 <i>kalopoieō</i> Verb — Pres. Act. Ptc. Nom. Masc. Pl.	STR: to do well, act honorably. Used only here in the NT. Significance: “Don't be weary — doing good”; the good itself is never the problem.
v.13	ἀδελφός <i>brethren</i>	G80 <i>adelphos</i> Noun — Voc. Masc. Pl.	STR: a brother. Significance: Paul calls both the faithful (v.13) and the disobedient (v.15) “brothers” — all are believers.
v.14	ὑπακούω <i>obey</i>	G5219 <i>hypakouō</i> Verb — Pres. Act. Ind. 3rd Sg.	THAY: to listen to, obey. Significance: Paul's written word is God's Word; Peter counted Paul's letters among the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:15–16).
v.14	σημειώω <i>note</i>	G4593 <i>sēmeiōō</i> Verb — Pres. Mid. Imp. 2nd Pl.	STR: to distinguish, mark. Significance: “mark that man” — identify him for the church's response.
v.14	συναναμίγνυμι <i>keep company with</i>	G4874 <i>synanamignymi</i> Verb — Pres. Mid. Inf.	THAY: to mix up together; to associate with (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:9, 11). Significance: withdraw close fellowship — “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”
v.14	ἐντρέπω <i>ashamed</i>	G1788 <i>entrepō</i> Verb — Aor. Pass. Subj. 3rd Sg.	STR: to invert; passive, to be put to shame. Significance: the goal — that he realize his error and turn back; discipline is constructive, never destructive.
v.15	ἐχθρός <i>enemy</i>	G2190 <i>echthros</i> Adjective (subst.) — Acc. Masc. Sg.	STR: hateful, an adversary. Significance: he is not your foe; he is family.
v.15	νουθετέω <i>admonish</i>	G3560 <i>noutheteō</i> Verb — Pres. Act. Imp. 2nd Pl.	THAY: lit. “to put in mind”; to warn, counsel. Significance: counsel him as a brother — “May I show you what the Word of God says?”

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.16	εἰρήνη <i>peace</i>	G1515 <i>eirēnē</i> Noun — Acc. Fem. Sg.	THAY: tranquility; the state of a soul assured of its salvation. Significance: peace with God (Romans 5:1), the peace of God (Philippians 4:7), and the God of peace (Philippians 4:9).
v.17	ἀσπασμός <i>salutation</i>	G783 <i>aspasmos</i> Noun — Nom. Masc. Sg.	STR: a greeting. Significance: Paul's handwritten closing greeting authenticates the letter (cf. 2:2).
v.17	σημεῖον <i>sign</i>	G4592 <i>sēmeion</i> Noun — Nom. Neut. Sg.	STR: a mark, token. Significance: the signature is "a sign in every epistle" — a test against forgeries.
v.18	χάρις <i>grace</i>	G5485 <i>charis</i> Noun — Nom. Fem. Sg.	THAY: undeserved kindness. Significance: saving grace (Ephesians 2:8–9), sharing grace (2 Corinthians 8:7), serving grace (Hebrews 12:28) — the letter ends where it began (1:2).

Grammar Abbreviation Key

Cases: Nom. · Gen. · Dat. · Acc. · Voc. | Number: Sg. · Pl. | Gender: Masc. · Fem. · Neut.

Verb Mood: Ind. · Imp. · Subj. · Opt. · Inf. · Ptc. | Tense: Pres. · Imperf. · Fut. · Aor. · Perf. · Plpf. | Voice: Act. · Mid. · Pass. |

Person: 1st/2nd/3rd Sg./Pl.

Hebrew Word Study: not included this week. Genesis 4 and Amos 3 are cited for their content in translation; no Hebrew term is a developed point of the message.

Study Questions

Part 1 — From the Commentary

Outline Point	Key Truth
Introduction	"Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). Yes — but help must be real help, not enabling.
I. Confirmation — 3:13	"But as for you, brethren": the faithful majority, working for their families and the church — don't grow weary of doing good; keep on keeping on.
II.A Warning — 3:14	Paul's word is God's Word. Note the disobedient person and withdraw fellowship ("Can two walk together?"), so that he may be ashamed — discipline is constructive.
II.B Caution — 3:15	Not a foe but family ("When you're here, you're family"). After prayer and a clear path, approach him as a brother and ask permission to show him the Word; if he refuses, Matthew 18.
III. Benediction — 3:16	Peace with God (Romans 5:1), the peace of God through prayer (Philippians 4:6–7; Peter asleep, Paul in the storm), and the God of peace who will never leave (Hebrews 13:5 — five negatives).

Outline Point	Key Truth
IV. Validation — 3:17	Paul's signature in every epistle, taking the pen from his amanuensis — perhaps because of poor eyesight.
V. Salutation — 3:18	Grace: saving, sharing, and serving.

Part 2 — Study Questions

1. What is the difference between helping a brother and enabling him, and how does this connect to the idle Thessalonians?

Leader answer: Enabling is “helping” someone continue in what is wrong — like giving money that buys drugs. Some in the church were enabling the idle brothers to keep not working and keep meddling. Real help may mean doing something distasteful, like withdrawing fellowship, so that the brother can see his error.

2. Why can Paul say that disobeying his epistle is disobeying God, and when can we say the same?

Leader answer: Paul's written and spoken apostolic word was God's Word, and Peter calls Paul's writings Scripture (2 Peter 3:15–16). We can say it only when we are quoting God's Word — not our own opinions.

3. What is the purpose of church discipline in 3:14–15?

Leader answer: Never destructive, always constructive: “that he may be ashamed,” realize his error, confess it, be forgiven, and be helped back into fellowship. He is not to be counted as an enemy but admonished as a brother — and done in a way that does not turn him away.

4. What steps does the teacher give for approaching an erring brother?

Leader answer: First, the Lord lays the problem on your heart; you are convinced it is your assignment; you pray hard; and you have a clear path from the Lord. Then approach him as family — “Brother Horatio, we are brothers and children of God; I'm concerned about you in this area” — and ask permission to show him from the Word where he has fallen short. If he says no, take the next step of Matthew 18.

5. Distinguish peace with God, the peace of God, and the God of peace.

Leader answer: Peace with God is settled and guaranteed by justification by faith (Romans 5:1). The peace of God is the experience we receive when we bring our anxieties to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6–7) — like Peter sleeping in prison. The God of peace is the Lord who will never leave a believer (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5, with its five negatives) and who is with all who practice what they learned (Philippians 4:9).

Part 3 — Passage Summary

Verse	Phrase	Summary
3:13	“do not grow weary in doing good”	The faithful majority must keep on keeping on.
3:14	“note that person ... that he may be ashamed”	Withdraw fellowship from the disobedient, aiming at restoration.
3:15	“admonish him as a brother”	Not a foe but family; counsel him from the Word.
3:16	“the Lord of peace Himself give you peace”	Peace with God, the peace of God, and the God of peace, for all.
3:17	“with my own hand, which is a sign”	Paul’s signature authenticates every letter.
3:18	“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all”	Saving, sharing, and serving grace.

⑤ APPLICATION

Closes the study · personal & corporate

1. Keep On Keeping On

2 Thessalonians 3:13 — “But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.”

Source: ③ Commentary, I.A–B; ④ Greek Word Study (ekkakeō, kalopoieō).

The faithful brothers in Thessalonica were carrying a double load — providing for their families and doing the work of the church — while others sat idle. Paul’s word is for them: don’t grow tired of doing good. The good is not the problem; the circumstances are. Serving God is done by grace, not to keep our salvation, which is a free and permanent gift.

Reflection: *What part of your service has begun to feel like a burden?*

Practical Step: Thank God this week for one specific opportunity to do good, and do it again with a fresh heart.

2. Help, Don’t Enable

2 Thessalonians 3:14 — “note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.”

Source: ③ Commentary, Introduction B and II.A.

Love sometimes requires us to do what is distasteful — to stop supporting a brother’s sin so that he can see it. The goal is never to toss him out, but to bring him to the point where he realizes his error and returns. Church discipline is always constructive.

Reflection: *Is there anyone you are “helping” in a way that keeps them from facing a wrong?*

Practical Step: Ask the Lord in prayer this week whether any of your help has become enabling, and what real help would look like.

3. Approach as Family

2 Thessalonians 3:15 — “Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

Source: ③ Commentary, II.B; Study Note “Still a Brother”; FGR — Hodges, The Epistles of John.

The erring believer is still a brother; his eternal life is not in question, but his fellowship is. So go only when the Lord has laid it on your heart, after hard prayer, with a clear path. Begin with brotherhood, name the concern, and ask permission to open the Word together. If he says yes, you may gain your brother; if no, Matthew 18 gives the next step.

Reflection: *When you have been corrected, what made it easier to receive?*

Practical Step: Write out the “Brother Horatio” approach in your own words and keep it in your Bible for the day you need it.

4. Never, Ever Alone

Hebrews 13:5 — “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Source: ③ Commentary, III.A–C; Study Note “The Emphatic Negatives”; FGR — Wilkin, Confident in Christ.

Peace with God is settled forever by faith in Christ. The peace of God is ours when we turn every anxiety into prayer — so that, like Peter, we can sleep the night before a crisis. And the

God of peace has stacked up five negatives to tell us He will never, ever leave us. Grace began this letter and grace ends it: saving grace, sharing grace, serving grace.

Reflection: *What anxiety do you need to turn into a request to God today?*

Practical Step: Each evening this week, write down one worry, pray it through Philippians 4:6–7, and leave it there.

End of Study · 2 Thessalonians 3:13–18