



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V25 N25

June 18, 2023

LIVING HOPE

“Counted Worthy”

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Life Purpose

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in his kingdom purposes for his glory.

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.”

Acts 20:24



Why will believers be made worthy of God's calling?

The Life Purpose creed defines the Core Belief in *individual* terms. As a Christian, “I believe,” “I am a steward,” “I have been redeemed” for the purpose of glorifying God through *my* participation in his kingdom purposes. The New Testament, of course, commands believers to glorify God. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the apostle writes: “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So *glorify God* in your body” (6:19b-20, ESV), and later in the same letter, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, *do all to the glory of God*” (10:31, ESV).

The Westminster Shorter Catechism defines the Core Belief in *collective* terms, tying its meaning to glorifying God *generally*. To the question, “What is the chief end of man?” the catechism answers, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” According to the catechism, this is the life purpose of *all human beings*. As a proof text for the first part, the catechism offers Psalm 86:8-10 (ESV), “*There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. 9 All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. 10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.*” And for the second part it offers Ps 144:15 (ESV), “*Blessed,*” or happy, “*are the people whose God is the LORD!*” God, the author and creator of life, created us to worship him, to glorify him in all things! But there is more here. By glorifying God, we find that we actually enjoy him. We find fellowship and communion with our heavenly Father that is eternal in scope. This is our true contentment! Being created to glorify God doesn't just benefit God (not that God could be enriched or benefit from us!). No, rather, we find that we, the created finite beings, are the ones who benefit infinitely. Of course, glorifying God and enjoying him forever is not possible apart from a relationship to him by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Life Purpose is a Core Belief, but *belief* is made manifest, that is, becomes evident in *behavior*. Be-

havior doesn't lie; it tells the truth about belief. When Moses *struck* the rock rather than *speaking* to it, God condemned him for his unbelief. In the wilderness, “*The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 ‘Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals’*” (Dt 20:7-8, NKJV). However, “*Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them’*” (vv. 10-12).

My point is simple. It's one thing to affirm belief in the Core Competency Life Purpose; it's quite another to faithfully express that belief in one's daily behavior. In my own case, regretfully I find that what matters most to me in life often isn't what matters most to God, and what matters most to God for my life often isn't what matters most to me. Subordinating my *many priorities* in life to his *one priority* for me is my greatest challenge spiritually speaking. The good news is there is hope for me and for you, too, if you find yourself in the same boat. As one unnamed writer observes: “Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 10 are indeed challenging to us. Whatever we do, do all to the glory of God. How miserably we fail at this. But here is the hope of the gospel: Having been robed in the righteousness of Christ, having been brought back into fellowship with God, we can, through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, truly strive to do all things to the glory of God” (“Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #1,” proclamationpca.com/blog/2015/1/9/westminster-shorter-catechism-qa-1).



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

11 *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.* 12 *We pray this 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.*

Read in other translations

11 *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,* 12 *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.* (ESV)

11 *So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.* 12 *Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.* (NLT)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "With this in mind" in v. 11.
- Circle "constantly" in v. 11.
- Box "that" (2x) indicating *content* in v. 11.
- Underline "make you worthy" and "bring to fruition" in v. 11.
- Circle "calling" in v. 11.
- Circle "every desire" and "every deed" in v. 11.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose/result* in v. 12.
- Circle "the name" in v. 12.
- Circle "glorified" in v. 12.
- Bracket "according to" in v. 12.
- Bracket "our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" in v. 12.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Verse 11 begins, “With *this* in mind.” With *what* in mind?
2. Why would Paul share the *content* of their prayers with the Thessalonians?
3. Identify the *content* of Paul’s two-fold petition for his readers.
4. To what does “his calling” refer in Paul’s first petition (cf. 1:5)?
5. Explain the meaning of the verb translated “bring to fruition” by the NIV (see note).
6. To what does “every desire for goodness” refer in Paul’s second petition?
7. Explain the *relationship* of God’s actions to the Thessalonians’ actions in verse 11.
8. Paul refers to the *reciprocal* glorification of Jesus and his people in verse 12. Describe what that will look like (cf. vv. 9-10).
9. This *reciprocal* glorification is “according to” grace. Explain what “according to” means (see note).
10. **Discussion:** If Paul stated in prayer what he wanted to see happen as a result of his prayer, talk about what he wanted to see happen in your life.

Commentary On The Text

Prayer is mentioned frequently in Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians (cf. 1Th 1:2; 3:10; 5:17, 25; 2Th 1:3, 11-12; 3:1-2). The prayer mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 might be called a *prayer report* because it isn't a *direct* prayer or a *wish* prayer, but a statement that prayer is being offered with specific content for specific purposes. (The difference between the various types of prayers is indicated by the mood of the verb—imperative, optative, or indicative.) However, even though it is not *grammatically* a wish prayer, it performs the same function as the one in 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13.

This raises an interesting question. Why would the apostle report the content of the prayer that he and his colleagues are regularly praying for his readers? One commentator gives this helpful answer: "One of the more effective ways of changing behavior is to let people overhear one's prayers for them. Like the parent who prays 'dear Lord, if only my child would live up to his potential' while the child can overhear it, Paul here offers a public wish prayer to be read out before the congregation. Its rhetorical function is not just to *convey information* about Paul's prayers but also to *instigate transformation*. One 'states in prayer what one hopes will happen as a result of the prayer'" (Ben Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 199-200, italics added). The transformation Paul wants to instigate is expressed in a two-fold petition found in verse 11. What he hopes will happen as a result of the prayer is found in verse 12.

With what he writes in verses 5-10 in mind—especially verse 5, "you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God"—Paul reports in verse 11 that he and his associates, Silas and Timothy, regularly pray, asking God to do two things for the Thessalonian Christians: 1) make them worthy of God's calling and 2) fulfill their every desire to do good prompted by faith.

With regard to the first petition, Paul has assured them that when the Lord comes to *reign*, they "will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God" (v. 5). Put differently, they will no doubt enter God's kingdom "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels" (v. 7). At that time, "those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel" (v. 8) will be "punished with everlasting destruction and *shut out* from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (v. 9), a reference to being *shut out* of the kingdom (cf. Mt 25:1-13; 31-46). So on the one hand, the Thessalonian Chris-

tians will certainly be counted worthy to *enter the kingdom*, which is "his calling," i.e., God's calling (v. 11a), and so will be in the Lord's presence to glorify and to admire him upon the inauguration of his earthly rule (v. 10). On the other hand, God must make them worthy of that calling in the meantime.

With regard to the second petition, Paul has thanked God for his readers' "work produced by faith" (1Th 1:3). Echoing that thought, he now asks God to fulfill their every desire to do good works prompted by faith (v. 11b)—something God has apparently continued to do from the beginning. God must make them worthy of his calling, but not apart from their participation in what he is doing. One commentator explains: "Paul prays that both the desires and the actions of the Thessalonians will be perfected so that they will long to do the good and will be faithful to carry out such desires. God 'completes' or 'fulfills' these things in the sense that he enables and empowers them to come to fruition. Here again is a prayer which involves both God's action and the actions of the Thessalonian converts as prompted and empowered by God" (Ben Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 200-201).

Paul reports in verse 12 that he and his colleagues thus pray "so that *the name* of our Lord Jesus might be glorified" in his readers and they "in him." Paul inserts "the name of" for emphasis. Doing so spotlights the *person* of Jesus. According to one commentator, "In the Bible the name stands for the person named, his character, conduct, reputation, and everything else about him. In praying thus, Paul was asking that God would fully glorify Jesus Christ in these saints" (Thomas L. Constable, "2 Thessalonians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 717). And reciprocally that God would glorify these saints in Jesus. "While the name of Jesus and his followers suffered dishonor in the sight of those who were disobedient to the call through the gospel, the Thessalonian church could anticipate the day when they as well as their Lord would be publicly honored. This glorification would be mutual: he in them and they *in him*" (Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC, 299). Paul writes that all of this will happen "according to the grace of our God" (v. 12), by which he means that it will happen *because* of grace and in *equal measure* to that grace.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 11 *with this in mind* Lit., “for which;” cf. “to this end” (ESV); “in this regard” (NET). The phrase refers either 1) to the Lord being honored among the saints (1:10), in order that the Lord may be glorified in his holy people and admired, we pray the following; or 2) to all that is mentioned in 1:5-10, “in order that you may be counted worthy of entering the kingdom, that you may receive rest, and that the Lord may be honored in you, we pray the following” (Richard C. Blight, *An Exegetical Summary of 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 2nd ed., 182); or 3) more specifically to 1:5 about being considered worthy of the kingdom. The second possibility is most likely given that verse 11 echoes verse 5 and verse 12 echoes verse 10 (Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 216).

v. 11 *constantly* Cf. 1Th 1:2; 2:13. The word does not mean “without stopping,” i.e., continuously, but rather “frequently,” “regularly,” or “habitually,” i.e., continually.

v. 11 *that* “‘That’ (*hina*) is not used to show *purpose* but rather the *content* of the prayer: ‘We pray that this will happen’” (Gary S. Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, ZECNT, 275, italics added). The *content* of Paul’s two-fold petition is expressed in two verbal clauses: “that God *may make you worthy* of his calling” and “that by his power he *may bring to fruition* your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.”

v. 11 *make you worthy* Cf. “count you worthy” (NIV©1984); see also 1Th 2:12; 2Th 1:5. “The verb here (*axioo*) is a simple form of the verb in verse 5 (*kataxioo*). There is considerable debate whether these two verbs mean ‘make worthy’ or ‘consider worthy.’ In the judgment of one commentator, “The first option better fits the context, but the second option better fits with usage elsewhere” (Holmes, 215). Since God is the one who counts believers worthy and is ultimately the one who makes them worthy, there is little difference in meaning between “counts you worthy” and “makes you worthy” in this context. One commentator admits, “Even though this means to ‘consider’ worthy, it is implied that the prayer is that Paul wants God to ‘make’ them worthy [NCBC]” (Blight, 199).

v. 11 *calling* “This probably corresponds to their worthiness for the kingdom mentioned in v.5 . . . the present emphasis on Christ’s return (v.10) and the eschatological kingdom of God (v.5) argues for extending the scope of ‘calling’ to include its future outworking at God’s righteous judgment (v.5)” (Robert L. Thomas, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:316).

v. 11 *bring to fruition* Cf. “he may fulfill” (NIV©1984, ESV, NET, GNT). “The verb translated *may fulfill* could be used in other contexts to mean ‘to pay a debt,’ but here the sense is rather to complete or finish something already initiated (Rom. 15.19; 2 Cor. 10.6; Gal. 5.14; Phil. 2.2; Col. 1.25; 4.12). This prayer recognizes that God is the ultimate source of the good they do and that the complete fulfillment of what they ought to do as those who are called depends on God’s intervention in their lives. This in no way minimizes the need for responsible volition and action on their part (cf. 2.13-15)!” (Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC, 297).

v. 11 *every desire* Lit., “every resolve of goodness;” cf. “every resolve for good” (ESV); “every desire for goodness” (HCSB); “all your desire for goodness” (GNT). “This is the Thessalonians’ resolve and the content of that resolve is goodness, that is, to be or to do good [Ea, EBC, El, HNTC, ICC, SSA, TH, Wd, NASB, NJB, TEV, TNT]: may God bring to completion the good you resolve to do” (Blight, 199)—i.e., “every deed prompted by faith.”

v. 11 *every deed* Cf. 1Th 1:3. One commentator suggests that the two expressions “are likely an instance of hendiadys, in which the second phrase explains the first” (Holmes, 216); cf. “all the good things your faith prompts you to do” (NLT).

v. 12 *according to* The preposition may indicate *reason*; cf. “This is all made possible *because of* the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ” (NLT). It may also indicate *norm*, i.e., “in accordance with;” cf. “in accordance with the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB)—the glory will be as great as the grace. “However, some who classify this as the norm of glorification also explain it to be the reason for glorification [El, Hb, Mn, Wd]” (Blight, 303). Both connotations of the preposition, *reason* and *norm*, are likely present in this context.

v. 12 *and the Lord Jesus* Lit., “the God of us, and Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. NIV margin, “God and Lord, Jesus Christ”). The text either refers to two persons of the Godhead, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, or to one person, Jesus, who is both God and Lord. Commentators are divided on the question. For example, F. F. Bruce favors the first interpretation, calling the second “an un-Pauline locution” (*Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 45, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 157), while Green favors the second, explaining, “They will glorify and be glorified by no less than the most exalted *God and Lord*, the one who stands as he true source of all things” (300). The first is more likely, “given the immediate context [cf. “our God” v. 11] and usage elsewhere in the Thessalonian letters (1 Thess. 1:3; 3:11; 2 Thess. 1:1-2; cf. 2:16)” (Holmes, 216-17).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

God will make you worthy of his calling as you seek to do good prompted by faith, so that when Jesus comes to reign, he will be glorified in you and you in him.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

When my oldest son turned four, he had to answer questions about opposites for his well check. The doctor would say things like, “cold,” “big,” “inside,” and my son would have to respond with the opposite, “hot,” “small,” “outside.” When the doctor said, “If Mommy is a woman, then Daddy is a...” my son responded vehemently with, “HERO!” Dads, you are indeed our heroes! You’re larger than life, tougher than anyone other dad on the planet and the best “tickle monster” around. Your strong arms fiercely protect and gently serve your family well. You’re the best playmate when kids are preschoolers, goofiest board game opponent when they’re preteens and most solid source of wisdom as they turn into adults. We know that being a dad isn’t always easy but you make it look effortless. We are praying for you today and always that God would continue to change and mold you to look more like Jesus and equip you to be what He’s called you to be. We pray your faith continues to grow and that you would glorify God and honor Him with your words and actions. Whether you’re a techy IT dad, construction worker, or middle manager living in cube city, we pray you’re fulfilled at work and that you have opportunities to speak biblical truth to those around you. We pray you continue to lead your family well and “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21). Press on, dads. We love you and want to celebrate you this week!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12.

1. What does Paul pray for the Thessalonians?
2. What can God’s power do for believers according to this passage?
3. Why does Paul pray this?

What Do You Think?

What does it mean to be made worthy of His calling? What does that look like in real life?

What Do You Do?

How does your dad show he is worthy of God’s calling, desiring goodness and walking in faith? What can you do this week to show you appreciate him?

CORE COMPETENCY: Life Purpose

I believe God wants me to glorify Him in all I say and do.

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 8:28

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purposes.”

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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