

# How To Recognize Faith, Hope, and Love

## I Thessalonians 1:3

### Introduction:

- I. The Bible uses several “trilogies” to illustrate points for us to understand.
  - a. We have the Trinity, for instance.
  - b. Other than the “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” we have another trilogy mentioned several times in the New Testament: “Faith, Hope, and Love.”
    - i. Truly these can be analogies to our Trinity of God:
      1. God is Faithful.
      2. Jesus expresses the Love of God.
      3. The Spirit gave us the scriptures that we might have Hope.
- II. The trilogy of faith, hope, and love is found in several places.
  - a. I Corinthians 13:13
  - b. Hebrews 10:19-25 (though not in the KJV)
  - c. Our text for today, I Thessalonians 1:3
    - i. “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.”
    - ii. Paul explains that faith, hope, and love are not just statements, but rather they are sentiments that *will* be expressed.
      1. Faith is expressed by works.
      2. Love is expressed by labor.
      3. Hope is expressed by patience/endurance.
- III. By studying these today, we will learn to recognize faith, hope, and love in our lives, so that we are what we truly claim to be.

### Discussion:

- I. Work of Faith
  - a. Here, Paul is probably talking about the work that the Christians at Thessalonica were doing by faith.
    - i. We are going to emphasize this type of work when we discuss love.
  - b. However, faith is also to be recognized by works (James 2:14-26).

- c. I once asked the class I have been teaching on Sunday mornings to tell me what a person might do because of faith. Here are some answers.
  - i. You would put God first (Exodus 20:3):
    - 1. What is generally a good amount to give when we talk about giving to the Lord?
      - a. Many people, borrowing from the Old Testament Law, still say that 10% is to be expected.
    - 2. What about with our time? What if we gave 10% of our time to the Lord? How much is that?
      - a. That is 2 hours and 24 minutes per day!
  - ii. HEARING: You would read the Bible (Psalm 1:1-3):
    - 1. Study of the Scriptures, especially at home, is something that I believe the church in many places has failed to do.
      - a. Knowledge of books of the Bible, basic doctrine, etc., is not as widespread as it once was.
      - b. How much time do you spend in prayer and the study of God's Word?
        - i. Most Audio Bibles have a running time of about 75 hours.
        - ii. If we spent an hour in prayer per day, and an hour and a half in the reading of the Bible, we could read the Bible on average in 50 days!
  - iii. BELIEVING: You would trust God to take care of you (Phil. 4:6):
    - 1. You would pray more, you would believe in your prayers, and you would worry less. All of these were answers that I received.
    - 2. One of the holes in our society is pride and arrogance. We are brought up to be self-supporting, yet God wants us to be dependent on Him.
  - iv. REPENTING: You would not behave badly. You would do what is right (Acts 2:38):
    - 1. What is repentance, if it is not correcting your steps when you notice you have gone the wrong way?
    - 2. True faith in God will lead you to put your life right before God.
  - v. BEING BAPTIZED: You would obey God (Matthew 7:21-23):
    - 1. In doing the will of God, you would devote yourself to doing all of the actions he has prescribed, including baptism.

## II. Labour of Love

- a. Love is always described as an active emotion.
  - i. I Corinthians 13:1-3 explains that an inactive love is no love at all.
- b. Love has two aspects:

- i. Patience (Ephesians 4:31)
  - 1. We will talk about a different kind of patience when we study hope in a moment.
  - 2. The patience of love will cause us to:
    - a. Have a long fuse/not be easily angered (Ephesians 26-27).
      - i. Staying angry gives two opportunities to the devil—your hatred, and their leaving the truth (II Corinthians 5-11).
    - b. Forbear our rights (I Corinthians 6:7).
      - i. Love “seeketh not her own” (I Cor. 13:5).
    - c. Forgive others as we have been forgiven (Col 3:13).
      - i. If we do not forgive men, we will not be forgiven (Matt. 6:14-15).
- ii. Kindness (Ephesians 4:32)
  - 1. As patience is the “reactive” aspect of love, kindness is the “proactive” aspect.
  - 2. Love acts before it is told:
    - a. It lays down its life (rights, possessions, etc.) for the other person (I John 3:16-18).
    - b. It seeks someone to help (Luke 10:25-37).
    - c. It starts the process of repentance and forgiveness (Matt. 18:15).

### III. Patience of Hope

- a. Patience toward a person is one thing (which we have discussed previously concerning love), but patience in hope is another thing.
  - i. “Hope” in the Bible is not desire, as in what the children are hoping to get for Christmas.
  - ii. “Hope” is an expectation to receive what has been promised.
    - 1. Romans 5 describes our hope and what makes it powerful.
      - a. First of all, we rejoice in hope because we have been justified in Christ by faith.
      - b. Not only that, but: tribulation→patience→experience→hope.
        - i. Hope is strengthened by trial!
      - c. Finally, hope does not disappoint, because the Spirit has expressed God’s love in our hearts:
        - i. God sent his son to die for us while we were still sinners.
        - ii. We were reconciled by his death
        - iii. We shall be saved by his life.
          - 1. If God loved us that much when we were sinners, surely he will do everything he can to save us when we are righteous!
- 2. Romans 8:24-25 – If we hope for the unseen, we will wait for it with patience.