

Speaking to the soul



Blessings through people

We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

Paul had great affection for the Christians in what we would now call northern Greece. He had spent time with them and knew them well. He therefore knew that they weren't perfect and, in this letter, went on to spell out some very specific concerns that he had about the way in which they were living. However, what I love about these opening verses is that he came up with a beautiful list of the ways in which his life was blessed by them.

It's so easy to focus on the problems of life. We can probably all identify people who wind us up, and who are a pain to us. We can think of their annoying habits and the way in which they make our life so much harder than it needs to be. I suspect that Paul could have come up with such a list about the people in Thessalonica, but he chose to identify the blessings instead. They were faithful and loving in their actions and had a firm hope for the future because of their faith in Jesus. It's important for us, too, to reflect on the people around us and to identify their good qualities. Let's thank God for the privilege of knowing them and praise God for the ways in which their lives enhance ours. They're not perfect but then, neither are we! But, however imperfect they may be, their lives bring God's blessings to us.

The key to what Paul says in these verses is that he prayed for them constantly. That shows the level of commitment that he had for them. One of the most transforming moments for me as a teenager was when a youth leader told me that he and his wife regularly prayed for me. I was amazed! What it revealed to me was their heart and their

commitment to me. So, let's keep praying for those around us – and give thanks!

QUESTION

In what ways has God blessed you through the people you know?

PRAYER

Loving Father, keep me constant in prayer for the people in my life and help me to give thanks for them. Amen

