

Confidence For Uncertain People

II Thessalonians 1:1–12

- Historians who study the history of religion call this the principle of retribution.

- But “sometimes” is quite different than “always”.

1. Looking for Signs of Life -1:1—3

- The basis of Paul's confidence is their growth in faith and their growth in love.
- The word Paul uses here for “growing more and more” literally means “super-growing”.

- When we're feeling uncertain, we can regain our spiritual confidence by **looking for signs of spiritual life.**
- Acceptance before God is a *free gift*.

- An infallible indicator that we're accepted by God is faith in Jesus that creates Christ-like love for people.

2. Spiritual Stamina - 2 Thess. 1:4

- The word for “boast” here doesn’t mean “to brag”, but it means “to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone.”
- The word “perseverance” refers to the “capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances.”

- When we are feeling uncertain, we can regain our confidence by responding to problems with spiritual stamina.
- The life of following Jesus is a marathon, not a sprint.

3. Anticipating Future Vindication

- But what we see Paul do here is refocus the notion of retribution forward, to the end of the age.
- This word describes an unveiling, pulling back the curtain to make something previously hidden now visible.

- The word translated “obey” in v.8 often means “to respond to someone knocking or calling at a door.”
- God refuses to force anyone to be in a relationship with him.
- When we’re feeling uncertain, we can regain our confidence by anticipating God’s future vindication.

4. Reflecting Jesus in the Way We Live

- Paul's prayer is that their acceptance by God might be worked out through their actions and through their character.
- In other words, God's ways so permeate our lives that our purposes become his purposes.

- So to glorify the name of Jesus is to have our character reflect a lifestyle that *honors Jesus*.
- When we're feeling uncertain, we can regain our confidence by striving to reflect Jesus in the way we live.