

# Giving Thanks for Others

## Love

### Foundation

#### Bible passage: 1 Thessalonians 1.2-3 and 2 Thessalonians 1.3

In most of the letters of Paul in the Bible he writes about giving thanks for other people. Whilst there are several different reasons why he gave thanks we will focus on just three in units 10 to 12.

In both his letters to “the church of the Thessalonians” Paul gives thanks for love. His mention of this in his letters is in itself a form of giving thanks as it would be read by the very people he was giving thanks for. But actually, it is his thanksgiving to God that Paul describes. This is an important aspect of Christian thanksgiving. When others do things, as the Thessalonians did, for which we are grateful, it is good to thank them. But we also recognise that they are created by God, and have become Christians because of God’s work in them, so it is also right to give thanks to God for them. Such thanksgiving is an encouragement to those who have done the good but also helps stop them from getting too full of themselves and their own achievements.

“We give thanks to God .. remembering .. your .. labour of love”

In the first letter Paul gives thanks for their “labour of love”, amongst other things. We don’t know exactly what he means by their “labour of love” but later in the letter he speaks about how Timothy had brought news of their faith and love and how they remembered Paul kindly and longed to see him again (1 Thess 3.6). This was



*The Apostle Paul’s phrase “labour of love” has become widely used, including in more recent times, for films, books, plays and albums.*

an encouragement to Paul. It was clearly a good thing for them to do, and so also helps us to learn from their example.

In his second letter Paul gives thanks for their love for one another, and the fact that it was increasing (2 Thess 1.3).

Many times, in the Bible Christians are encouraged to love one another. It is one part of loving our neighbour as ourselves. Jesus told His disciples to love one another because He loved us first (Jn 15.12). Therefore, the example of Jesus love by coming into the world and dying, serving them, and dying for our sins shows us that such love is not just words or sentiment, but practical and costly. He also told his followers to love one another so others might see this and come to believe and trust in Jesus (Jn 13.35).

#### **Booklet:**

What does Paul give thanks for here? - For love.  
How did Paul give thanks? - In prayer to God, and in writing a letter to them.

#### **Reflection:**

How do you show love to other people?  
Is it sometimes hard to show love? Why? (Paul talks about “labour of love”.)



**We should give thanks to God for others and their love and so remind ourselves how important self-giving love is.**