

LOVE ABOUND

LOVE GROWS

- our love for one another may grow (1 Thess 3:12; 2 Thess 1:3; 2 Peter 1:7–8)

2 THESSALONIANS 1:3

- "because" introduces two reasons why Paul, Silas, and Timothy should always thank God for the Thessalonians:
 - (1) 'your faith is growing beyond measure'—the present tense of *hyperauxano* indicates their faith is continually growing, becoming stronger and stronger,
 - (2) *auxano* 'grow, increase' is used of flowers growing (Matt 6:28) and of a mustard seed growing into a large plant (Luke 13:19),
 - (3) the prefixed preposition *hyper* means 'above measure' (severe testing helped their faith grow—"faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure" 1:4)
- 'and the love of every single one' emphasizes individual believers in the local church:
 - loving one another starts with individuals—you must do your part, not just wait for others to love you
 - 'of all of you for one another' refers to the whole church: all must love and all must be loved
- 'is growing'—the present tense of *pleonazo* 'grow, increase' indicates a steady growth in their ability to love each other—
 - including their enemies and the unlovely
 - the church at Thessalonika was fantastic: their faith and love were continually increasing—let's be like them (note Paul's commendation—"We ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God!" 1:4)

1 THESSALONIANS 3:12

- "increase and abound in love for one another" confirms that our love for one another may grow
- "may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love" indicates the Lord Jesus is the cause of this growth in love
- "for all men" takes us beyond the local church—our love for all men, both believers and unbelievers, may also grow
 - "but you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18) is called the Royal Law—the second most important commandment in the Bible (Mark 12:31)

2 PETER 1:8

- this verse confirms that both brotherly-love (*philadelphia*) and love (*agape*) can grow
 - 'if' introduces a condition—maybe you have these qualities, maybe you don't
 - 'these qualities' refer to the preceding eight virtues mentioned in verses 5–7:
 - (1) faith (*pistis*)—comes from hearing God's Word,
 - (2) moral excellence (*arete*)—comes from obedience to God's moral commandments,
 - (3) knowledge (*gnosis*)—comes from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit,
 - (4) self-control (*egkrateia*)—comes from knowledge and from the Holy Spirit (a fruit of the Spirit),
 - (5) endurance or steadfastness (*hypomone*)—comes from testing and self-control,
 - (6) godliness (*eusebeia*)—maintaining a godly attitude while persevering, not complaining or cursing God,
 - (7) brotherly love (*philadelphia*)—comes from the Holy Spirit,
 - (8) love (*agape*)—comes from the Holy Spirit (a fruit of the Spirit)
- 'render you neither useless nor unfruitful'—*argos* means "unemployed, lazy, useless" and *akarpos* means "unproductive"—
 - it's possible to be a useless and unproductive Christian
 - 'are yours and are increasing' means you will be useful to God and productive in your Christian life if these eight virtues are present and continually growing in your soul