

GROWING IN WHAT MATTERS MOST

January 11, 2015 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 by Bob Branch

MAIN IDEA: Overall, what represents progress from God's point of view? It will largely fall under the 3 core foundations: faith, love and hope.

"We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 1:2–3 ESV (cf. 5:8)

"So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." **1 Corinthians 13:13** ESV

Faith acts.

Love labors.

Hope endures.

FAITH acts. *What is faith?* Biblical faith is active trust and belief expressed in obedience. (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

LOVE labors. Sacrificing love. Love that sees the best for the other as primary and acts upon it. God kind of love.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." **1 John 3:16**

HOPE endures. At heart, Biblical hope is to expect with confidence because of who God is. (Titus 2:11–14)

The central character in the story is JESUS!

Faith ACTS.

Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." **Luke 19:8**

(Matt. 8:5f; 9:20; 9:27f; 5:22f; Gen. 12; Heb. 11:8; Mk. 5:36; Dan. 3)

What is the state of your faith?

Love LABORS.

"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." **Galatians 5:6**

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." **1 Corinthians 13:4–7** (1 Thes. 2:7–8)

What is the state of your love?

Hope ENDURES.

"we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." **Romans 8:28**

"I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary."

Revelation 2:3 ESV