

## The Cost of Investing in Others – Part Two

"...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 1:3

Note how Paul combines "faith, love, hope," as he does in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, 1 Corinthians 13:13, and Colossians 1:4-5. When he says "work of faith," he calls attention to the fact that the genuineness of their faith can be seen in the fruit that it produces. Faith manifests itself by its works – its active exertion; love by its toils – its works of self-denial; and hope by its patience – its endurance amid trials and discouragements; "...the work which comes of faith, the labor which springs from love, the patience which is born of hope." Faith is the source of all Christian virtues, love is the sustaining principle of the Christian life, and hope is the light guiding us to the life to come. These, work...labor...and steadfastness, are the aspects of faith...love...and hope that can be seen as fruit indicative of genuine conversion.

This is the first time Paul combines these three words, giving them in their logical order: "faith" rests on the past; "love" works in the present; "hope" looks to the future. God executes His will in the world in answer to the prayers of His people. From a human perspective, people come to Christ because God found people who prayed for them. John Knox prayed, "God give me Scotland or I die!"

These are the marks of a disciple and the ground for Paul giving thanks: "Work of faith" – Disciple making is a work of faith. The greatest test of faith is to trust God for people. The people you influence are those that trust you. "Labor of Love" – Disciple making is a labor of love; it requires endurance. Love binds together; husband = house band. "Patience of Hope" – Disciple making involves the patience of hope. Hope motivates. Those who are patient with you, because they hope you will do well, motivate you.