

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,
direct our way unto you.

Analysis

Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you—autos de ho Theos kai Patēr hēmōn kai ho Kyrios hēmōn Iēsous kateuthynai tēn hodon hēmōn pros hymas (αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς). Note the singular verb kateuthynai (κατευθύναι, 'may he direct') despite compound subject (God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ)—implying unity of divine persons. Kateuthynō means 'to make straight, guide directly.' Paul prays for divine removal of obstacles (2:18) preventing reunion.

This prayer reveals sovereignty's practicality: Paul made plans, sent Timothy, wrote letters—yet ultimately depended on God to 'direct our way.' Human effort and divine sovereignty aren't competitive but complementary. The phrase autos de ('himself') emphasizes God personally, not merely circumstances. Satan hindered (2:18); only God can override satanic opposition. The inclusion of Jesus Christ as joint subject of prayer addressed to God demonstrates Paul's high Christology—he prays to God and Christ interchangeably, implying Christ's deity. This casual trinitarian language predates later creedal formulations yet assumes divine unity-in-plurality.

Historical Context

Paul probably never returned to Thessalonica during this missionary journey (Acts ended before recording such a visit, though 2 Cor 7:5; 8:1 imply later Macedonian

ministry). His prayer for divine direction wasn't answered immediately—teaching patient submission to God's timing. Yet the prayer's spirit (pastoral love, concern for completing their instruction) was answered through this letter and possibly later visits. God sometimes denies specific requests while granting broader intentions. Paul wanted personal reunion; God provided written instruction (this epistle) that has benefited countless believers beyond the Thessalonians.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you balance active planning and effort with prayerful dependence on God to 'direct your way'?
2. What does Paul's casual use of singular verb for compound subject (God and Christ) teach about early Christian trinitarianism?
3. How do you respond when God denies specific prayer requests while fulfilling broader intentions (as Paul's desire to strengthen them was met through this letter, not personal visit)?

Interlinear Text

Αὐτὸς	δὲ	ὁ	θεὸς	καὶ	πατὴρ	ἡμῶν	καὶ	ὁ	κύριος
himself	Now	G3588	God	and	Father	our	and	G3588	Lord
G846	G1161		G2316	G2532	G3962	G2257	G2532		G2962
ἡμῶν	Ἰησοῦς	Χριστός	κατευθύναι	τὴν	ὁδὸν	ἡμῶν	πρὸς		
our	Jesus	Christ	direct	G3588	way	our	unto		
G2257	G2424	G5547	G2720		G3598	G2257	G4314		
ὕμᾱς·									
you									
G5209									

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:32 (Parallel theme): (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 (References Jesus): Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (References Jesus): To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org