

# 1 Thessalonians 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

## Analysis

**And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you**—hymas de ho Kyrios pleonasai kai perisseuai tē agapē eis allēlous kai eis pantas kathaper kai hēmeis eis hymas (ὁμᾶς δὲ ὁ Κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς). Two verbs intensify: pleonazō (πλεονάζω, 'to increase/multiply') and perisseuō (περισεύω, 'to abound/overflow')—love should not merely exist but multiply and overflow. Agape must grow toward two targets: eis allēlous (εἰς ἀλλήλους, 'toward one another,' believers) and eis pantas (εἰς πάντας, 'toward all,' including unbelievers and enemies).

**Even as we do toward you** (kathaper kai hēmeis eis hymas, καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς)—Paul models the love he commands. His sacrificial ministry (2:7-12), anxious concern (3:5), and overwhelming joy at their perseverance (3:9) demonstrate agape surpassing professional duty. Love's two dimensions (internal to believing community, external to all people) fulfill Jesus's dual command: love believers (John 13:34-35) and love enemies (Matt 5:44). Only divine intervention ('the Lord make you') produces love exceeding natural capacity. Supernatural love authenticates Christian witness (John 13:35).

## Historical Context

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The Thessalonians lived in a hostile environment—neighbors had attacked them, authorities threatened them, family ostracized them. Natural response would be defensive withdrawal or retaliatory hatred. Instead, Paul prays for increasing, overflowing love toward fellow believers and 'all people' (including persecutors). This countercultural love, possible only through Christ, becomes compelling witness. Roman emperor Julian the Apostate later complained that Christianity spread because 'the impious Galileans support not only their own poor but ours as well'—enemies couldn't ignore Christians' practical love.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How do you distinguish between natural affection and supernatural *agape* that increases, abounds, and extends even to enemies?
2. What evidence demonstrates that your love is growing ('increase and abound') rather than stagnant or diminishing?
3. How does Paul's modeling of sacrificial love ('even as we do toward you') challenge leaders to exemplify what they teach?

## Interlinear Text

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ὤμᾱς	δὲ	ὁ	κύριος	πλεονάσαι	καὶ	περισεύσαι	τῇ
<b>you</b>	<b>And</b>	G3588	<b>the Lord</b>	<b>make</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>abound</b>	G3588
G5209	G1161		G2962	G4121	G2532	G4052	
ἀγάπη	εἰς	ἀλλήλους	καὶ	εἰς	πάντας	καθάπερ	
<b>in love</b>	<b>do toward</b>	<b>another</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>do toward</b>	<b>all</b>	<b>as</b>	
G26	G1519	G240	G2532	G1519	G3956	G2509	
καὶ	ἡμεῖς	εἰς	ὤμᾱς				
<b>and</b>	<b>we</b>	<b>do toward</b>	<b>you</b>				
G2532	G2249	G1519	G5209				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Philippians 1:9** (Love): And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

**Matthew 22:39** (Love): And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

**Romans 13:8** (Love): Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

**1 Thessalonians 5:15** (Parallel theme): See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

**Galatians 5:22** (Love): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

**2 Thessalonians 1:3** (Love): We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

**Galatians 5:6** (Love): For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.