

## Live a Life That is Worthy

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Throughout history, there have been great men and women. Some of these people were known for public speaking. Mark Twain was known as a humorist. He toured all over the world as a public speaker. He was also someone who was greatly skilled at using words. Some were known for their words in writing like Rudyard Kipling who wrote poems and stories like the Jungle Book, Kim, and Gunga Din. Some great thinkers were known for their tough words during difficult times. Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister of Great Britain during WWII. He was known for his gruffness and candor which helped to strengthen England during their fight against Nazi Germany. Churchill would speak during the darkest moments for England. At one of the times Churchill was to speak, his speech was given the customary editorial review by paid staff to check for errors and mistakes. This speech was given to a person who took great pride in grammar and filled Churchill's speech with red ink corrections. The speech became stiff and very correct. Churchill handed the speech back to the paid staff with this note at the bottom, "This is the kind of nonsense up with which I will not put!" You will notice that Churchill used very poor grammar in this response and he gave his speech with the unedited version. However, Churchill knew what the people needed in his own words. Words can become very important. Churchill's words of courage and strength helped England to survive during the tough years of the war. As we continue with our series on Paul's letter to the Thessalonian Church, we discover how important words are to Paul. Some of the words he would use through the guidance of the Holy Spirit would be used in other letters he had written to other churches. Today, we are going to look at a few words that were important to Paul.

Let's turn to 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-6 where we read this from Paul, "2 For you yourselves know, brothers *and sisters*, that our <sup>[a]</sup>reception among you was not in vain, <sup>2</sup>but after we had already suffered and been treated abusively in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of

God <sup>[b]</sup>amid much <sup>[c]</sup>opposition. <sup>3</sup> For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or <sup>[d]</sup>by way of deceit; <sup>4</sup> but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not intending to please people, but to *please* God, who <sup>[e]</sup>examines our hearts. <sup>5</sup> For we never came <sup>[f]</sup>with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext <sup>[g]</sup>for greed—God is *our* witness— <sup>6</sup> nor did we seek honor from people, either from you or from others, though <sup>[h]</sup>we could have <sup>[i]</sup>asserted our authority as apostles of Christ. (NASB – [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))

Paul starts out talking about his first visit with them that only lasted a few weeks because he had to leave when heavy persecution came against him in this big city. Even though it was a short visit, much was accomplished. In fact, Paul was always being persecuted about everywhere he went. Paul states in verse 2 that they told the church the “gospel” even in the face of much opposition. Paul mentions this term again in verse 4. Paul and his other preachers were entrusted with the gospel, so they had to speak it to the people. The term “gospel” was a very important term to Paul. In the KJV, the term “gospel” is used about 104 times in the New Testament. Paul uses the term about 75 times out of the 104. This term is very important to Paul. The Greek term Paul uses here for “gospel” is “euangelion” – in which is a noun and it simple means “the good news” (Strong’s Concordance). This noun comes from the Greek verb word for “gospel” which is “euangelizo” and it means to preach the good news – In the NT it always refers to the death, burial, resurrection, and witness about Jesus Christ including its implications for humankind’s relationship to God (Strong’s Concordance). In other words, Paul told the Thessalonian Church about the death, burial, resurrection about Jesus Christ, and how that had implications on humankind’s relationship with God. Not only that, but Paul also witnessed to the Church about his own experience with Jesus. Paul was a witness to the working of the gospel message of Jesus in his own life. We just celebrated Easter and that event is all about the gospel message. Our job is like Paul’s job, we must continue to carry that message onto others so that they may hear and understand why Jesus had to die so we can have a relationship with God, our Creator. Plus, Paul tells us that he even did it under strong opposition. That didn’t stop Paul. In fact, tradition has it that Paul would be beheaded for telling others about Jesus and the cross. Paul states this in 2 Corinthians 5: 14-21, “<sup>14</sup> For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; <sup>15</sup> and He died for all, so

that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore from now on we recognize no one <sup>[a]</sup>by the flesh; even though we have known Christ by the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *this person is* a new <sup>[b]</sup>creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. <sup>18</sup> Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and <sup>[c]</sup>He has <sup>[d]</sup>committed to us the word of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* <sup>[e]</sup>sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NASB – [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))”

Paul states here that because of Christ’s love in them, they are ambassadors for Jesus which compels them to tell others that they need to be reconciled to God through Jesus. There is no other way one can have a relationship with God without going through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the One who went to the cross and became our Perfect Lamb. That perfect Lamb produced the blood needed to cleanse us of our past sin permanently. Plus, Paul tells us in verse 17 that we will become a new creation because of this gospel message. Many Christians today don’t want to tell other people about Jesus. What drove Paul to do this? Remember, back in verse 14 Paul states that the love of Jesus controlled them. If we go back to Thessalonians, we can see the evidence of how this love from Jesus helps us to present the gospel message to others.

In 1 Thessalonians 2: 7 – 9, we read this, “<sup>7</sup> But we <sup>[i]</sup>proved to be <sup>[k]</sup>gentle <sup>[l]</sup>among you. As a nursing *mother* <sup>[m]</sup>tenderly cares for her own children, <sup>8</sup> in the same way we had a fond affection for you and were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own <sup>[n]</sup>lives, because you had become <sup>[o]</sup>very dear to us.

<sup>9</sup> For you recall, brothers *and sisters*, our labor and hardship: *it was by working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, that we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.* (NASB – [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))

Paul states in verse 7 that they were “gentle” with Thessalonians with the gospel message. Paul was delighted to share the gospel of God to them. Some other translations have “like young children” and I think that is a bad translation because I have known some mean little kids in my lifetime. The Greek term Paul uses means “gentle”. Out of love for them, Paul was gentle and delighted to let them know about Jesus and why He died for them. When we tell others about Jesus, we need the love of Jesus to help us to give the gospel message in the right way. For the Thessalonians, they needed gentleness from Paul. Plus, Paul did it out of love for them (verse 8). Paul had fond affection for them and he was only there for a few weeks before he had to leave. You see, the love of Jesus helps us to be gentle and helps us to love people we don’t even know. It’s easier at times to tell our own friends and relatives. However, the love of Jesus compels us to reach people we don’t even know out of love for them. Paul would only use this same Greek term for “gentle” one other time which is found in 2 Timothy where Paul tells Timothy to be gentle unto all men. One time, I was at Harper’s Ferry to hike around and I was approached by a male that started to tell me about the gospel message. He didn’t ask if I believed in Jesus or not. I guess the shape of my head told him I was an unbeliever. Anyway, after he was done, I told him I was already a believer in Jesus. He got very mad and left right away. He was telling others with the wrong motive. He should have been happy I already knew Jesus as my Savior. Not only do we need the love of Jesus to compel us to tell others the gospel message, we also need to do something else.

Paul adds this in 1 Thessalonians 2: 10-12, “<sup>10</sup> You are witnesses, and so *is God, of how devoutly and rightly and blamelessly we* <sup>[a]</sup>*behaved toward you* <sup>[a]</sup>*believers; <sup>11</sup> just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, <sup>12</sup> so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.* (NASB – [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))”

Paul had set the example for them on how to present the gospel message. They believed it and became believers of Jesus. They believed this because of how Paul and his helpers acted in their presence. They were devoted, righteous

and blameless. The reason Paul states this is because they were living out the life they were to live. Paul states in verse 12 that they did this so that the Thessalonian church would walk in a manner worthy of the God who called them into His own kingdom and glory. Let's narrow this down to "walk in a manner worthy of God". These words can be found in other letters from Paul in the New Testament. In Colossians 1: 10, we read, "10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, [a]to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and [b]increasing in the [c]knowledge of God; (NASB – [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))."

We also find this in Ephesians 4: 1, "4 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, (NASB – [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))"

If something is taught more than once in the Bible, there is a good chance it is very important to us. Paul uses this phrase more than once in his letters. I looked up the Greek words Paul uses here and it means suitably – to do something in a manner that is appropriate to a person or thing (Strong's Concordance). In other words, we walk out our lives in a manner that is appropriate to our Lord. If we don't, then we taint or destroy the gospel message we present to people. If we continue to live a sinful lifestyle, the gospel message doesn't and can't fit in because Jesus came to help us to live a holy life, not to continue in a life filled with sin. Not only that, but if we really love our Lord, we will want to walk in a manner that is worthy / appropriate to the Lord. This is why so many people won't go to church is because of what's inside the church – hate, bitterness, gossip, and all the other things that our culture teaches. If these items are inside a church, there is no need to go inside. If we walk in a manner that is worthy of Jesus, then the church will be different from what is going on in the culture. I don't like going into Lowe's or Home Depot. Both of them stores are the same to me. I like going into Rural King because it's a different kind of store. If we are to present the gospel message of Jesus, we must be living out that message in full. We don't want to sin and we want to love our Lord with everything we have. Then we can love people which will compel us to present the gospel message to them in a gentile way. We all can be a Winston Churchill in the time we are living in. Let's allow the Spirit of God to give us the love that will help us to say the right words so the people around us

can understand the saving message of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul is trying to tell the church of his day and to our day as well. We are Jesus' ambassadors.

*The Strongest Strong's Concordance.* Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2001.