

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Helping the Baby to Grow Up
1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
Part 7

I would like to wish all the father's here this morning, Happy Father's Day! And to take this occasion to complete **1 Thess. 2:1-12**.

Paul in **1 Thess. 2:1-12**, is giving us three different images that help convey to us how he approached his ministry amongst the Thessalonians.

In **VV. 1-6** we considered the image or picture of a steward. A steward is a person who has been entrusted with the affairs and/or the property of another. As such, a steward feels a personal sense of accountability toward the one who bestowed upon him or her their trust, and this is exactly what we see in these verses. If we are going to be effective in ministry we must, like Paul, feel this personal sense of accountability to the Lord.

In **VV. 7-8** we considered the image or picture of a nursing mother. A mother's primary role in the family is that of a caregiver. A mother typically feels a fond affection for her children and will impart her very life in order to meet their needs. If we are going to be effective in ministry we must like Paul feel this personal sense of affection for those to whom we are ministering and have this willingness to impart to them whatever we might have in order to minister to their personal growth.

In **VV. 9-12** we have begun to consider the third and final image and this final image is that of a concerned father. When we think of a father, a number of different images may come to our minds. And this is the way it should be, since a father can function in a myriad of different ways within any particular family. But even though a father may function in a myriad of different ways within a family his primary role as a man within the home is that of a leader. And it is in this role that we see Paul ministering in **VV. 9-12**. Let us read these verses.

“For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. (10) You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; (11) just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, (12) so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

If we are going to be effective in ministry we must like a father take a role of a leader. We must know where people need to be and by God's grace do what is necessary to take them there. Certainly we see Paul, like a father, fulfilling this leadership role.

Paul had a very clear goal as to where he wanted the Thessalonians to go and he believed he knew how to get them there.

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In order to lead a person needs to be strong, this is why we see frequent exhortations in the scriptures to those in positions of leadership to be “strong and courageous.” And certainly, it is impossible not to notice the strength of Paul in the leadership he exerted amongst the Thessalonians.

How did Paul manifest his strength of leadership in **VV. 9-12**. First of all we see his strength manifested by his actions.

BY HIS ACTIONS - No one can be a strong leader unless their lives communicate the value of what they say they believe in. This is true of any leader. It certainly is true of a father and it certainly was true of Paul in his ministry to the Thessalonians.

Paul believed in the gospel of Christ. He believed that through the gospel that men and women could come to salvation. Paul believed that through the gospel people could pass from death to life. Paul believed that through the gospel people could come to know God and be delivered from eternal torment. Paul believed that this message needed to be proclaimed and that the gift of life that came to people as a result of trusting in that message needed to be lived fully. Those who had the opportunity to observe his life could not question how deeply he believed this.

In order to make his ministry as effective as possible in Thessalonica he was willing to commit himself not to receive financial assistance from the Thessalonians. This is clear from **2 Thess. 3:8** where he said, “**Nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you.**” Paul repeats the difficulty of that commitment here in **1 Thess. 2:9** “**for you recall brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.** Paul believed in the gospel. Paul believed that he needed to proclaim the gospel. Paul believed that the effective proclamation of the Gospel took precedent over his own personal welfare. Paul knew where he wanted to take the Thessalonians. He knew what he had to do in order to be effective in taking them there and he was willing to pay the price. Paul’s willingness to pay such a high personal price for the sake of the Gospel of God and for the Thessalonians communicated very powerfully the kind of person Paul was. Look at **V. 10** “**You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers.**” Paul demonstrated hopefully like a father, the strength of his leadership in Thessalonica by his actions. But Paul also demonstrated the strength of his leadership by his speech.

BY HIS SPEECH

There is a very simple biblical truth that Jesus shared with his disciples in **Matt. 12**. Jesus in this passage was rebuking the Pharisees for the hardness of their heart and he says in **V. 34** “**You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.**” Doesn’t this make sense? We are going to talk about those things which are important to us. Give me a week to engage in conversation with someone and at the end of that week I will tell you what is important to them. Our speech betrays our heart. And that is what Jesus is saying. In fact this is so true that he goes on to say, “**The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of this evil treasure brings forth what is evil.** **(36) And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment.**

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(37) For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.”

Words tell us very a great deal about where we are coming from. And it is very important that we do not discount this.

Let me ask you a question. What is the primary role of a wife and mother in the home? It is that of a caregiver? God has designed it to be that way. And what is the primary role of the husband and father in the home? It is that of a leader. We see these natural bents that God has purposed in the woman and the man in their conversations.

Let me ask you when women get together what drives their conversations? They will so much of the time be talking about the details of their families and their households. I believe so much of what they are talking about is being driven by their God given need to be a caregiver. This is not so with the man. When you talk with men. Men are given to involve themselves in conversations about things that are related to accomplishment. Rather that is the projects they are working on or sports teams that they are following or the latest political upheavals. Men are looking to make things better. Rush Limbaugh epitomized this in the title of his book “THE WAY THINGS OUGHT TO BE.”

When Paul came into Thessalonica he saw things as they were but he also saw things as they ought to be. And he set about seeking to making his goal reality. First of all by his actions as we saw in **VV. 9-10** but also by his words which is clear from **VV. 11,12**. **“Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, (12) so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”** Paul could not help speaking about what filled his heart. He had been given a wonderful and glorious work and that was to go and make disciples baptizing and teaching them to observe all that the Lord had commanded and it was this commission that filled his heart. It was this purpose that shaped his actions as well as his speech.

When we are seeking to be obedient to Christ’s call upon our lives to go and make disciples we need Paul is saying that we need not only to respond with the heart of a nursing mother, but with the strength and determination of the Father. Not only in the way we live our lives but also in what we say.

Notice the three words that Paul chooses to describe the kind of communication that a father might have with his child.

“Exhorting” - This means to come alongside to move someone into a specific line of conduct. Exhortation says, “This is the way to walk.” Just like a father would come alongside of his own child a exhort that child to walk in a certain path Paul was coming alongside of the people God brought into his life to exhort them to live in a certain way. We need to have the same freedom.

We need to feel the freedom even the responsibility to minister the truth of God’s word to people so that they might know the way. How can we not tell the people that the Lord has brought into our lives the way in which they should walk.

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Jesus said, “I am the way the truth, and the life, no one comes unto the father but by me.” We need to be telling people this. We need to be exhorting people to do this. We cannot be silent.

If we do not do this then we will not be nearly as effective as we could be. Leadership does not only involve living in a certain way but also speaking in a certain way. But there is more!!

“Encouraging” is where we move from pointing out the way to coming alongside and cheering them on. Encouragement says, “I know it is tough but keep doing it.” I believe that fathers more so than mothers are equipped to encourage their children to keep on keeping on. Mothers so often times will be drawn to sympathize with the pain that the child is feeling so much that they might give them an OK to quit. It is the father that says so often you need to get back up and do it again. It is the father that so often says to their child “quitting is the easy way out and though it might be hard, don’t quit!”

The Christian life is not easy. There are people who just think that God has asked too much of us. There are Christians who just can’t keep going any longer. They are becoming weary. But we need to be like a father and come alongside of them and encourage them not to quit. But to keep pressing, to keep running, to keep fighting.

“Imploring” comes from the Greek word that means “witness” - Imploring says, “I am a personal witness as to what will happen if you do this.” There is nothing so powerful as a personal testimony. It is a wonderful thing to be able to pass along the lessons that we have personally learned.

I shared with you that my father was a strong leader. He showed the strength of his leadership in the way he lived his life, but also in the way he talked with his children. And looking back on my time in his home I would have to say that in the area of passing along to his children various stories from his life that were meant to effect change in us he was excellent.

He is still telling me stories. When we get together for family gatherings he will say to me, “Have I told you this story.” Invariably I will have to “yes.” I never tell him that this is probably the 100th time I have heard it, but it wouldn’t matter anyway he would still go ahead and tell the story.

I want to share with people from my life experiences what happens when I choose to follow the Lord. And I want to share with people from my own life experiences what happens when I choose not to follow the Lord. When our sharing comes from our own personal experience the sharing tends to be more passionate and powerful.

We as fathers within our homes must have a clear goal. And be able to lead our families so that by God’s grace that specific and special end might realized and what specifically would that end or goal be? It should be the same that Paul had for the Thessalonians. Let us look at **V. 12** **“So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”**

As a steward of the gospel of God Paul ministered amongst the Thessalonians as a nursing mother would minister to her own children. As a steward of the gospel of God Paul ministered amongst the Thessalonians as a concerned father would minister to his own children.

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He combined the tender affection of the mother with the strength and determination of the father, so that these Thessalonians might walk in a manner worthy of the God who is calling them into His own kingdom and glory.

Notice the present tense. Rather than saying “**so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who called you into his own kingdom and glory**” he says “so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” It is emphasizing God’s continual drawing of his sheep to himself. This is not as if we do not continually here the voice of the shepherd. For us who have responded to his call, will continue to respond to his call.

But how long will he be calling us? Until we arrive in His kingdom and find ourselves in glory. In light of this, let us walk in a manner worthy of those who are heaven bound.