

1 Thessalonians 1

1 Thessalonians 1:3-4

- **Work** – tangible (how much did you get done today?) **James 2:18** - I will show you my faith by my works.
- **Labor** – effort (I labored to do the work); intangible
- **Steadfastness** – perseverance to do the work and labor over time
- **Faith** – the trust that something is true based on things we've learned in the past, then believing and acting on that (Jesus fulfilled the OT prophecies).
- **Hope** – always future, hope comes from our faith. Because we trust in what Jesus has already done, we are confident in what He says will happen in our future. It's what allows believers to overcome the struggles of this life (Us and Paul)
- **Love** – a selfless form of love that “labors” or expends all there energy to the maximum level
- These are 3 evidences that you are elect or chosen **(V.4)**

1 Thessalonians 1:5-7

- Ultimately, the reason Paul knows they're elect is two-fold
- 1.) **V. 5** – Paul preached the Word with power supplied by the Holy Spirit and with full conviction in what he was preaching
- 2.) **V. 6-7** – The Thessalonians started to imitate Paul's characteristics (Paul was imitating Christ, Christ is an exact representation of God)

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for **you received the word** in much **affliction**, with the **joy** of the **Holy Spirit**,

- When the word came to them, **The Holy Spirit** caused 3 effects:
 - 1.)** They received the Word (accepted what was given)
 - 2.)** With joy (it was precious to them, greatest gift to give someone, it satisfies)
 - 3.)** Affliction increased and it did not deter them (it was worth it)
- Paul is describing the process of knowing true salvation

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- Later, Paul will use Thessalonians as an example when he wrote back to the church in Corinth, when he wants to teach them how God and the Holy Spirit works

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 - We want you to know, brothers, about the **grace of God** that has been **given** among the churches of **Macedonia**, 2 for in a severe test of **affliction**, their abundance of **joy** and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

1 Thessalonians 1:3-6

- Paul knows the Thessalonians were chosen (V.4) because he saw evidence of salvation and sanctification (V.3)
- He knows V.3-4 are true because V.5-6 – The word was presented powerfully through Paul and it was accepted, with joy, even in the midst of affliction because of the Holy Spirit

Presented Powerfully

1 Thessalonians 1:5 - because our gospel came to you not only in **word**, but also in **power** and in the **Holy Spirit** and with full conviction.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you **accepted it** not as the word of men but **as** what it really is, **the word of God**, which is at work in you believers.

- They heard the word as it was spoken by men (Paul)
- But they “heard The Word” as The Word of God
- They accepted it as God’s Word, not mans
- The Word of God is powerful and it works in the person (“**at work in you believers**”) when it’s presented

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Accepted

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - ...**for you received the word** in much affliction, with the joy of the **Holy Spirit,**

Acts 16:14 - One who **heard us** was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. **The Lord opened her heart** to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

- Paul spoke the words, but they were heard as God's Word, because God "opened her heart" for her to be able to accept it
- Paul presented the gospel and he sees evidence of true salvation and sanctification in the Thessalonian church and it gives Paul confidence that God is at work here and the Thessalonians are chosen by God

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - And you became imitators of us and of the Lord,...

- God can supernaturally use a donkey to preach the gospel and save people, but His preferred method of spreading the gospel is through us
- God wants us to preach His Word to other people, so that they can have the Holy Spirit open their hearts, so that they can accept the Word of God

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- We don't know which people that will happen in, so we offer it freely to everyone
- When we see the evidences of salvation in certain people, then we continue to teach them from God's Word the best we know how
- The result is that they imitate what we teach them, which is pointing them to God
- So they become imitators of us and the Lord

Matthew 28:19-20 - **Go** therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you...

- Our job is to go and make disciples
- We do that by preaching the Word
- For those who accept it, we continue to teach them all that He's written in His book
- Paul, Silas, and Timothy reproduced themselves in the Thessalonians who reproduce themselves to the believers in Macedonia and Achaia

2 Timothy 2:2 - and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

- It feels like a slow process (The Roots)
- It's a picture of multiplication

If I offer you a choice of taking \$1 a week for 52 weeks **or** 1 penny the first week, and then, for the next 51 weeks, I'll double the amount each week (week 1 = 1 cent, week 2 = 2 cents, week 3 = 4 cents, week 4 = 8 cents, etc.)

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\$22,000,000,000,000 (approximately 22 Trillion)

Suppose one person leads 1,000 people a day to Christ. Suppose another person in one year led one person to Christ and spent that year teaching that person to grow and how to give the gospel to others. What would that look like over the years?

Year	Soul winner	Discipler
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33	over 10 million	over 8.5 billion
10,960	4 billion	

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 - And you became imitators of us and of the Lord...7 **As a result** you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For from you the message of the Lord has echoed forth not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place reports of your faith in God have spread, so that we do not need to say anything.



1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 - so that you became **an example to all the believers** in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

- The result of Paul, Silas, and Timothy living a godly life and being an example to the Thessalonians is that they became an example to other believers
- The result is God's Word is multiplied and expands and God is glorified

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- The result of Paul, Silas, and Timothy living a godly life and being an example to the Thessalonians is that they became an example to other believers
- The result is God's Word is multiplied and expands and God is glorified
- The question is are we following that pattern?
- Are we sharing the gospel with unbelievers so that the Holy Spirit has a chance to open their hearts to here the message? **(the word sounds forth)**
- In addition, are we being an example to other believers?
- Are we sharing with other believers things that help them grow?
- When God does something in your life, share it **(your faith gone forth)**
- It builds up other believers and God gets the glory

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - For people everywhere report how you welcomed us and how you **turned to God from idols** to serve the **living** and **true God**

- gods can be living or dead
- gods can be true or false
- The great testimony was the Thessalonians turned to the living and true God from the idols who were dead and false
- The dead, false idols were everywhere in Paul's day

Acts 17:16 - Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that **the city was full of idols.**

Acts 19:23-27 - About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made **silver shrines of Artemis**, brought **no little business** to the craftsmen. 25 These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, Men, you know that **from this business we have our wealth**. 26 And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this **Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods**. 27 And there is **danger** not only **that this trade of ours may come into disrepute** but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.

- Paul is turning the world upside down
- The Jews want to kill him because the synagogue was torn apart
- The Gentiles want to kill him because he's destroying their wealth

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - For people everywhere report how you welcomed us and how you **turned to God from idols** to serve the **living** and **true God**

Colossians 3:5 - So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and **greed which is idolatry**.

- The Thessalonians are imitating Paul and the Lord by turning from dead, false gods to the true, living God
- They are being shining examples to all those around them and are encouraging others to turn from this idolatry to God
- And it's spreading
- Which leads to strong persecution

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 - For people everywhere report how you welcomed us and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath.

- Why was the church at Thessalonica was so influential and such a great example to others?
- Looking at the verses I can give you 4 potential reasons:
 - 1.) Their affliction was greater than those around them (V.6)
 - 2.) Their joy despite the affliction was inspiring (V.6)
 - 3.) The way they turned to God from idols was absolute (V.9)
 - 4.) Their belief in the second coming was strong (V.10)

