



Radical Word Bible Study Podcast

1 Thessalonians

Live Streamed on July 10, 2025



Pastor Rick Lancaster

Radical Word Bible Study Podcast

1 Thessalonians

Opening Comments

- Welcome to episode 2 of the Radical Word Bible Study Podcast Live Stream.
- Before we get into the study for this evening, we would like to encourage you to ask questions via chat.
- We are standing by to answer any questions you might have.
- Also, if you watch this after the live stream, ask you questions in the comments, and we will do our best to answer them promptly.
- Something you will see a lot during this study are my study notes.
- As I said last time, this is how I mark things in my notes.
- There are many other systems, some simpler, some more complex.
- It really depends on the kind of study you are doing and how deep you want to go in it.
- If you are listening to this and not watching, I will attach my Key Word Marking Chart to this message so that you can see what I am talking about.
- **Show and describe what they are seeing.**
- Okay, let's get into our study tonight.
- Let's open with a word of prayer.
- **Pray**

Teaching

- Turn to **1 Thessalonians 1**
- We got to verse 8.
- Before we go on to verse 9, let's do a review of the first 8 verses.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:1-8**
- Read and comment on the text.
- The reputation of the church of the Thessalonians was getting around.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**
- The people around Thessalonica saw three things that caught their attention about the believers in Thessalonica.

- First **Turned to God from Idols.**
- The church in Thessalonica was surrounded by idol worship.
- The highest mountain in Greece is Mount Olympus.
- It was the supposed home of the gods, Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, and several others.
- Mount Olympus is about 50 miles from Thessalonica.
- It influenced every part of the lives of the people who lived there.
- The city was very religious with shrines everywhere and not just to the Greek gods.
- Shrines to Egyptian and several other gods were all throughout the city.
- Most of the people who came to Christ were involved in the worship of one or more of those false gods.
- Turning from those false gods meant they might be alienated from their social groups and status within the community.
- People could see the Thessalonian believers were different than the world around them - they had changed.
- The gospel of God has the power to change lives. **Romans 8:29**
For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
- When your life starts to change people notice.
- As modern westerners we don't relate to idols the way people of Paul's time did.
- Temples, priests, and icons were everywhere.
- People often had little shrines in their homes to their gods.
- If they traveled, they carried their idols with them so that wherever they were, their god was there also.
- They believed these gods were real and they trusted in them for help in their lives.
- There are still places in the world where idol worship is common.
- Places like Indonesia, especially Bali, idols are everywhere, and people make daily offerings to them.
- Those gods are false and can do nothing for them.
- Not only that, but you also become like what you worship. **1 Corinthians 10:19-20**

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? ²⁰ Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

- We worship the One True God and so are striving to be more like Him as manifested in His Son Christ Jesus.
- We might not relate to idol-worship.
- For thousands of years, people have made idols of everything they can imagine or experience.
- If someone has imagined something, someone has worshipped it.
- It is hard-wired into the fallen nature.
- Modern people may not bow down to carved images, but they will find something to worship.
- We were made in the image of God. If we don't worship God with our whole heart, we WILL be tempted to worship something else.
- We can even take something that God gives us and is good and turn into something that we elevate over God.
- The Thessalonians had a reputation for having turned away from false gods.
- We use another word that is represented by turning away from something – repentance.
- Repentance is not something we do once we are saved and then never have to do again.
- There is a false idea that if you truly repent of something you will never commit that sin again.
- I don't know about you but that is not my personal experience.
- That is also what Jesus taught. **Matthew 18:21-22**

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

- God doesn't keep track of how many times He forgives us.
- We are weak spiritually and we are going to fall short of God's perfection.
- It is an expression of God's amazing grace that He will forgive us every time we repent, even when it is the same sin He forgave us for 489 times already.

- If you are not perfect, which none of us are, then you are going to need to repent every time you fall short of God's perfection.
- Repentance is a grace God gave to the church, to all believers, to be cleansed from the filth of sin. **1 John 1:9**

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- One of the ways you will sense you are growing in faith is as you learn to hate your sin and love repentance.
 - Don't take this grace for granted, that would be another kind of sin.
 - The Thessalonians repented and turned away from the false gods of their culture.
 - It is not enough just to turn away from false gods or idols.
 - You must also turn to something.
 - Often people turn away from one sin and ultimately move toward another one.
 - When we turn away from something that has had a strong influence in our lives we must turn to God, we replace that idol with the Living God.
 - The second thing the Thessalonians did was turn to **Serve the Living and True God.**
 - People could see that the Thessalonians were committed to serving God.
 - One of the changes that people will notice is life becomes less and less about you.
 - And more and more about others – pleasing God, serving Him.
 - One of my desires is that when it comes my time to leave this world that I will be remembered as a man who loved God, His Word, and His people.
 - What does it mean to serve God?
 - It is about getting to know Him and determining to do those things that He commands, that bring Him glory, and please Him.
 - Jesus is our example of this – God the Son. **Mark 10:45**
- For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**
- The Thessalonians served God in a way that showed they believed in a true and living God.

- Every person is going to approach this differently.
- That is because He made us for the good works He prepared for us to do.
- The good works I do are different than the good works He has prepared for you.
- It is not hard to figure out what those good works are, but it might take a little time.
- The best way to start is to find someone who is serving God and come alongside them to help.
- The church is a great place to start that process.
- Just find a good Bible-teaching church and look for a way you can help.
- Most pastors would be overjoyed to have someone come and ask them if they can serve somewhere.
- It doesn't have to be in the church, just find a place to serve and be faithful.
- The Holy Spirit will work to get you into just the right place and doing those good works God prepared for you to do.
- Another thing that was evident to the people around the Thessalonian church was their attitude about the future.
- They had turned from idols to the living and true God, following the example of Paul and his companions, and were doing the work of faith, the labor of love, and were patient in hope as they **Wait for His Son from Heaven.**
- While Jesus was with His disciples, He told them He was going away.

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

- When Jesus ascended back to heaven after the resurrection, the disciples stood there staring into the sky.
- An angel had to tell them; Jesus will come again.
- When we look at the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament, we can see God had always planned on two advents of the Messiah/Savior.

- In the first advent the Messiah came as the Suffering Servant who would give His life as a ransom for lost sinners.
- The Old Testament also teaches us about the Messiah who would come as a conquering King who overthrew all His enemies.
- The Jews of Jesus' time were waiting for that second advent of the Messiah.
- That was the Savior they wanted.
- When Jesus came as the Suffering Servant, they were offended and rejected Him.
- To this day, Jews are offended at the thought that their Messiah would die on a cross, that is not the Messiah they want.
- And sadly, that resulted in God judging them by placing a veil over their eyes.
- That veil prevents them from seeing the Messiah in the Old Testament. **2 Corinthians 3:14-16**

But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

- Some Jews have experienced that lifting of the veil.
- God always maintains a remnant of His people who believe.
- Jesus is going to come back.
- We don't know when, but He is coming back.
- When He comes back, it will be with a sword to execute judgment upon the wicked, God-hating, Christ-rejecting people of the world.
- As Christ-followers, we have no fear of the judgment to come.
- Jesus took our judgment to the cross. **Colossians 2:13-14**

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- Everything that made you worthy of the wrath of God will pour out on this world was nailed to the cross with Jesus.
- One of the glorious promises of our faith is that Jesus will deliver us from the wrath to come.
- Once we get to chapter four, we will look at the mechanism He will use to rescue us from the wrath of God.

- While we wait for that glorious day, let us show the world our faith through works of faith, labors of love, and patience grounded in our hope in God and Christ Jesus.
- Paul transitions in chapter 2 from the reputation of the Thessalonians in their culture to Paul and his companion's reputation with the Thessalonians.
- One of the ways that I know that God is in my life is how I relate to other people.
- Before coming to Christ, I was self-centered in my relationships with others.
- We could be friends if I was getting something out of it.
- And so, I had a very small circle of friends.
- But once I began a relationship with Jesus, that started to change.
- And one of the truths I have learned in life is that every relationship I enter into in this life will change me and the other person also.
- Sometimes those changes are very small and sometimes they are huge, but every relationship in my life will change me.
- That is one of the reasons we are warned about the company we keep.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

- Good relationships will make us better; bad relationships will make us worse.
- If you want to become a better person, develop relationships with better people.
- This is especially true spiritually.
- When we accept Christ, we begin a relationship with God the Son.
- We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit to empower us to be in that relationship.
- And if we want to become a better person, then we need to develop that relationship.
- And one of the ways that we do that is by being around people who are growing in their relationship with Christ.
- Attending and serving in a church is a good place to do that. Being a part of an in-person Bible study can also help with that.

- One-on-one discipleship with a mature believer will also help you to grow.
- These are just some of the ways to do it.
- Even watching an online Bible study will help.
- Since you are watching or listening to this, you are already doing some of those things.
- Let us keep in mind our goal as we do that – perfection. **Romans 8:29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
- Jesus is perfect.
- Our goal is to be like Jesus - perfect.
- People are often quick to remind me when I say that our goal should be perfection that we are incapable of perfection.
- They are absolutely right.
- Does that mean we should not strive for it?
- Or does that suggest that we can settle for something less than perfection.
- Our goal ought to be perfection, whether we can achieve it or not.
- In chapter 2 of Thessalonians, we see the benefits of being connected to a spiritual person.
- The apostle Paul, possibly the most spiritual person on the planet when he wrote this letter, shared the benefit they received from their mutual friendship.
- And in this we can see the benefits that we can expect if we develop these kinds of relationships, as well as what is expected of us when we are in those relationships.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:1**
- Our first expectation in these kinds of friendships is that they should be useful.
- Paul said, ‘not in vain.’ His coming produced a result – they believed the gospel and were saved.
- We should be examining our friendships and asking what results are coming from them.
- Is someone benefitting from this friendship?
- Keeping in mind. **Acts 20:35**

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

- In our relationship with Christ, we get infinitely more than we can give, but we should be giving something, worship, obedience, prayers, and offerings.

- We also need to keep in mind that we give to God through our relationships with others. **Matthew 10:42**

And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.

- Doing good in the name of Christ is the same as doing it to Christ Himself.

- The writer to the Hebrews said something similar. **Hebrews 6:10**

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

- Every relationship we are in can be used by God to minister His love, grace, mercy, hope, and peace to those who need it.
- And when those relationships are healthy, it is a give and take of the things of God.
- When I allow God to minister through me, He is faithful to minister to me in the process.
- I have experienced many times the truth of Christ's words that it is more blessed to give than to receive.
- Just like every other Christ-follower, there are times when I feel like I need a spiritual touch from the Holy Spirit.
- I might be physically or emotionally drained by the day-to-day demands of life or ministry.
- I have found the best way to meet my needs is to meet the needs of others.
- Sometimes I just need a nap, but real filling comes from giving myself away more.
- Paul and his companions had come to Thessalonica from Philippi.
- Another evidence of growing faith is fearlessness in our speech.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:2**
- Before going to Thessalonica, they were in Philippi.
- They were arrested, beaten, locked in jail.
- You can read about that whole fascinating account in Acts 16.

- Even in Thessalonica, they were only there three weeks because threats against Paul's life.
- But even as tough as things were, Paul was 'bold in our God...in much conflict'.
- The word 'conflict' is translated from the Greek word 'agon' from which we get the word agony.
- In the face of great persecution, Paul and his companions boldly proclaimed the gospel.
- Paul had a special mission to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- Every Christ-follower is called by God to tell other people what He has done for them.
- God wants each of us to others about what He saved us from.
- He wants us to share the hope of heaven with anyone who will listen to us.
- None of us will ever have to face the kind of spiteful treatment and conflict Paul and his companions did.
- The greatest fear most Christ-followers have in sharing the gospel is rejection.
- Part of your daily prayer ought to be that you are a light of the people around you.
- They should be able to see Jesus in the way you live.
- Also, pray for boldness to speak to people about your faith.
- If you need help with that, find someone who is bold and ask them for help to grow this part of your faith.
- Last, pray for fearlessness.
- Sharing your faith is part of your faith.
- Being afraid to do is a sign of a weakness in your faith.
- I don't mean for that to be condemning, it is just the reality of where you might be.
- It just means that is a place where your faith needs to grow.
- We all have areas where our faith is not as strong as it could be.
- Acknowledging that doesn't make you a terrible Christian, it makes you an honest one.

- In good relationships we do not withhold what needs to be said to avoid conflicts.
- Sometimes we might need to say the hard thing to someone so they can grow in their faith or have victory in a struggle they are dealing with.
- Remembering what Paul said in Ephesians, ‘Speak the truth in love’.
- If we want to be better people, we need be willing to speak the truth in love, regardless of the consequences.
- We are living in a time when some people have deluded themselves into believing something about themselves that is not true.
- It is not loving to participate in their delusion.
- Living a lie can only lead to pain and suffering.
- If we are truly followers of Christ, we must tell them the truth, as gently, humbly, lovingly, and meekly as Christ would do it.
- Paul and his companions told people what God wanted them to hear and they did it boldly and fearlessly.
- I imagine they thought about the possible consequences, but they didn’t let the possibility of being spitefully treated stop them from doing what they knew God wanted them to do.
- They didn’t let the idea that their words would not be received and would be resisted stop them from sharing Christ.
- One of the reasons we are on this earth is to let people know how to get to God.
- And we need to be just as willing to hear the truth spoken to us in love.
- I am so thankful for the people God has placed in my life to speak to me His truth.
- One of the greatest of those voices is my wife, Kelly.
- God can use anyone to speak to us, but we need to be willing to hear and respond to the work of the Holy Spirit through them.
- And to do that we need to examine the motives of our heart.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:3**
- Paul knew that the message he shared was true, was shared from a pure heart, and was not intended to deceive.

- When Paul shared the gospel, it would exhortation.
- An exhortation is an earnest request, or an urgent plea.
- Paul didn't come with a "Turn or burn!" message.
- There may be rare times when you should tell people they will go to hell if they don't get saved right now, but more frequently, we want them to know God loves them and wants to deliver them from the power of sin.
- Paul the believers in Rome that isn't escaping judgment that should motivate us to come to Christ. **Romans 2:4**

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

- Paul also said his message was not from error.
- The Greek word translated as error is defined as deception, delusion, perversion, moral corruption.
Paul's message was not to deceive or delude.
- It was based in the truth of God's Word, and it was motivated by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- He also said his message did not come from uncleanness.
- That word means immorality or filth, usually of a sexual nature.
- Many of the ancient pagan religions had an overtly sexual component to them.
- Some even included priests, priestesses, or temple prostitutes, both male and female, who engaged in sexual acts as a form of worship of their false gods.
- Paul was an itinerant preacher; he traveled around from place to place sharing the gospel everywhere he went.
- Other people did that too, and some of them were doing it with impure motives.
- Even the modern church is not immune from this perversity.
- Paul and his companions kept themselves pure from these evil practices.
- And the last characteristic of his message was that it was not in deceit.
- Paul wasn't trying to trick them into something for wicked reasons.
- He simply told them the truth.
- Paul claimed to have evidence that this was true.

- **1 Thessalonians 2:4**

- Paul knew he had God's approval.
- How? God was producing real results in his life and ministry.
- Throughout his ministry Paul had to deal with people who were coming into churches to take advantage of them or to profit from them.

- Jesus warned us to watch out for them. **Matthew 7:15-17**

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

- Paul also warned about why they would do it. **Colossians 2:8**

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

- We have an enemy, Satan, and he wants to take from you everything God wants to give you. **John 10:10**

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

- One of the reasons we want you to grow in your faith is because you will be better able to detect the deception of Satan, and stand more firmly in your faith and experience everything God intends for you to have.
- The false prophets and teachers would come into the church with letters of recommendation from supposedly important people in the church.
- Paul says he and his companions didn't man's approval to teach and preach, they had God's approval.
- That is always true for all of us.
- If you have God's approval, you don't need anyone else's.
- I have known a couple of men over the year's who have come to get my approval to engage in some kind of ministry.
- In one man's case he wanted me to ordain him as a pastor as a kind of letter of recommendation.
- I sensed the Holy Spirit telling me he didn't need that, and I encouraged him to go with God's approval, not man's approval.
- He did and the Lord blessed his ministry.

- The other man wanted me to ordain him so could go start a church.
- The Holy Spirit told me clearly that he was not ready.
- He went and did it anyway and, sadly, it did not end well.
- If God calls you to do something, go do it.
- If you are not sure, speak to someone spiritually mature to help you understand the Lord's will.
- Knowing that he had God's approval affected how Paul shared the gospel.
- Paul shared, taught, and preached to please God, not people.
- This was a very liberating truth when I first learned it about my calling.
- As pastors, we want people to be pleased with the things we say.
- With that desire comes a temptation to adjust your message so that it is pleasing to people.
- That is a dangerous temptation.
- The Bible teaches us that in the last days people will be looking for and lifting up teachers who make them happy and feel good about themselves.
- Later in Thessalonians Paul exhorts his readers to not focus on pleasing man. **1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ² for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

- The writer of Hebrews tells what is required to please God. **Hebrews 11:6**

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- As a pastor, my goal is not to please you, it is to please God.
- One of the ways I do that is, by faith, teaching you from God's Word in the leading and power of the Holy Spirit.
- Some pastors are concerned they might say something that will cause people to leave the church.
- I don't worry about that.
- The church I pastor is not my church.
- God started and He will maintain it.

- He has for over twenty years.
- I am going to focus on pleasing God and trust Him to bring who He wants to be here.
- I still want people to be pleasing about what I say, but I am going to say what God wants me to say, even if people don't like it.
- Paul finishes verse four by saying God tests our hearts.
- In my time in ministry, I have had people challenge the state of my heart, questioning my faithfulness or calling.
- That can be a hard thing, and it is almost impossible to convince someone about your heart they don't believe.
- Paul told the Corinthians that there is something every Christ-follower ought to be doing regularly. **2 Corinthians 13:5-6**

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. ⁶ But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

- We should be checking ourselves, but there is a problem with these self-examinations. **Jeremiah 17:9-10**

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? ¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

- Only God can truly examine our heart and test them to know whether they are true or false.
- We play a part in that by letting God the Holy Spirit do the work of examination. **Psalms 139:23-24**

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴ and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- And Paul had been approved by God and his heart tested, he could speak boldly and with the confidence of knowing God was pleased with him.
- Paul goes on to describe the character of his teaching.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:5**
- Continuing with the idea of not being focused on pleasing people, Paul says they didn't use flattering words.
- They did not use excessive or insincere praise to try to get something out of them.
- It is good to praise people, but your heart should be right when you do it.

- Do it because it is right, not because you want to influence them in your favor.
- Paul was given the role of apostle by Jesus Christ Himself.
- You can read about it in Acts 9.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:6**
- Paul could have demanded their respect, but he didn't need their respect.
- If anyone was going to be respected and glorified, Paul wanted it to be God.
- Our relationships become so much freer when seek God's glory and not our own.
- I know that God appointed me to be the pastor of Calvary Chapel French Valley.
- But you will rarely hear me parading that title around.
- To do so would be to suggest that you owe me respect, you don't.
- You owe God respect, and He deserves all glory, honor, and praise.
- Because of his role as an apostle of Christ, Paul could have made demands of support and other things upon them.
- Elsewhere, Paul boasted about all the reasons people should respect.
- He only did it to prove the false teachers were not everything they were boasting about.
- Paul then describes the way he behaved around them
- And he is going to use two very familiar relationships as illustrations
- And this is a good lesson for anyone who might think they are spiritual
- **1 Thessalonians 2:7-8**
- A mother is an amazing and supernatural creation of God.
- They are God's example to the world of agape love.
- Agape = unconditionally acting in the best interest of others.
- True friendships that change people is gentle and caring.
- This is how Jesus relates to us **John 15:13**
- **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**
- Paul says they cared for the Thessalonians.
- Gave them not only the gospel, but their very lives.

- When Jesus says we should lay down our lives for others He is not talking about dying for someone.
- While that might be the ultimate expression of that kind of love, it is not the most common.
- The most common expression of agape love is more about setting your life aside so that you are better able to love someone.
- Mothers are a great example of that, but fathers do it also.
- We all have needs, dreams, desires, wishes, and hopes.
- The kind of love Jesus is referring to in John 15:13 is setting your needs, dreams, desires, wishes, and hopes aside so that you can do something to fulfill the needs, dreams, desires, wishes, and hopes of someone else.
- To do that we must trust that God cares about us and will see to it that our needs, dreams, desires, wishes, and hopes will be met by Him.
- God is faithful and can be trusted. **1 Peter 5:6-7**
Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
- As Christ-followers, we are all called to this kind of love.
- Paul says he gave them not only the gospel, but they gave them their very lives.
- Then he tells why, ‘you had become dear to us.’
- One of the signs of a pastor with the heart of Christ is they care for the people they are called to minister to.
- It is not just a job they do.
- Jesus set the example. **John 10:11-14**
I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own.
- If you don’t care about the people God has called you to minister to, you need to let the Holy Spirit do more work on your heart.
- Another sign of a good minister is their work ethic.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:9**
- Jesus came to lift our burden. **Matthew 11:28-30**

Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.

- Life sometimes is hard; the weight of life becomes a burden to us.
- The Bible does tell us to share our burdens. **Galatians 6:2**

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- Paul said they worked very hard, to the point of exhaustion, so that they would not be a burden to the Thessalonians.
 - On a personal level I take this example to heart.
 - I see my role as one who helps others with their burdens.
 - I am very selective about who I share my burdens with.
 - I have people in my life that God put there for that very purpose, Kelly, our Borad, and a few others.
 - I have discovered, no matter how great my burden might be, I can help someone else bear theirs, and then mine feels lighter.
 - Paul worked to make sure he was not a financial burden – tentmaker?
 - He wanted nothing to get in the way of sharing the gospel.
 - Gospel = good news – salvation through Christ & rest of God's Word.
 - Paul then calls upon his integrity as a witness to the kind of servant of God he and his companions were.
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:10**
 - Integrity is not valued to the same degree that it was in the past.
 - Politicians give lip service to the need for integrity and then downplay their own indiscretions.
 - Even some religious leaders justify or spiritualize the need for integrity.
 - To be the kind of person God can use to great things for Him, we need to be people of integrity.
 - Paul describes three characteristics of integrity.
 - Devout = holy – not perfect, but aiming for perfection. **1 Peter 1:15-16**
- ...but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,**
¹⁶ because it is written, "*Be holy, for I am holy.*"
- Paul is talking about his behavior in the presence of the Thessalonians.
 - The word holy has the idea of being apart from this world and set apart to God.

- To be holy in our conduct, people must be able to see us doing things for God and because of God.
- That means we are not selfish and self-centered in our actions.
- Justly = doing the right things, even when it is hard or unpopular.
- It means doing the wrong thing even if it means you will suffer because you did the right thing.
- Blameless = no guilt – confessed sins to God and repented of sins to others.
- This is another word that does not mean being perfect.
- It means that no one can bring a legitimate charge against you.
- As it relates to God, being blameless means that we cannot think of any sins we haven't repented of.
- If we sin, which we all will, we are to go to God and confess it. **1**

John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- If we do that for every sin we are aware of, we are blameless before God.
- You ask, what about the sins I am not aware of?
- We have God the Holy Spirit living inside of us.
- If He wants us to repent of sins we have forgotten or are unaware of, He is fully capable of bringing them to our remembrance.
- Paul calls the Thessalonians and God to be witnesses to what Paul is saying.
- It has been said that integrity is who you are when no one is watching, but real integrity shows in the light and in the shadows.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

- Paul did what needed to be done with the Thessalonians to encourage them to walk worthy of their God.
- 'walk worthy' = live in such a way that you prove what was done for you.
- God sent His Son to die your death on a cross.
- God gave you eternal life.
- God gave you the Holy Spirit to help you through this life.
- God gave you the Bible to teach you about His kingdom.

- Jesus gave you the church as a place for growth, comfort, and encouragement.
- One of the amazing things about God is that He loves us just the way that we are.
- We don't have to get our act together before we come to Christ.
- The fact is, you can't get your life together until you come to Christ.
- It is the power of God working in through the presence of the Holy Spirit that empowers to live the life God calls us to.
- We come to Jesus just as we are, warts and all.
- But because He loves us, He doesn't want us to stay that way.
- He wants us to be better.
- Jesus is coming back, maybe very soon.
- As a Christian you don't have to change, you don't have to be better than you are.
- But if Jesus is your Savior, King, and friend, and He is coming for you, shouldn't you want to.
- To be better we need to be willing to change.
- And here is an absolute fact: You can't change who you are if you won't change what you do!
- If you want to be better, choose to do something that will help you to be better.
- Find a church, a Bible Study, or another believer who can help you.
- You can stay the way you are, but if you do, you will miss out on the abundant life Jesus came and died to give you.
- **Pray**