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EDINBURGH

The Kind of Christians who Change the World

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

The letter to the Thessalonian church is one of great encouragement. Paul writes to some relatively new believers, not with a long “to-do” list or set of corrections, but with great joy and encouragement. Although Paul had left Thessalonica in a hurry (*see Acts 17*), he knew the Grace of God was sufficient to cause them to grow and mature. Good foundations and foundational attitudes are vital to the Christian life.

Paul noted **3 attitudes** in the church that acted as catalysts that accelerated these young Christians to quick maturity:

1. Learners. (V6).

They imitated both Jesus and the leaders who shared Christ with them. Learning from godly leaders in our lives is a fast way to grow.

2. Welcoming. (V6).

They “welcomed the message”. The simple message proclaimed to them was held in high esteem. It was treasured. The parable of the sower (*Mark 4:20*) reminds us of the necessity for good hearing (welcoming) of the word. In contrast to welcoming the word, we can allow it to be robbed, to nullify it through a simply emotional response, or to allow it to be choked through anxiety and wealth’s deceitfulness. In *Acts 17:11* in the next town from Thessalonica we read the Bereans received the word with great eagerness.

3. Exemplary. (V7).

They became the influencers and leaders that brought a great knowledge of God to many. No-one gave them a badge or a title. They simply acted into the role God has given every Christian; to be an example to others. God loves leadership but not titles! Leadership is demonstrated through service and example.

God saved them from Hopeless, destructive idolatry to a new life trusting in Jesus who will come again. This news was way too good to keep to themselves. It filled the whole of their nation and beyond. Let's ask God to do that here!

Questions:

- **Grace at work.** Why was Paul so confident in the outcome of these young Christian's lives and faith? Read Phil 1:6. Who does he attribute the good work and its completion to? Do we live our lives in this understanding or where do we put our confidence for Christian maturity?
- **Learners.** What things help prevent your relationship with Jesus getting tired? Think of a Christian who has played an important part in bringing you to maturity. What did that look like?
- **Welcoming the Word.** In the parable of the sower, which soil do you feel most affinity with? Emotional? Anxious? Materialistic? How does each of those mindsets hinder the welcoming of the word?
- **Exemplary.** How can we, like the Thessalonians, show initiative and be an example to others newer in faith than us? Read 1 Tim 4:12 which of these areas do we find easier and harder to engage with?
- **Idols.** What are the idols of our day? In what ways is Jesus superior to them?



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