

# The True Servant of Christ - Part 3

by Paul Washer

---

*Paul Washer emphasizes the necessity of integrity and Christ-like behavior in the life of every Christian as a true servant of Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:11:23

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

**Topics:** "Servanthood"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a life of integrity and Christ-likeness. He points out that the apostle Paul describes his behavior towards believers as devout, upright, and blameless, highlighting the significance of actions rather than hidden motives. The speaker encourages the audience to strive for greater integrity and faithfulness in their own lives, emphasizing that small consistent actions are what lead to approval before others. He concludes by urging listeners to put off their old ways and put on the new self in Christ, living in a manner worthy of God's calling into His kingdom and glory.

---

## Transcript

All right, let's look at 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2. And we will be looking at verses 10 through 12. I don't normally like to take a text this small, but we're obligated to do so because of all that is in this text. So let's read it.

Paul says, you are witnesses and so is God. How devoutly. And rightly and uprightly and blamelessly we behave toward you believers, just as you know, how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each of you as a father would his own children so that you would walk in a manner worthy of God, worthy of the God who calls you into his own kingdom.

And glory. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, I thank you for this great privilege to be here tonight and to speak from your word.

But Lord, all is vain. But how well I know all is vain. Unless your spirit helps us.

Unless you strengthen us. Not only the speaker, but also the hearers, Lord, that you would open up our ears, that we would hear, that the spirit would so work, Lord, giving grace that we would be transformed even by the things that we see in this text. Lord, calm our hearts.

Settle us to speak your word boldly and clearly for your glory, for the sake of your people. In Jesus name, amen. In chapter two of First Thessalonians, we have been dealing with a great problem that turns out for our benefit.

And that is this. After Paul had left the city of Thessalonica, people were coming in and the people that were there and they were accusing Paul of many things. You need to understand that in the time of Paul, there were traveling teachers that were abroad everywhere.

Philosophers, religious men, pagan Jews, they were everywhere. And most of them had a very, very poor reputation. And so it was easy to put a bullseye on the back of Paul and say that he was a man just like all the others who lacked integrity.

And so in their accusations, I'm sure it did great damage to Paul. I'm sure it hurt him. But in the end, it comes out for our benefit and the benefit of the church, because while Paul is defending himself.

He sets before us some of the characteristics of a true gospel minister, a true minister of Christ. Now, you may think right now, well, he's going to talk about a minister of Christ and I'm not a preacher. So maybe I should have stayed home where it was warm.

Not at all, because there is a sense in which all of us are ministers of Christ. Then there is another sense that a minister of Christ has authority. And there is a sense in which all of us have some sort of authority over others.

You may be a father, a mother, a teacher, you may work at a job where you have authority over others. And as Christians, we each are brought into a relationship, one with the other in which we must interact. And at times we must submit and at other times we must exercise authority.

So this passage deals with all of us. Now, having said that, I can say this, if you want to know how Paul defended himself. How he could be bold as a lion.

One word, let's make it two, personal integrity. Another word we could use is Christ likeness. Paul constantly throughout chapter two to answer all these arguments, all he says is this, you know my life, you saw me.

Enough said. Now, isn't that amazing? I know that as I've read through this, I so want to be a better man. I want to be a man of greater integrity, a man that is more faithful, a man that does the small things consistently and correctly.

Because in the end, those are the things that add up to our approval before other men. And silence is also all the objections of those who would come against us. Listen to me.

There's nothing more important in this day in Christianity than we walk in Christ like integrity. You know that there's every kind of preacher and every kind of minister out there today, huge ministries claiming all sorts of things. You also know the number of people that seem to every day fall and lose their testimony.

And because of that, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles. How important is it to have integrity? And those of you who work in what is called the secular world or you're going to the university. Or you're with unbelieving family members, what is the thing that's going to set you apart? It is the gospel message, but that gospel message.

Is shored up and confirmed by the way that we live. And let me say this also before we go into our text, don't whine. About any sacrifice you have to make in the name of integrity.

It's demanded of you by our Lord. And if you have to go the extra mile, did he not command you to go the extra mile if you have rights and you're not for the sake of integrity allowed to use them? Did he not already teach us these things? It comes down to integrity, brothers and sisters, Leonard Ravenhill used to say everybody's wanting to give us a new definition of Christianity. What we need is a new demonstration and not all these things of as I was bombarded with while I was in Norway, not all these things of false signs and wonders and claims to miracles that never happen.

No, but a godly, godly life and that godly life is not just doing the big things. It's doing the little things, because if you don't do the little things, God will never entrust you with the big things. That's why Paul said that he had already been approved of God, tested and approved, and yet God was also always testing him and approving him.

Do you want to be used of God? Do you want to be a means through which people come, if not to accept the gospel, at least to respect it? Then you and I, all of us, we must walk in integrity, in integrity. Now, in verse 10. Paul says regarding himself, regarding his character, his ministry, he says, you are witnesses.

This is the sixth time in chapter one and chapter two that Paul is going to call them to the witness stand. And then in the next verse that comes up, he's going to call them to the witness stand again, seven times. Now, what does that tell us about Paul? That he was bold.

I mean, I'm hearing echoing in Paul's words, I'm hearing the words of Jesus Christ, which one of you convicts me of sin? Now, Paul, of course, would have never said that because he knew that he was just a man. And like us, he had frailties and problems and weaknesses, but he was so consistent in his devotion to Christ. He was so consistent in his service to other people that he could call them to witness when everyone was coming against him.

And he could say, you know, you lived with me, you saw me, you know what I did. Now, I think something needs to be said here. I'm bringing it up from what I know in past experiences dealing with countless ministers over the last 30 years.

Notice that Paul, because we're also in the context of talking about authority, Paul never used his position as the grounds for his authority. He never argued from his position and then demand authority from others. For example, he never said, I'm an apostle and as an apostle, you must obey me, respect me, follow me without question.

He never did that. Now, I've in my many years in the Christian life, I've seen ministers do that. I've seen all kinds of people do that.

I'm the pastor. It doesn't matter what flaw you see in me, I am the pastor. And the Bible says you must respect the pastor and you must be under the authority of the pastor.

Paul never plays that game. Also, Paul never points to his miracles. He never points to his success in ministry as grounds for why they ought to accept him as genuine.

And yet, isn't that what's being done today? For the most part, I can't be wrong. The minister of a church of thousands of people might say, I can't be wrong. Look at all these people following me or others who

might be so bold to say, I can't be wrong.

There's signs and wonders, even though I would say that none of them are ever proved. Paul never did that. And if anyone had the right to, who was it? It was Paul.

Also, another thing that I want to point to, Paul never spoke about some undetectable inward sincerity as the reason why everyone should listen to him or consider him genuine. Now, what do I mean by that? Throughout the years, I've seen ministers who had many outward flaws and people would come to them and address their outward flaws. And they would say, you can't judge me because you can't look into my heart.

Paul never pulled that on anybody. Why? Because he was a godly man, he was a devoted man, and he never had to do that. He said, look at my life, look at my life.

Now, another thing that Paul never did, and a lot of so-called ministers will do that. He never said, I am a servant of the Most High God and I'm not accountable to you. He never did that.

In order to demonstrate that he was genuine, that his ministry was valid, do you know what he did? He pointed to his behavior. Hebert says something that I find very interesting. He said, Paul not only believed the gospel, he behaved the gospel.

He lived the gospel. Now, let's just sit for a minute and think about that. Isn't that a really powerful way of looking at it? Not only believed the gospel.

He behaved it. I like that even better than saying he obeyed it or he lived it. He behaved it.

His behavior was marked by the gospel. Now, I want us to go on, he said, you are witnesses and so is God. Now, we need to treat this really quick because this is the second time in this chapter that Paul has called God to witness.

Now, before we look at Paul's intentions, I want you to look at some other things. Now, some of you are young Christians and may be quite naive. And believing so many of these great claims of supposed great men.

So I need to warn you, one of the things that charlatans and false teachers and all sinners will quickly do is use the Lord's name in vain. They will call God to testify. Why? Because they don't fear God.

Some of them don't even believe God exists. So when a man says to you, I call God to witness that I am a godly man. It can mean nothing.

Because the man who is speaking that may be a man who does not fear God at all. So when we look at Paul and Paul says, I call God to witness when he does it, it has credibility. Why? Because when you looked at his life, you saw that he feared God.

He honored God once again. To call God as our witness is a powerful thing, but if our life doesn't back it up, it's absolutely meaningless and turns into even blasphemy. Do you see how little power there is in confessions and declarations, and do you see how much power there is in a godly life? Now, make no mistake, Paul has written over and over again about the necessity of proclamation, and he's going to do it again.

But the one thing that I want you to see is all our proclamation, all our profession, all our confessions, all the declarations that we make are meaningless unless we behave them, we live them. And now you younger believers, I want you to understand something. I've been a Christian longer than some of you have been alive.

And as I'm preaching this, a fire is in my heart to want to be not smarter, even though that would be good. Not more knowledge, even even though knowledge is important, my desire is to be behaving. As I ought to, there is the key, there is the goal, you see that.

OK, so here we see he is, you are our witnesses and so is God about what? Now, look at this, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved. Now, I want you to notice something, just look down here, devoutly, uprightly and blamelessly, those are adverbs, OK? Now, I'm going to give you a grammar lesson. Adverbs modify what? A verb and a verb describes what? Action, something that is being done.

Adjectives modify a noun. OK, now that I've said that, we can look at this text. Paul does not give us three adjectives describing some secret and undetectable sincerity in his heart.

Paul gives us three adverbs to describe his action, his behavior, and again, he's throwing that at the forefront, isn't he? Do you want to know why I'm genuine? OK, let's look again at my behavior. I behaved among you devoutly, uprightly and blamelessly. Behavior, behavior.

Now, before we go on, you could take this sermon and turn in a certain direction and ruin everything. What do I mean? By looking at behavior as something that flows from primarily your understanding of biblical principles and the strength of your will to submit your life to them. Please don't think I'm teaching that.

But this behavior flows out of knowing Christ, being united with Christ. Intimacy with Jesus Christ, it flows out of knowing the gospel. Yes, the Bible has rules and principles and commands and all sorts of things, but it is not an ethics driven religion.

It is not just about you screwing up your will really tight and then going out and doing these things. But it's looking, beholding Christ being transformed by him, his spirit moving in you so that these things become realities. Do you see the difference? And there is a difference, a tremendous difference.

Now, I want us to look here, he says, first of all, devoutly and uprightly. Now, we're going to look at all three of these, but we need to look at these two in particular together. Why? This phrase was used quite often in the Hellenistic world, the Greek world.

Whenever you heard the phrase devoutly and uprightly, what was being said is this devoutly referred to one's relationship with God or the gods and uprightly referred to one's relationship with men. And when people used it, they would say basically this, I am living according to the will of the gods and I am also obedient to the laws of men. Now, of course, if Paul is using these terms, it's not with reference to the pagan gods, but the one true God.

But the idea may be here with him. Why? Because he's already called God and men to witness. And then he uses this popular phrase in Hellenistic in the Hellenistic world that refers to I'm right with God and I'm right with men.

I'm submissive to God and I'm submissive to the laws of men. Now, that's just something for you to know. And it's quite interesting.

But I want you to understand something. It is kind of picking at things. Why? Because in reality, biblically.

Devotion to God and righteousness are always linked together in the Bible. And there's no such thing as a separate devotion to God and a separate obedience to the laws of men, all true righteousness flows from our relationship with God. And if we are righteous before God that is submitting ourselves to his commands, we will be righteous before men.

But I want you to see that Paul maybe has this idea again that he's not only living his life to please God, aware of God's demands and seeking to please him. But Paul is also deeply concerned about what men say about their laws, about doing things right, not only before God, but also before men. Again, that gets us away from this super spiritual idea that so many Christians have.

I'm accountable to God. I'm not accountable to you. I've heard it like I'm accountable to God, I'm not accountable to the church, I'm accountable to God, I'm not accountable to anyone else, I'm accountable to God, I'm not accountable to the laws of men.

All that is just super spiritual jargon. That's unbiblical. I want us to look just really carefully for a minute at Second Corinthians 8:21.

I'm just going to read it to you. He says, For we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. Sometimes if you're going to obey God, you must disobey men.

But generally, you and I should seek not only to honor God, but even to honor men. And when we can honor their laws, so many people today think that being obedient to God and being radical in the Christian faith means that you're going to just stand against everything on the planet. That's not true.

In one sense, we should be a quiet, peaceable people seeking to submit our lives, even to the king. Even the Christians were told in the New Testament to this terribly vile Roman Empire, submit in every way you can, except when submission to the laws of men will cause you to disobey the laws of God. Now, he says here in verse 10, You are witnesses and so is God.

How devoutly. Now, the word can be translated piously or religiously, and don't look at that bad. Today, so many people have this negative view of the word religion.

Well, you shouldn't because the word is used in the New Testament. OK, and what what Paul is saying here is that I acted in the way you would expect a religious man to act. He's saying my life was bent toward God and bent toward spirituality.

It was bent toward eternity and not the temporal, toward the holy and not the profane. You see that he was a spiritual man. This has been very convicting for me.

Not that I want to put on some robe of spirituality that's false. But the idea is that his, well, let me put it this way. His disposition was Godward.

You see that? And his words were God centered. And his life, his deeds were God honoring and God fearing. There was this, I don't want to say mystique, but there was this thing around Paul that you saw that he cared about heaven.

He cared about God. He cared about eternity. He was a man who was always thinking this way.

Now, let me say two things that are very important. The difference between devotion or being devout and being a fanatic. OK, Paul was not a fanatic.

He was devout. And what is the difference? The fanatic separates himself from all common activities and common conversations. You can't even laugh around this person without getting a stern rebuke.

He separates himself from all these common conversations and activities in order to be spiritual. But the devout man is spiritual in the midst of all these common activities. Do you see the difference? And common conversations so that he can he can talk to you at length about Hebrews chapter 11.

And for the most part, his conversations in his life are going to be related to Christ and God. But he can also laugh with children. He can also talk about things that are just things of this world that God has given us that bring us delight.

He finds joy in everything. He doesn't have to separate himself to look spiritual. He is spiritual so that even when he's in a common conversation, he still looks like a spiritual man, even though he may be laughing to the point of falling out of a chair.

He's so happy. Do you see? We're not talking about fanaticism. We're talking about being devout.

And I think it's very, very important we understand this. Now, another thing that I want you to see is that Paul was devout, not just in his ministry. But I believe he was just as devout, just as spiritual when he was making tents or working with leather or whatever the scholars think he was doing.

That in his whole life, he was spiritual. And yet a babe in Christ could come up to him. And he didn't take this spirituality of his and just make them look temporal and low.

I hate that. Have you seen that? People that are so spiritual, if you even talk about the sun or the stars or some beautiful thing you saw, they seem almost offended. Don't be that way, at least not around me, because I won't tolerate it for your own sake.

I'll rebuke you. Don't be that way. Now, another thing I want to tell you about devotion.

So many people today say, you know, this person is so heavenly minded that he's no earthly good. Well, I would say in America today we have just the opposite problem when you were so earthly minded, we're no heavenly good. Yet I want to give you an illustration from history that I think will be helpful.

His name was Frank Lombok. Frank Lombok, in his diary, if you can ever find it, buy it. In his little diary, you see that his greatest aspiration was to have one day on this planet of uninterrupted thoughts of Christ.

That was his aspiration. That was his life goal. Now, if anybody would qualify for being so heavenly minded that they're no earthly good, it would be him.

Do you know what Frank Lombok did? He taught the entire Philippines to read. And if you mention him today among educators in the Philippines, they'll know exactly who you're talking about. He taught all the islands of the Philippines to read.

So I guess he was heavenly minded and I guess he was earthly good. As a matter of fact, this earth could do well with a few more spiritually minded people, don't you think? People who think deeply and consistently about God, but it doesn't draw them away from common people, but it leads them to common

people as a blessing, not as a scourge. So Paul said that he was, of course, devout.

He says how devoutly and then he says uprightly, uprightly, righteously in the Bible refers to conformity to a standard that he conformed, of course, in the New Testament, always he conformed to the standard of God's nature and God's law. Now, need to be careful here. I know what some of you are thinking.

No, we're justified by faith. Of course, we're justified by faith. We can only stand before God justly, righteously through faith in Jesus Christ.

But Paul is using this term with regard not to sinless perfection, but is it simply a description of the way he lived? He lived as a man who knew God's nature. He knew God's law and he sought to be and walk conformed to it. And that's the way you and I need to be.

And not only again did Paul live according to the laws of God, but Paul also would have been considered exemplary. In the eyes of the pagan moralist. In the laws of Rome.

There was only one thing that brought him in conflict with Rome. Now, what do you think about this? Now, I know sometimes that I know that there are Christian activists and there are Christian politicians and there are Christian all kinds of things. But if there was ever a time to rail against the government, it was when Rome was the government.

Notice that Paul was not brought into conflict with the government for anything other than preaching Christ crucified and raised from the dead. Because Paul knew something, the only way to turn the powers that be is through the preaching of the gospel. Oh, how much in the last century have we seen so many Christian movements and moral majorities and everything else trying to change the world, change the country, change the government? Has it gotten better? Absolutely not.

It's had no impact. What will have an impact? Preachers preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, Christians living the gospel, behaving the gospel of Jesus Christ. What will have an impact? You, you will have an impact.

Never underestimate the power of a godly life. Never underestimate the power of a sincerity. Of a sincerity and a sincere faith in Christ.

OK, so he also lived uprightly and then he lived blamelessly, blamelessly. Now, that, again, does not mean sinless perfection. But it did mean this, because he was so concerned and so given to live in according to God's law and to live according to the laws of men, even his worst critics could not find, could not get a hold of him.

They could not find something and say, aha, here we'll get Paul. He's greedy or here we'll get Paul, he's immoral or here we'll get. No, they couldn't.

They couldn't get a handle on him. Even though they scrutinized his life. Now, that reminds me of somebody else and I'm just going to to read it to you.

Just just listen to me and you'll figure out where it is when I read it. Then the commissioners and the sand traps begin trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs, but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption in so much as he was faithful and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Then these men said, we will not find any ground of

accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God, that's the way we must be.

That's the way you university students must be. No professor ought to get a get a grip on you because you're lazy or because you don't do your work or your homework. If you're employed, no one should be able to grab a hold of you and have something wrong with you because of what you're doing wrong on the job.

When I was pastoring in Peru, this man came to me and he said, you know, pastor, I'm being persecuted, persecuted in my faith. And I knew a lot about this man. I counseled him and everything else.

And I looked at him and I said, no, you're not being persecuted in your work because of Christ. You're being persecuted in your work because you're the laziest human being on this planet. You see.

We start talking about Jesus, and yet we live in a way that doesn't show any power of Jesus, it would be better that we just keep our mouth shut. If you're going to be in the university, be there for Christ, not just witnessing on the quad. But doing your homework for Christ, doing your studies for Christ, if you're working at a job, honoring your employer for Christ.

You see, so that they can't get anything against you except the gospel, the gospel. Now, let's go on. We've taken too long here.

He says, you are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behave toward you believers. Now, there's a lot here. I'm going to skip over it, but I want you to look at the word believers.

Now, I want to teach you something that's very important. Sometimes when something becomes a title, it loses its meaning. And when you hear it, you're not really understanding what you hear.

Let me give you an example. Satan. When you hear Satan, you think personal name of the devil.

You don't realize that the name means accuser. Every time you hear Satan, you ought to realize he's an accuser. That's what it means.

That's what it's telling me. That's the meaning of the title or devil adversary. He's an adversary.

But see, when you call him Satan and devil and you don't think about the real meaning, it just loses everything, doesn't it? He becomes almost like a cartoon character. Also, the case with, he says, you believers, you just think a Christian. But but this is a present tense participle, and it's extremely important.

He's saying the ones who believe the ones who go on believing, he's not saying like a noun believers. He's using a participle. And he's saying that believers are those who go on believing that they are always trusting, rolling upon, holding onto, clinging to Christ.

And I want to be encouragement here for maybe a weaker saint, even though there are moral tests with regard to assurance of conversion, the great test is this. That you are so convinced that you have no hope, but Jesus Christ, that you continue, you go on trusting and believing only in him. That is the great evidence, above all other evidences, you're believing, trusting, holding onto, rolling upon Christ.

Do you see that? Another thing that I want you to see here is that Paul is saying that he lived, behaved devoutly, uprightly and blamelessly toward you believers. Now, he did that toward all men. That's why his accusations couldn't, the accusations couldn't stick.

But here's what I want you to see. And Paul says this in the first chapter. Paul not only lived unto God.

But he lived unto believers. Never forget when you start talking about loving the Lord, your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, it's always followed by a second part, isn't it? Maybe to a degree lesser. But nonetheless, important, what is it? You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Paul lived for the glory of God, but he also lived for the benefit of believers. And I'm not just talking about ministry. I'm talking about the way he behaved.

Why did he act devoutly? Because he loved believers and wanted to be an encouragement, not a stumbling block to them. Why did he live uprightly? For the same reason. I have heard fathers and it's wrong, it's wrong, wrong, wrong.

But at the same time, there's there's something in it of good when I've heard fathers who never cared anything about the church and they were drunks and everything else. But their firstborn comes into the world. And what do they do? They say, for the sake of that child, I've got to straighten up.

Now, one sense that's idolatry, it is. And if you're living for believers more than you're living for God, that's idolatry, too. But the point is, and we don't think about this enough, I'm sure you don't, because I don't.

Why do we live righteously for other believers who are looking at us? Why do we try to be more godly because of our children who are looking at us? There's nothing wrong with that. Don't think there is. I've heard super spiritual people say there is, but they're just well, there's super spiritual.

They're not biblical. You do this for others to try to be an example, not a hypocrite, not hiding something, but genuinely trying to live a certain way is to be an influence, a godly influence. Now, he goes on and he says this, verse 11, just as you know.

You know what he's doing again? He's saying what you know. Perfectly conforms to what we're saying. What we're saying perfectly conforms, precisely conforms to what you know about us.

Isn't that amazing? That's boldness, and that's boldness that comes from a righteous life. You know, some of you aren't parents. You better not be until you get married.

Do you know when the saddest thing as a parent is when you see sin in your children that is a perfect reflection of your own sin? That is one of the saddest things in the world, but let's amplify that. It's the same way with other believers. You know, whether you like it or not, you have an influence and it's powerful.

But is it for good or is it for evil? Now, let's go on. He goes, just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each of you as a father would his own children. Now he uses I want you to look at this.

He uses three participles, their present tense, exhorting, encouraging and imploring. And this indicates to us that this was Paul's constant and consistent activity. Do you see this? It exalts preaching here.

Now, I'm not doing it because I'm a preacher. I'm doing it because it's in the Bible. What Paul was saying is that he dedicated his life to exhorting, to comforting.

You see, and to urging, to charging. You see, here's what you need to understand. I need this.

I it's yes, the word of God. You need to study it. You must study it yourself.

But you need to understand is you not going to make it in the Christian life, not being committed to a church where you're hearing preaching that is full of not just teaching, teaching is not enough. But exhortation, moving you, comfort, comforting you. And urging.

Urging. Now, another thing that I want you to see is Paul heaps these three terms together, and I think it's very important. It would be like something like, you know, that a child of yours is now grown up and is fixing to make a horrible, horrible decision.

And you pray with your wife and you go out the door to go visit your child, your son, your daughter, whatever your wife sends you off with her prayers. When you come back after talking to that child and your wife says, well, you know, what did you say? Well. You know, I mentioned it to him.

She would go, what you did, what? Well, I mentioned it, I brought it up. You brought it up. This is this is this is catastrophic.

This decision is going to affect everything in their life. And you're telling me you went over there and you brought it up. She expects you to come back to the house saying, I exhorted, I pleaded, I begged, I beseeched, I urged in a part you cannot be neutral in preaching.

Pedantic, you can't you can't just treat it. It's common. Why? Every person in there has only their next breath.

God has brought people providentially into a certain place who knows what's going on in their life. That one of them could be one step away from hell or one of them could be one step away from making a tragic decision. And if there is no such thing as that, there is still just the fact of what the Christian life is.

This is about eternity. It's about heaven. It's about hell.

This is not about getting your best life now. This is important. It's nothing more important than this.

And so Paul is just talking this way, I exhorted you, I pleaded with you, I urged you, I comforted you. I did whatever I had to do. Why? Because this is so important.

Now. I want to say something here, I want to I want to read from John Calvin on exhorting, and I think this is very, very good. Calvin says he shows with what earnestness he devoted himself to their welfare.

When a preacher exhorts you, pleads with you, and not just in a pulpit, but especially because cowards can do it from a pulpit. But it takes a brave man to do it face to face with you in counseling. He's thinking about your welfare when he does that.

You see that that's what Calvin says, he shows with what earnestness, earnestness, earnestness, he devoted himself to their welfare. For he relates that in preaching to them, respecting piety towards God and the duties of the Christian life. It had not been merely in a perfunctory way, superficial, careless,

unconcerned.

But he says that he had made use of exhortations. It is lively preaching of the gospel when persons are not merely told what is right, but are pricked by exhortations and are called to the judgment seat of God that they may not fall asleep in their vices. For this is what is properly meant by exhorting.

But if pious men. Whose promptitude or responsiveness Paul so highly commends stood in absolute need of being stimulated by stirring exhortations, what must be done with us in whose sluggishness of the flesh does more reign? Paul saying if these Thessalonians who were exemplary in the Christian life needed exhortation, how much more us who are sometimes sluggish. And here, let me put it in modern vernacular, some people need comfort and some people just need to be kicked in the pants.

Do you see what I'm saying? Some people need to be comforted, consoled and freed from condemnation. Others need a fire built under them. And that's what preaching is about.

That's what preaching is about. Now, that exhortation may manifest itself in a different way. When I preach, I wear my heart on the sleeve, not everyone's going to exhort the same way.

But in that preaching, when you come here on Sunday and Wednesday, you need to look, listen for the exhortation. What should I do when I leave here? Not just what did I learn, but what should I do? How should I change? Exhortation. Now, and then he says encouragement, I love what Mounts says here.

It's just beautiful. He defines this as to exercise a gentle influence by words. It is used of the Jews who consoled Martha and Mary when Lazarus died.

It's also used to describe the ministry to the faint hearted. In this same book, in First Thessalonians 5.14. But listen, listen to me. I'm talking to you in a pastoral manner.

Men of God can be wrong. They can, we all know that. When they comfort, receive it.

And when they kick. And when they urge and when they push. Ask yourself, why? Why is this preacher talking like this? Why is my pastor counseling me this way? He's hurting me.

There may be a reason he may be trying to save you. Let's have none of this silly American thin skinnedness here, you see. So he says here, exhorting and encouraging and imploring.

Now, I wish they'd put the literal translation here instead of imploring. It literally means witnessing, witnessing. Now, how can I best describe this? It's like in the preaching and in the counseling.

And this applies to you also when you're counseling people or when you're dealing with your children, that you want to be a fixed point. An immutable testimony with regard to the truth that when they look at you, when they hear you, they're hearing this immutable fixed point testimony about who God is, about the need of man, about the joys of those who walk in righteousness and the pain of the sinner. You need to stand up and testify.

That's what the preacher does. I testify if you go that way, it's a way of destruction. I testify that the righteous are blessed no matter what they suffer.

I testify that the way of the sinner is hard. And it's testifying not merely because you've studied it, but because you've seen it. You've seen it, you can pull up from history, your own history, countless cases,

you can go into the Old Testament with countless cases.

Look at King Saul. Look at the life of Samuel, look at the life of his sons, look at the difference between the righteous king and the unrighteous king. You're constantly testifying, you're a testimony.

So they see this when they look at you, when they hear you. Now. He goes on.

Imploring each one of you, the commentary written by way, he says, each one of you one by one, and that is the emphasis here. That Paul said, I didn't just take care of you from a pulpit. I took care of each one of you one by one.

Shepherd calls this house to house visitation. There are things that cannot be done in a pulpit, there are things that cannot be done in a pulpit. So if one day one of the elders shows up at your door.

It's because there are things that cannot be done in a pulpit. Or if you see yourself struggling in spite of many sermons, you may need yourself to ask, can I speak personally with an elder? I need help. Do you understand me? Not only is it wrong to lock the door.

When counsel is coming to it, it's also wrong to sit there wallowing. And not looking for aid. That's why God has given elders, as Paul said, it wasn't just a mass evangelistic thing in his life.

No, he said each one of you one by one as a father would his own children. Now, we don't have much time, but I want you to look at something he's already referred to himself as well. He's used the metaphor of a nursing mother and that there we see gentleness, protection and nurturing.

Just just bring everyone in and cover them with the feathers of your wings. But now he's changing it. It is the.

Instruction and exhortation of a father. You need both, you need both of those things, you don't you do not need to be coddled all the time. Some of the things that have most saved my life have been kicks in the pants from brothers who loved me and did not fear me.

You see that you need the same young people, you need the same wisdom was not born with you, neither will it die with you. We not only need coddling and nurturing and comfort, but we need fatherly, authoritative instruction, not from a man and his own agendas, but from a clear proclamation of the word of God. OK, now.

He says here. Employing each one of you as a father would his own children now notice that when it talks about in verse seven, a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children and then as a father would his own children, that repetition is not coincidence. You see the point he's getting to.

He's getting to this idea of I cared for you. I didn't just walk up and say I love the church. But I love each and every member of the church, and I cared for you as my own is what he said, and he uses the word children, which would indicate both his endearment to them, how much he loved them and also their immaturity, their immaturity.

Sometimes we all need to be dealt with as children because we act like children. And don't think that this type of instruction and exhortation is limited only to the elders. There is another sense in which we ought to exhort one another.

We do. We need to comfort those who are faint hearted. We need to exhort.

We need to do both and you need the wisdom to know when to do one and when to do the other, and that wisdom is not going to come by you simply laying a Bible under your pillow and hoping it seeps through your head. That wisdom comes so that the whole body can exhort and encourage one another only to the degree that we're all studying the scriptures. And coming to have the mind of Christ now.

I want us to go down now to Paul's goal, verse 12. What was his goal? Oh, my, what a goal. So that you would walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Paul exhorted and encouraged and implored. Why? So that they would be very smart now. So that they would know a lot of stuff.

No. So that they would walk. Peripateo, pateo means to walk.

Peri is a prefix that that kind of indicates around. To walk around, it's about a lifestyle, a way of living, not just when you come among the brothers and sisters in Christ, but all the time in the church, outside the church, everywhere you are. He's talking about the walk of your entire life.

Now, there's important things to point out here. One, the Christian life is not static. It is not static.

That means it is not immutable. It is not unchanging. The Christian life is the dynamic.

It is changing. And what does that mean, particularly with regard to sanctification? You and I are supposed to be advancing. We're supposed to be progressing.

We're supposed to be becoming more like Jesus. Do you see that now that we all go through periods of dryness? We all go through the John 15 pruning and discipline and everything. But you should be moving.

In fact, many would say you are moving either forward or backward. But also, I want you to realize this, the Christian life is not static, it's dynamic, but it's not a glorious run. There's a walk of endurance, one foot in front of the other.

Oh, yes, there are times when we may run a little bit. But don't kid yourself, every attainment of more Christlike virtue is a battle, hard won through walking, through studying, through praying and through going through the fires of discipline. Yes, you will not.

You will not advance in the kingdom or in Christlikeness apart from that. Now, he says that you would walk in a manner worthy of God, literally that you would walk worthy of God. And what does that mean? That you would walk in a way that corresponds.

To who God is and that which is due him, that you would walk that way, what a high calling, there is no higher calling. Now, don't pull the glass half empty on me here, I'm not saying this so that you now will look in the mirror and go, I'm so far away, we're all so far away. I said, well, Brother Paul, you've been walking with Christ for 30 years, you're closer than I am.

Listen, right now, at least for all of you that are seated, I'm closer to the sun, S-U-N, than all of you, aren't I? I'm at least, what, a meter higher than all of you here. I'm closer to the sun than you. But we're both so far away, it really doesn't give me any bragging rights, does it? What you've got to realize is this.

Yes, it's a far away goal. But it's the goal that's been given to us, not for discouragement, but for encouragement. For he who began a good work on us will complete it.

He will do it. He will give us advance in this life and then one day we'll step over into glory and we'll see him as he is and we'll be transformed to be like him, not because we have the power of virtue, but he himself inherently has the power to transform our lowly bodies to be conformed to his majestic person. Look, this is something discouraging.

I say, wow, let's keep walking. Let's keep walking. Let's keep walking.

Now, he says, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of God. I want you to go just quickly, hold your place and just jump over to Ephesians for a second. This is too good to miss, Ephesians 4, verse 1. He says, therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

You see, we're called to walk in a manner worthy of God. We're called to walk in a manner worthy of this calling that we've been given as sons of God. To be conformed to the image of Christ, walk worthy of it.

Now, here's the point that I want to make to you. A great thing has been done for you. A great title has been laid upon you.

You've been given the greatest of all callings. No one has a calling like this. If some coach came to you in high school and says you have all it takes to be the greatest Olympic wrestler or boxer or runner that's ever lived in history, what would that do to you? Wouldn't that encourage you to train every day? You think, man, how many people get to do this for the Olympics? What is the Olympics compared to your calling that you would be a manifestation of the grace and power and life of God? You've received the highest calling of anyone.

That's why Spurgeon said, I would never stoop to be a king. And that should encourage you. Not only have you been called, not only is it the highest calling ever given to a human being or an angel, for that matter, but it's going to happen.

That's the exciting thing. It's going to happen. You are going to get there.

I'm going to get there. You're going to get there because of him, because of him now. But I want you to look, if you look, he says that we should walk in a manner worthy of our calling and for one, then go to 17 for 17.

So I say this and affirm together with the Lord that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walked in the futility of their mind. All right. You're to walk like him.

Stop walking like the Gentiles. Which basically means stop walking like those who do not know God and who are living for vain idols. Stop it.

You know, I love saying that because so many so few people say it. Sometimes you just need someone to walk up to you and say, stop it. Just stop.

Oh, OK. Stop. And then he goes on in verse 22 of four that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit.

Lay it aside. Your old life is like rotten clothing, the way you used to live, your old behavior. Put it off of you like the plague.

Twenty four and put on the new self, which is in the light, which in the likeness of God has been recreated in the righteousness and holiness of the truth, dress yourself in Christ. That's how you that's how you live in a manner worthy. That's how you walk worthy, no longer walk as the Gentiles.

Put off that old lifestyle and do what? Put on Christ. How can you put on Christ? Look at Christ, study Christ, cry out that Christ's character and virtue would be made more and more yours. Cling to him, abound in your unity with him.

Now, I promise this is the end. He says so that you would walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. Now, this is very unusual.

He calls here is in present tense. And there's a great debate on if Paul wants it to be a true present tense, because there's all kinds of different present tenses. Paul, usually when he uses the word called as verb, it's usually aorist referring to a moment in time when God called you, bam, just like that, or he'll use it in a perfect tense that God called you in the past in a moment of time.

But that carries on through until today unchanged. But here it's present tense, and if it is present tense, a true present tense, then what he's saying is, listen to me, believer, God is constantly calling you and wooing you to draw nearer to his kingdom and his glory, that it might become a greater reality in your life. He's constantly calling you come, come, enter in, enter in, go deeper, go higher, enter in, go deeper, go higher, constantly, constantly, constantly, and not just through the preaching of the word and not just through the scriptures, but in circumstances of life.

You know, when you get astray and you start looking at other things instead of service to him. And all of it turns to rot in your gut. You know, there is a real sense that when Adam and Eve fell, those curses were also great demonstrations of mercy.

Because he said this, basically, Adam, you're going to work in futility and the sweat of your brow. And so every time Adam went out there and it was futile and worthless, it was God calling him, Adam, Adam, come to me, come to me. All this is futility.

In childbirth, a woman would experience pain. And it's at that moment God is saying, you're fallen, you're fallen. Come to me.

Come to me. Every affliction, everything that doesn't go right, everything you get that turns into gravel in your gut is God calling you to come further into his kingdom. Now, says this, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Now, what is the kingdom? The kingdom is the sovereign rule of God in its degrees and variations. I have to say it that way, because there is a real sense in which God's kingdom has come in Christ. There's another real sense in which God's kingdom is coming as God's providence is working in the world and more and more people enter into the kingdom and more and more people go deeper into the kingdom.

And then there's another sense in which God's kingdom is yet to come and it will come when Christ returns the consummation of all things, the new heaven and the new earth. And that is probably Paul's idea here, because in in First Thessalonians, it's primarily saying this one of the greatest. Now, listen to

me.

One of the greatest, greatest incentives to walking in a manner worthy is that he's coming. And this earth so corrupt and broken is going to be rolled up like a scroll and there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. That your life is coming, it's coming to live for him now, live in service, live dedicated to him, do not try to grab a hold of this world, but wait, serve in this world, enjoy the grace of God in this world.

But your incentive must be Christ returns and sets everything right. That must be your incentive. We don't preach on this enough.

I know I do not preach on this enough. Why should you walk? What is the incentive for turning away from what you can see and turning to what you cannot see like Moses in Hebrews 11? What is the incentive? There's a new heaven and a new earth. There's a new king.

There's the consummation. This is not your home. What he has prepared for you, I has not seen, ear has not heard.

Tongues of men or angels could not even begin to reach the foothills of the Everest of what he has prepared for you. So don't grab a hold of this stuff now, says he calls us into his own kingdom and glory, glory and kingdom are related together with the same pronoun and the same article. And it indicates that the two things are directly related to one to the other.

And this is what is glory. The glory of God is a manifestation, a manifestation. And I love this of this person.

I don't know if you've studied much about different kings down through the ages or anything, but even the Catholic priests, they wear these glorious robes and all these things. Why? Because underneath they're just skinny legged little men. And so they wear all these great robes with big, broad shoulders and hats made out of gold and all sorts of things.

That's their glory. They have to dress in an external glory because they don't have internal glory. So if they want to show you glory, they've got to get all dressed up.

That's why God says his glory is him. He doesn't have to dress up, he emanates glory, he is glory. It is the manifestation of his person and all his excellencies.

Now. How's this kingdom and glory related together just this way? Well, first of all, he calls you into his kingdom. That means to submit, to come.

And bring yourself into greater, greater submission to his lordship. He calls you into his glory, which means he's calling you to come closer and closer to see more of his glory and then to reflect more of his glory. Now, how do they relate together? Brother and sister, the more you and I. Submit ourselves.

To God's reign and rule. The more we will see his glory and the more we will reflect, do you see that? Oh, dear brothers, we we shine so dull. Now, don't be sad, be encouraged, we could shine more, the more we submit.

To his rule, his reign, his commands and his providences in our lives, what he's doing with our life, you know, that we don't like right now. I wish he'd hurry up here, I wish he wouldn't do this or I wish he'd give

me that when we just be quiet, trust in him and submit ourselves to his rule, the more we reflect his glory. Now, one last thing, he says that he calls us into his own kingdom and glory.

Do you know what he's saying? He's not calling you into a lesser kingdom and he's not calling you to a lesser glory. He's calling you to his kingdom. The highest kingdom, and he's calling you to his glory, the highest glory, oh, brothers and sisters in Christ.

Isn't this encouraging? It's not like some cults have it, you know, you'll be trapped on level three. Or you'll have to stay here on Earth while the really good guys get to go to heaven. That's not what the Bible teaches, the smallest saint is called in to the very same kingdom and the very same glory.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25166.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-washer/the-true-servant-of-christ-part-3/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**