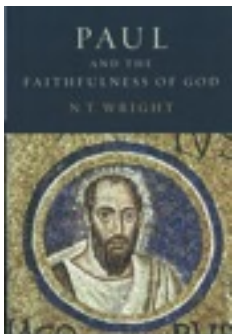


Once a group of people believe and are formed into a church, how do you get them to fully embrace the whole new life they have just entered?

How do you get them fully established and living transformed lives in true community as Christ intends for us?

Why do you think so many people in our churches are not fully established?



---

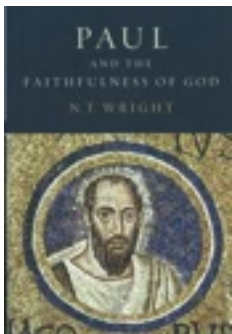
*Paul's Early Epistles*

Nancy and I had a chance to see this in living color on this trip to Albania.

This passage says, “have charitable concern for the whole family” including “the whole of Macedonia.”

we were just with that family; tell story

3 stories: Steve Galegor, Holger, Femi, Ditron the freedom fighter



---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

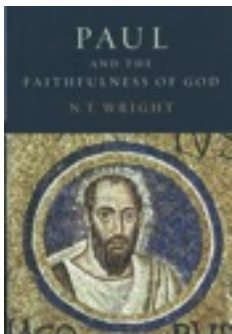
# The Biblical Theology Series

## New Testament Theology

1. **The Gospels (5 booklets)**
2. Paul's Early Letters (13 booklets), **first booklet**
3. The Jewish Encyclicals (5 booklets)
4. Johannine Writings (4 booklets)

## Old Testament Theology

1. **The Story (1 booklet)**
2. The Law (2 booklets)
3. The Prophets (4 booklets)
4. The Writings (5 booklets)



# Toward a NT Theology

(In order both situational events and authorship of NT Writings)

Theology of John's Letters—The 7 churches until Christ' return  
Theology of Peter's Letters—reinforcing Paul in Jewish churches  
*From Jesus to Gospels* (5 booklets) Stabilize churches (gospels among last written)

## Stabilizing Transition From Israel to the Church

Later letters—fully developed didache for churches

Middle letters—Christ' grand strategy fully developed, didache framed in

Early letters—fully developing gospel (NT Wright) emerging didache

(*Paul's Early Letters: New Testament Theology*—5 booklets)

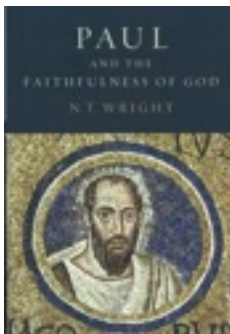
Pauline Theology—*The First Principles* (plus *How to Teach First Principles*)

## Building on Foundation—The Didache, Sound Doctrine, The Faith

Apostles-Kerygma/Acts 1–8 (formulaic)—“foundation laid by apostles and prophets,” recorded in Acts

Jesus—kingdom at hand/Messiah of OT — *The Story* (Law, Prophets, Writings) opened scriptures—Jesus the “cornerstone” —Jesus, the Living Kerygma (1 booklet plus *How to Teach the Story*)

## Substructure of NT Theology—The Kerygma



---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

# The Early Letters

Book 1: The Early Letters: Fully Establishing  
the Churches in the Gospel

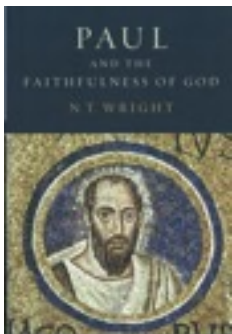
Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the  
Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonians Correspondence:  
Conversion to the Gospel

Book 4: The Corinthian Letters:  
Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Paul's  
Gospel Defended

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise  
of Paul's Gospel



# Book 1: *The Early Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches in the Gospel*

Session 1: The Intent of The Early Letters

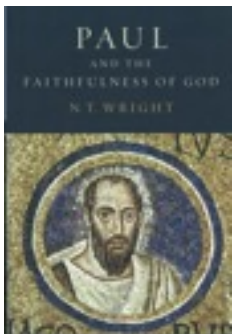
Session 2: The Galatian Problem

Session 3: The Thessalonians' Conversion

Session 4: The Corinthian Schisms

Session 5: The Roman Treatise

Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry



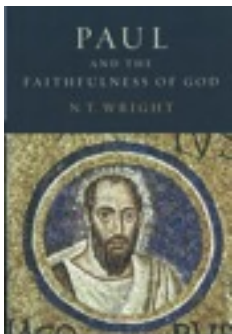
---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

The intention of these early letters is to establish the churches in the gospel.

Paul broadens the understanding of the gospel, and he roots the solutions to the problems his churches were encountering in that growing and broadening understanding of the kerygma and its implications.

This intention will become clearer and clearer as each letter unfolds.



---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

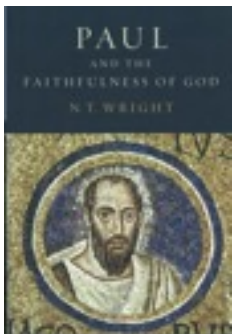
We will validate this in the six books of this series, as we will look at the correspondence of these early letters:

The Galatian letter

The Thessalonian correspondence

The Corinthian correspondence

The letter to the Romans



---

*Paul's Early Epistles*



## Book 2: *Paul's Early Letters: The Galatian Problem*

Session 1: The Galatian Problem

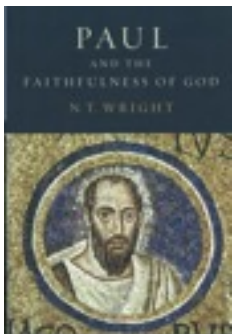
Session 2: The Pure Gospel

Session 3: The Gospel as a System of Living

Session 4: The Gospel and Walking in the Spirit

Session 5: The Gospel and Respecting Leaders

Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry



---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

Book : *Paul's Early Letters: The Thessalonians' Conversion*

Session 1: Paul's Concern for the Thessalonians

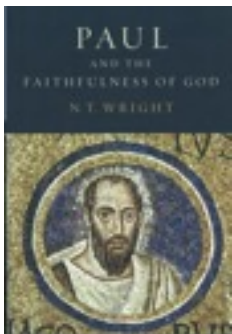
Session 2: Their Dramatic Conversion

Session 3: Three Emerging Problems—Letter 1

Session 4: Further Clarification—Letter 2

Session 5: Solidifying Their Conversion

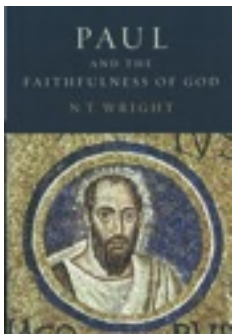
Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry



## Passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:1–5:11

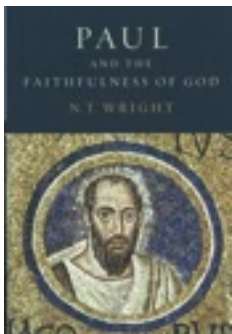
### Questions

1. What did Paul understand was needed for the Thessalonians to be fully established in their faith?
2. What were the 3 main areas Paul challenged the Thessalonians in? Were they related to each other?
3. What is the essence of Paul's challenge to them in fully embracing their new faith?
4. How did he root his instructions in the gospel and the emerging teaching? What is the basis of his authority?

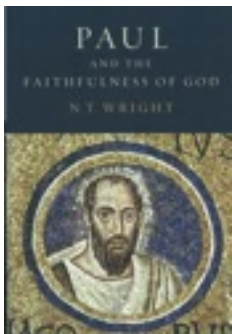


Last session we focused on the conversion process of the Thessalonians.

This session we turn our attention to the 3 areas Paul addresses in the Thessalonian churches in order to fully establish them.

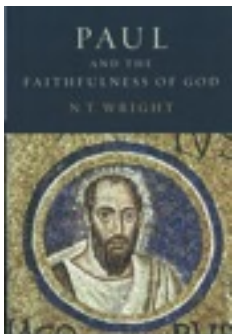


Conversion is misunderstood because it is removed from its literary context, compartmentalized because it is separated from the establishing process, and reductionistic because it is reduced to a moment-in-time event only.



A complete conversion process looks like this:

1. An initial solid response, in which the gospel is fully embraced, takes several weeks of exposure to the Word of God and results in those receiving the gospel beginning to proclaim it themselves.
2. It must be immediately followed up by careful nurturing and exhorting.
3. It is then followed up in the context of a new community by leaders who know the Word—a balance of modality (local leaders) and sodality (apostolic leaders).



## Marks of Solid Conversion:

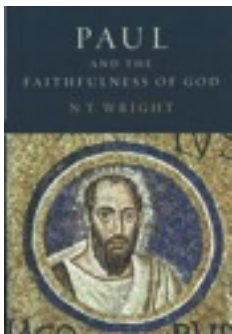
- accomplishment of your faith
- the hard work of your love
- the patience of your hope

Their faith turned into action

The *accomplishment of faith* was their own dramatic proclamation of the gospel everywhere.

Their *hard work of love* was towards the Thessalonian churches themselves.

And their *patience of hope* was how they were responding to persecution and suffering.



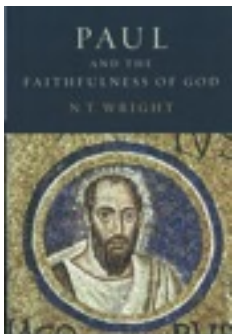
---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

## Passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:1–5:11

Questions:

1. What did Paul understand was needed for the Thessalonians to be fully established in their faith?
2. What were the 3 main areas Paul challenged the Thessalonians in? Were they related to each other?
3. What is the essence of Paul's challenge to them in fully embracing their new faith?
4. How did he root his instructions in the gospel and the emerging teaching? What is the basis of his authority?





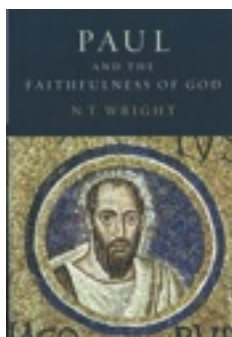
## Intention Statement for the Thessalonian Letters

To further establish the Thessalonians in the gospel they so dramatically embraced, rooting the emerging problems in the churches in a fuller understanding of the gospel and lining up with the emerging traditions

that they might not be unsettled, would remain strong amidst suffering and wrong teaching, and would grow their faith, hope, and love

by addressing, in the first letter, the emerging problems in the Thessalonian assemblies that were beginning to destabilize them

by further clarifying his instruction to them of the implications of the gospel in solving the problems that began to destabilize them



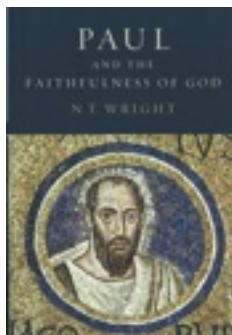
## Intention Statement for the Thessalonian Letters

To further establish the Thessalonians, deepening their understanding of the full implications of the gospel they recently embraced

that they might not be unsettled, but would remain strong and focused amidst suffering and emerging tensions in the churches,

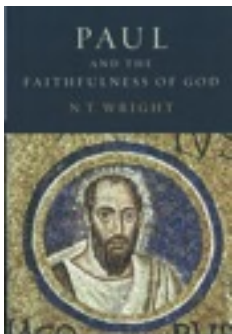
by challenging them, in the first letter, to fully embrace the new lifestyle in community as laid out in the emerging traditions handed down by Paul from Christ

by further clarifying his challenges to them in the first letter, giving them specific instructions in solving problems that had the potential to destabilize them



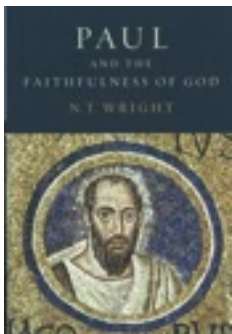
## Three key words bookend this passage

- 4:1 “urge”—parakaleo: to personally come along side and encourage/challenge them
- 4:2 “instructions”—transmission of a command  
These instructions are commands from the Lord. Paul had instructed them earlier.
- 4:8 “human command”—not rejecting a human, but God; so the word carries the idea of human authority



The Thessalonian churches were only 9 months old, but they needed to be challenged in 3 areas:

1. Changing their whole lifestyle from one of sexual impurity and living lives set apart to God.
2. Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in their own hard work and generosity.
3. Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing hope when loved ones die.

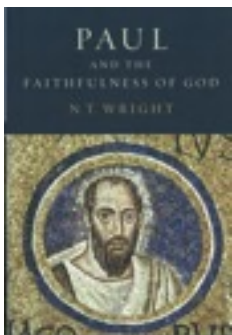


4:1 What remains, my dear family, is for us to ask you, and indeed to urge you in the Lord Jesus, that you should continue more and more to behave in the manner that you received from us as the appropriate way of behaving and of pleasing God. <sup>2</sup>You know, of course, what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup>This is God's will, you see: he wants you to be holy, to keep well away from fornication. <sup>4</sup>Each of you should know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup>not in the madness of lust like Gentiles who don't know God. <sup>6</sup>Nobody should break this rule, or cheat a fellow Christian in this area; the Lord is the avenger in all such matters, just as we told you before and testified most solemnly. <sup>7</sup>For God did not call us to a dirty life, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who rejects this, then, is not rejecting a human command, but the God who gives his holy spirit to you.

1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 (N. T. Wright)

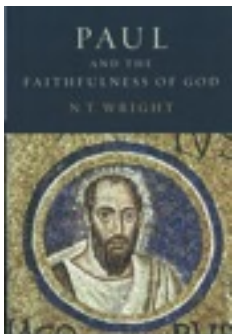
*Paul's Early Epistles*

---



The Thessalonian churches were only 9 months old, but they needed to be challenged in 3 areas

1. Changing their whole lifestyle from one of sexual impurity to living lives set apart to God.
2. Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in their own hard work and generosity.
3. Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing hope when loved ones die.

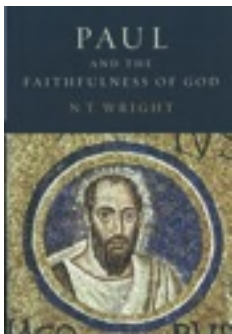


Cleaning up their lives from all sexually impurity and living lives set apart to God.

The essence of Paul's challenge:

They needed to be completely committed to a new lifestyle, fully committed to Christ and His new plan and purposes.

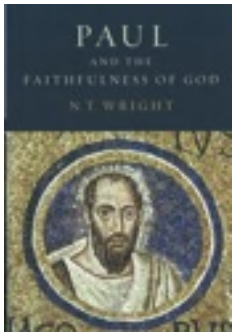
This meant cleaning up their old lifestyle, specifically putting aside all sexual sin.



Cleaning up their lives from all sexually impurity and living lives set apart to God

## Key concepts

- the instructions, 4:2: the emerging didache
- madness of lust, 4:5: passions that hurt you and others
- holy, 4:3, 4, 8: dedication, like a Nazarite vow
- way of behaving, 4:1: to live, referring to lifestyle



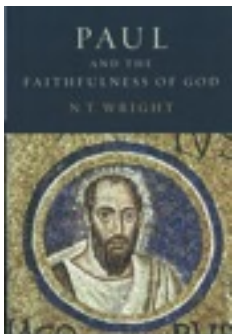


<sup>9</sup>Now, about charitable concern for the whole family: I don't really need to write to you, because you yourselves have been taught by God to show loving care for one another. <sup>10</sup>Indeed, you are doing this for all the Christian family in the whole of Macedonia. But we urge you, my dear family, to make this an even more prominent part of your lives. <sup>11</sup>You should make it your ambition to live peacefully, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, just as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup>so that you may behave in a way which outsiders will respect, and so that none of you may be in financial difficulties.

1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 (N. T. Wright)

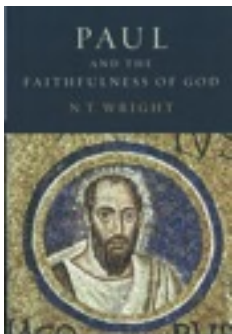
*Paul's Early Epistles*

---



The Thessalonian churches were only 9 months old, but they needed to be challenged in 3 areas:

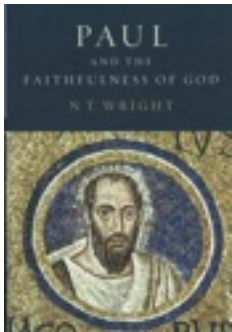
1. Changing their whole lifestyle from one of sexual impurity to living lives set apart to God.
2. Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in their own hard work and generosity.
3. Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing hope when loved ones die.



Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in their own hard word and generosity.

Again the essence is *lifestyle*.

A charitable intent must govern the stewardship of their work, toward both their own churches and families of churches in Macedonia.



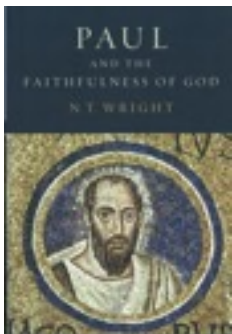
---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in their own hard word and generosity

Key concepts:

- charitable concern, 4:9: love for the brethren, brotherhood,
- Christian family in all of Macedonia, 4:10: church network
- live peacefully, mind your own business, work with your hands, 4:11: peaceful living—home, possession, property, assets—and businesses
- outsiders' respect, 4:12
- financial difficulties, 4:12: be dependent on others

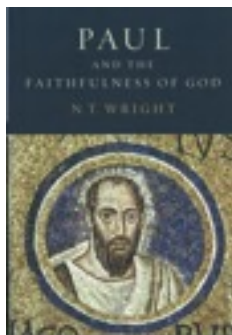


---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

<sup>13</sup>Now concerning those who have fallen asleep: we don't want you to remain in ignorance about them, my dear family. We don't want you to have the kind of grief that other people do, people who don't have any hope. <sup>14</sup>For, you see, if we believe that Jesus died and rose, that's the way God will also, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 (N. T. Wright)

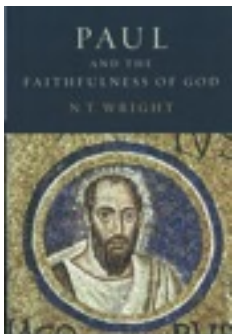


---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

<sup>15</sup>Let me explain. (This is the word of the Lord I'm speaking to you!) We who are alive, who remain until the Lord is present, will not find ourselves ahead of those who fell asleep. <sup>16</sup>The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shouted order, with the voice of an archangel and the sound of God's trumpet. The Messiah's dead will rise first; <sup>17</sup>then we who are alive, who are left, will be snatched up with them among the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And in this way we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>So comfort each other with these words.

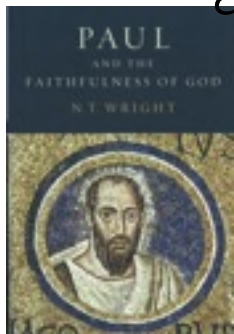
1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (N. T. Wright)



---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

5:1 Now when it comes to specific times and dates, my dear family, you don't need to have anyone write to you. <sup>2</sup>You yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a midnight robber. <sup>3</sup>When people say, "Peace and security!" then swift ruin will arrive at their doorstep, like the pains that come over a woman in labor, and they won't have a chance of escape. <sup>4</sup>But as for you, my dear family—you are not in darkness. That day won't surprise you like a robber. <sup>5</sup>You are all children of light, children of the day! We don't belong to the night, or to darkness. <sup>6</sup>So, then, let's not go to sleep, like the others, but let's keep awake and stay sober.



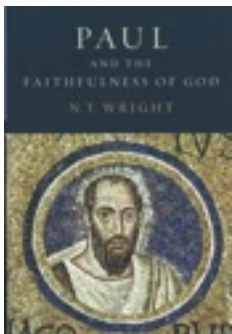
1 Thessalonians 5:1–6 (N. T. Wright)

*Paul's Early Epistles*

---

<sup>7</sup>People who sleep, you see, sleep at night. People who get drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But we daytime people should be self-controlled, clothing ourselves with the breastplate of faith and love, and with the helmet of the hope of salvation; <sup>9</sup>because God has not placed us on the road to fury, but to gaining salvation, through our Lord Jesus the Messiah. <sup>10</sup>He died for us, so that whether we stay awake or go to sleep we should live together with him. <sup>11</sup>So strengthen one another, and build each other up, just as you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:7–11 (N. T. Wright)



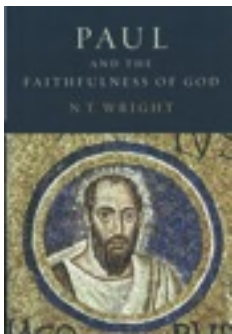
---

*Paul's Early Epistles*



The Thessalonian churches were only 9 months old, but they needed to be challenged in 3 areas:

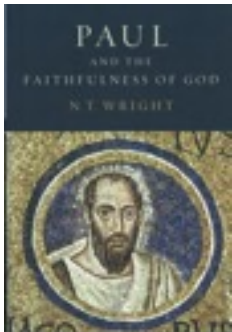
1. Changing their whole lifestyle from one of sexual impurity to living lives set apart to God.
2. Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in their own hard work and generosity.
3. Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing hope when loved ones die.



Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing hope when loved ones die.

The essence of his challenge to them was to live sober lives, recognizing that part of following Christ is to embrace His whole gospel—He is returning and we will be rejoined with our loved ones at His return.

Keep focused!



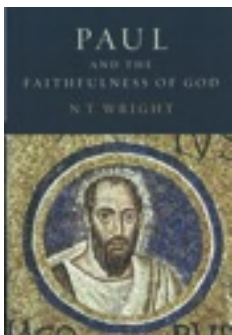
---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ, not losing hope when loved ones die

Key concepts:

- grief/hope, 4:13: distress that brings carousing vs. expectation that brings focus—powerful concept
- will not find ourselves ahead, 4:14: our loved ones are not left behind. They will join the action at the same time.
- clouds/fury, 4:17; 5:9: *clouds* = storm clouds on horizon vs. the storm itself—deal with next week (affects rapture metaphor)
- keep awake and stay sober, 5:6: *keep awake* = be alive; *sober* = composed (don't go get drunk)



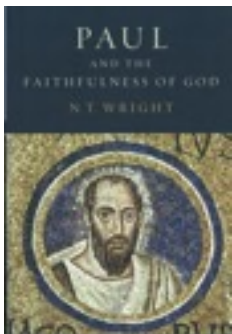
---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

**Issue:** Fully established churches today

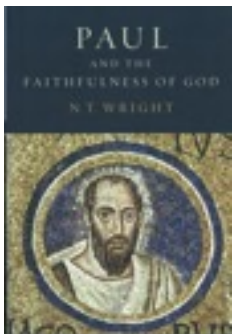
**Questions:**

1. What does it take to fully establish believers in the gospel and its accompanying lifestyle?
2. Why are so few churches fully established? so few members fully established?
3. Have you seen any of the three areas of challenge addressed in the Thessalonian letters in your church or churches? How are they manifest?
4. Is your church equipped to fully establish all of its members?



To become fully established means that we change our whole lifestyle once we embrace the gospel.

Anything short of that will result in a shallow conversion.



---

*Paul's Early Epistles*

Just like the Thessalonian churches, we need to be challenged in 3 areas:

1. Changing our whole lifestyle from one of sexual impurity to living our lives set apart to God.
2. Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in our own hard work and generosity to our churches and churches worldwide.
3. Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing our hope when loved ones die.

