

August 25, 2024 PM – Pastor Kevin Olivier  
**1 Thessalonians 2:1-8** – “Imitate Worthy Exemplars”

- A. When an artist is chiseling a statue out of stone or carving one out of wood, he or she needs to use a model if they want their masterpiece to look somewhat realistic.
- B. When endeavoring to mold our lives into what they should be, we need models as well. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, the authors of this epistle, gave thanks to God for these fledgling Christians → **1 Thes 1:6-7**

Imitate worthy exemplars	I. WHO ARE WORTHY EXEMPLARS? II. IMITATE THE ATTRIBUTES OF PAUL, SILVANUS, AND TIMOTHY
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**I. WHO ARE WORTHY EXEMPLARS?**

A. Christ is our ultimate example that we are to follow.

1. In **v2**, our authors mentioned how they suffered mistreatment in Phillipi before they came to Thessalonica.

a. Speaking of the Philippian Church, Paul wrote in **Phil 4:2**: “**I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.**” That was major problem in that church.

b. A key teaching to help resolve this was for these two disputing ladies to imitate the humble attitude of Jesus Christ. → **Phil 2:1-8**

2. We must keep in mind that the ways we can imitate Jesus is limited. [ WWJD ]

a. As the divine, eternal Son of God, Jesus knew the thoughts of men and women and would speak accordingly.

b. We are to imitate Jesus by what we say and do and especially in how we treat others.

B. You are to imitate Godly exemplars in Scripture.

1. Many OT saints are worthy exemplars— **Heb 11** is an entire chapter of OT figures who serve as triumphant examples of faith we should imitate. **Heb 12:2** concludes that we are to fix “**our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.**”

2. As we read in **1 Thes 1**, our 3 authors commended the Thessalonian church in how they imitated Jesus and them as well.

3. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “**Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ**” (**1 Cor 11:1**).

C. There are exemplars to be found throughout church history.

1. Martin Luther is a great example of bravery in the face of opposition.

2. Many Christian martyrs can likewise be exemplars.

3. Dr. J. Gresham Machen is an example of standing firm on Scripture in opposition to liberal theology.

D. Modern day saints in our churches are also examples you ought to imitate. In as far as they demonstrate fruit of the Holy Spirit and follow Jesus, they are models for how we are to order our lives.

## II. IMITATE THE ATTRIBUTES OF PAUL, SILVANUS, AND TIMOTHY

- A. They had a willingness to suffer for the kingdom of God. → v2
- B. Even though not everyone is called to preach, we should endeavor to have a degree of **“boldness in our God to speak”** of the gospel— to witness of Christ— as these men did according to v2.
1. In Acts 4, the Jewish Council commanded Peter and John **“not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus,” (v18)**.
    - a. They were committed to heed God rather than men (v19).
    - b. After meeting their companions they prayed, **“And now, Lord, take note of their threats and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence” (v29)**.
  2. Like Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, you ought to speak to others about Christ in a such as way that **“not pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts” (v4)**.
    - a. That means you should avoid **“flattering speech”** when you witness the gospel.
    - b. There is a place for **“flattering speech.”** One clear example is when you are alone with your spouse whom you love.
- C. You should imitate how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, were lovers of God and His people rather than lovers of money. They wrote in v5 how they did not have **“a pretext for greed—God is witness.”**
- D. We are given the apostles as exemplars of those who sought to glorify God rather than seek glory from men. → v6
1. This verse suggests that Paul is the primary author of this epistle. Neither Timothy nor Silas were apostles even though they were important leaders in the church.
  2. Humility is another worthy trait from v6. A proud person asserts his authority to the max degree, yet the apostles often avoided this.
- E. You should also imitate the gentleness and tender love of these men. →vv7-8
1. Notice how these men cared for the church in Thessalonica just in the same kind and patient way that a nursing mother tenderly cares for her children.
  2. God calls men to masculinity.
    - a. Men are to be leaders in their homes.
    - b. Men are to be providers and protectors.
    - c. Despite the mandate for masculinity, there is a place for gentle, patient, and kind care for those within the church.

Review, further application, and conclusion: