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# Words of Truth

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## I Thessalonians 2:7-8

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As Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus continue to remind the saints in Thessalonica of their entrance in among them, we find these words: *“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us”* (I Thessalonians 2:7-8).

The gentleness that these brethren came to the Thessalonians with is what Paul will later remind Timothy to use in preaching the Gospel. What he wrote to Timothy will explain not only the gentle approach, but why as well. Notice: *“But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will”* (II Timothy 2:23-26).

When we consider the point of “as a nurse” we get some more insight. The Greek word translated “nurse” [τροφός] only appears in this one verse. The definition is: “a nourisher, that is, nurse: - nurse” (Strong’s # 5162). From the perspective of those teaching, the nourishing comes through the words of faith (I Timothy 4:6). So, you have them using a gentle approach in teaching the truth. That is what the people of Thessalonica needed.

A gentle approach as a nurse is not always the approach a teacher must take. There are times wherein a sharp rebuke is needed (II Corinthians 13:10 and Titus 1:10-14). Jesus was meek [gentle; Strong’s # 42350 (Matthew 11:28-30). He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11; 10:14). Yet, there were many times wherein He did not use a gentle approach (Matthew 8:23-27, Matthew 12:22-42, Matthew 16:21-23, Matthew 23:1-36, Luke 11:37-54, Luke 24:15-27, John 2:13-17, etc.). He was not apologetic for being offensive either (Matthew 15:1-14). So, those who dare take upon themselves the responsibility of teaching need to carefully consider how to approach people in different situations.

To get more insight of the point, consider the thought of a nurse cherishing her children. When you study the way the Apostle Paul looked at those he taught you find statements like these: *“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father*

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*and Jesus Christ our Lord... To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*" (I Timothy 1:2 and Titus 1:4). Thus, from these facts, we can see a parental approach to teaching.

With all that we have considered already, the statement *"being affectionately desirous of you,"* makes a lot of sense. The idea conveyed from the Greek "ἰμείρομαι" is: "(a yearning; of uncertain affinity); to long for: - be affectionately desirous" (Strong's # 2442). Paul's parental-like affection for his brethren is very clear in the Scriptures. He wrote this to the saints in Corinth: *"Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved"* (II Corinthians 12:14-15). Outside of what we are reading in this letter about Silvanus, we don't have much more that we can say about him on this point. However, with Timothy, we do have more insight. For example: *"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel"* (Philippians 2:19-22).

As if the point hadn't been made already, these brothers in Christ wrote, *"we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."* The Greek word that is translated "souls" [ψυχή] has various meanings. Aside from "soul(s)" it is translated in the KJV as "life" or "lives" (Matthew 2:20; 6:25; 10:39; 16:25; 20:28, Mark 3:4; 8:35; 10:45, Luke 6:9; 9:56; 12:22-23; 14:26; 17:33, John 10:11; 10:15; 10:17; 12:25; 13:37-38; 15:13, Acts 15:26; 20:10; 20:24; 27:10; 27:22, Romans 11:3, etc.), "mind(s)" (Philippians 1:27 and Hebrews 12:3), and "heartily" (Colossians 3:23). They could have therefore meant their lives here on earth (I John 3:16) or their actual soul as in the spirit within us (Matthew 10:28). That same Greek word is used in the two Scriptures I just cited. Whether they meant life external or internal, they are emphasizing their love for the saints in Thessalonica.

Brethren, we need to understand that faithful teachers of the word of God are risking their souls to help others with the Gospel (James 3:1). That should speak volumes to those who have an understanding of what that means. In addition to the spiritual risks, there is also the anxieties that come with teaching and trying to help people get to Heaven (Romans 9:1-3 and II Corinthians 11:28). Faithful teachers of the Gospel strongly desire to see those they are teaching succeed spiritually. They will risk it all to help their students be saved. Think about this statement: *"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all"* (Philippians 2:17). So, from these faithful teachers we are reading the words of; let us consider that sound preachers shouldn't only be judged for their faithful teachings. They should also be measured by their love for their brethren!