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# Words of Truth

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## I Thessalonians 2:11-12

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*“As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory”* (I Thessalonians 2:11-12). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus are reminding the saints in Thessalonica about their approach in teaching when they were in Thessalonica. The Greek word that is translated “exhorted” [παρακαλέω] has a broad definition. That definition is: “To call near, that is, invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation): - beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort (-ation), intreat, pray” (Strong’s # 3870).

It was common for brethren to be exhorted to continue in faithful service to our Lord. Notice: *“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God... I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called... Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 14:22, Ephesians 4:1, and I Thessalonians 4:1-2). As you read in the first Scripture quoted in this paragraph, continued faithful service to the Lord comes at a price (Psalms 37:12-15, Matthew 5:10-12, John 16:33, and II Timothy 3:12). So, the next point was as important then as it is now. Brethren need to be comforted from time to time.

We know one source of comfort is the Scriptures (Romans 15:4). However, the Scriptures are not our only source of comfort. Faithful brethren play a large role for saints in affliction to be comforted. Consider what Paul wrote about persecution he faced and how he was comforted during that time: *“Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more”* (II Corinthians 7:4-7). The parental-like relationship Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus had with the brethren in Thessalonica undoubtably aided them in comforting the saints in Thessalonica. Yet, that relationship was not just used for comforting these brethren.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus charged these brethren as a father does his children. The Greek word that is translated “charged” [μαρτυρέω] is an interesting word. One definition of this term is: “to be a witness, that is, testify (literally or figuratively): - charge, give [evidence], bear record, have (obtain, of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give (have) testimony, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness” (Strong’s # 3140). When you do a word study, you find that translations of this word in the KJV include “bear witness” (Luke 11:48, John 1:7, John 1:8, John 5:31, John 5:36, John 8:18, John 10:25, John 15:27, John 18:23, John 18:37, Acts 23:11, I John 1:2, and I John 5:8), “testify” (John 2:25, John 3:11, John 5:39, John 7:7, John 15:26, Acts 26:5, I John 4:14, and Revelation 22:16), “bear record” (John 8:14, II Corinthians 8:3, I John 5:7, and III John 1:12), etc. So, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus gave witness to these brethren in a manner that a father would his child. That is not the way I would normally think of the English word “charge.” When I think of the word “charge,” I think of it as a command like it is used in Deuteronomy 3:28 and I Timothy 6:13.

What would Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus be testifying about? When we look back at the book of Acts we get some answers. For example, in Acts 14:3 we see the giving of testimony unto the word of the grace of our Lord and confirming it with signs and wonders. Paul acted as a witness for Christ (Acts 23:11). Paul gave witness accounts for Christ of things which were long ago recorded by the prophets and Moses (Acts 26:22). So, that is our answer. Paul and the other Apostles were able to testify of things they were eye witnesses of concerning our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:46-48, Acts 2:29-32, Acts 3:15, Acts 4:33, Acts 10:39-42, Acts 18:5, I Corinthians 15:15, I John 1:1-3, and I John 4:14), which then and now serves as a motivator for faithfulness among the saints. We have the words of faithful men who saw the evidence that our faith is rooted in (I Corinthians 15:1-26).

We have, in the study of this context, talked about the parental-like relationship in teaching (cf. I Thessalonians 2:7-8). To the Corinthians, this was written and it serves as great commentary on this point: *“I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel”* (I Corinthians 4:14-15).

The calling all saints experience is through the Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord (II Thessalonians 2:14). Christians are supposed to walk [to tread all around] in a worthy manner (Ephesians 4:1). Jesus is our ultimate example of how we are to behave ourselves (I John 2:1-6). Our conduct has to be as becometh the Gospel (Philippians 1:27). Through Jesus Christ, our Heavenly Father has made us citizens of the kingdom (Colossians 1:12-23). As Christians, our conversation [citizenship] is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20). When people observe our behavior, they should see people that behave like citizens of the kingdom of God rather than people of the world (Romans 12:1-2). As children of God, our conduct has to be above and beyond that of people of the world (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1). Just as Jesus behaved Himself in a worthy manner, all Christians need to do such as well!