

Living a Godly Life  
By Trey Sullins

What if the Holy Spirit described your faith right now? What would that sound like? Would be happy with the way your life is presented or would you be ashamed? This ought to be the question that we ask ourselves daily to make sure that we are always on the right track with Christ. In the scriptures we find a passage just like this where the Holy Spirit inspired Paul described the brethren of the church at Thessalonica. Does their description sound like ours would?

The Thessalonians were praised for their godliness: “remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father” (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Paul first remembers their “work of faith.” This is a reference to the effort which they put in for the faith of Jesus Christ. This work which they were doing not only proved their faith but also furthered the kingdom of God. James 2:14 shows us that this is the Biblical way to have a living faith. Paul next remembers their “labor of love.” The word translated “labor” in the original language is a word with reference to something that is wearisome or hard on the body. The Christian’s work will be exhausting at times, but notice for these Thessalonians it was still motivated by love. Finally, Paul remembers their “patience of hope.” This phrase is displaying the Thessalonians’ enduring hope. Through trial and persecution or joy and blessings the Christian must maintain a hope in the promises from God.

The Thessalonians were also praised for their imitation of Christ: “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.” When the gospel was brought to these Thessalonians, they reacted by receiving and following it. In fact, the word translated “follow” in the original language is from where we get our English word “mimic.” In other words, they tried their best to follow exactly or mimic that path of Christ. Furthermore, think about the city in which they found themselves. In Acts 17:1-9 we read of a violent mob raised by some of the Jews in the city. This mob’s purpose was to remove the Christian missionaries! This mentality of wickedness was surrounding these brethren, but even through their “affliction” they received and followed the word of Christ. This same type of obedience needs to be in us as Christians. There should be nothing in life that can stop us from doing the will of God!

These brethren were also praised for being transformed: “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9). After these brethren received the word in verse six, they completely changed themselves to match the image of God’s true people, Christians. They continued on even further by “sounding forth” the “word of the Lord” to others throughout the Greek world (1 Thessalonians 1:8). These brethren turned from the pits of paganism and the man-made traditions of Judaism to serve the living God. What a powerful lesson that is to us! When we become Christians, this is the change we have to commit to in our lives. We must leave the self-serving attitudes and behaviors of the world behind us and completely change to the Almighty as well.

The Thessalonian brethren are a great example in many ways for how we ought to be today. They were praised for their godly work, their obedience to Christ, and their total transformation to the way of Christ. Does this pattern describe us as well? We ought to ensure daily that we match this

description with constant testing of ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). When we live like this then we too will be delivered “from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10).