

Church in the Wild Devotional
Helping Others' Thrive
1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

After celebrating *how the gospel came to the Thessalonians not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction* (1:3), Paul and his team challenged their spiritual offspring to parent others in the faith. As you read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 on this page, ponder this summary of the seven qualities that we Christ-followers need to reproduce ourselves spiritually:

2 ¹ *You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results.* ² *We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition.*

Disciple-makers are **courageous**—motivated by love, we dare to share Jesus graciously and respectfully, despite risking rejection, mockery, or dangerous opposition,.

3 *For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.*

Disciple-makers are **truthful**—we don't distort or "sell" our good news message.

4 *On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.* ⁵ *You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.*

Disciple-makers are secure in their **God-given authority**. While we listen and give prayerful consideration to other people's input, we are accountable to an audience of One.

6 *We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.* ⁷ *Instead, we were like young children among you.*

Disciple-makers strive to be **humble**. As loving parents get down on their children's level to teach and play with them, we seek to be authentic and accessible to others.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸ *so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.*

Disciple-makers are **nurturing**. As a "nursing mother cares for her children," we provide spiritual food and gentle care so that our adopted spiritual offspring might grow more mature.

9 *Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.* ¹⁰ *You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.*

Disciple-makers have **integrity**. They do not take advantage of their adopted spiritual children. Instead, they serve sacrificially. While Paul's and his apostolic team chose to provide for themselves as tentmakers, he affirmed their right to receive compensation (2 Corinthians 9:3-12). Whether volunteers or paid, disciple-makers should be "above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:2-3).

11 *For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,* ¹² *encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

Disciple-makers make no apology at having **influence**. They are attentive in "encouraging, comforting, and urging" their adopted spiritual children to be their best.

These seven qualities are certainly crucial for pastors and missionaries who hope to glorify God and bless others. Yet they also apply to laypeople, not just clergy. When I raise my hand to give the Benediction at the end of worship, I'm commissioning you to fulfill God's calling to make disciples of family members, co-workers, and neighbors. **Which qualities do you need?** As God to provide!