

The Thessalonian believers, though only young in the faith, became models of those who lived their faith and shared their faith (1 Thess 1:6-10; 4:1-6). Even though neither they nor we might be gifted evangelists, we can and should strive to profess Jesus to the lost. Four disciplines can help us accomplish this goal.

I. Live godly

1. *To live godly is part of the change which occurs when we come to God through Jesus and are changed by Him.* See Ephesians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; Philippians 2:12; John 17:16.
2. *When we live godly, it will show.* As Jesus was the Light of the world, His followers become light as well. We should stand out like stars in the sky. See Matthew 5:14, 16; Philippians 2:14-16.
3. *When we live godly, it will not only show, it will draw questions.* Peter expected people to ask about the believers' hope (1 Peter 3:15). We can imagine other questions that could have arisen in New Testament contexts, e.g., concerning the joy of the Philippians (Phil 2:14; 3:1), the failure to purchase images in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-27); the absence at heathen feasts (1 Cor 10:14-21), the voluntary return of a runaway slave (Onesimus), the lack of hopeless mourning at death (1 Thess 4:13).

II. Prepare wisely

Living a godly life is an insufficient testimony. They must hear the gospel (*cf.* Romans 1:16). So we must prepare to move from testimony to gospel message.

1. *Be ready to give an answer.*

Theoretically, every area of our life should be affected by our faith because we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Therefore, any question about how we live (think, feel or act), should have a spiritual aspect to it. We should be able to trace it to a Biblical reason that relates to the gospel and then strive to explain it to another person.

Practically, many believers have not thought through that much of their lives and a new believer may have been impacted in just one area. But we can respond like the blind man who had been healed by Jesus, "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (John 9:25 NIV). He logically concluded about Jesus, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." (John 9:33 NIV) In a personal testimony we profess what Jesus has done for us. It allows us to move to the gospel for an explanation of how it happened.

2. *Be ready to take an opportunity.*

Since many do not ask, we need to take opportunities to share about Jesus. Paul's experience in Athens (Acts 17:15-34) is a good example. He started with their altar "to an unknown god", quoted their poet, related to their own philosophies, but gave a clear and uncompromising message in response to those things.

III. Focus clearly

1. *Keep in mind that they need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.* God uses the gospel and the gospel is about Jesus Christ. Take people to Jesus such as by reading the Gospel of Mark or John with them. This was the basic response of the early disciples, "Come and see!"
2. *Keep in mind that we want to bring people to follow Jesus.* The purpose is not to get them to attend church meetings nor be our followers.
3. *Keep in mind as well that our commission is to make disciples.* See Matthew 28:19-20. We are introducing a person to a life-long relationship to Jesus Christ.

IV. Pray intently

Since all of this is clearly a work of God, we must certainly also pray intently. When it concerns professing Jesus to the lost, I would suggest four specific requests to bring to God.

1. *Pray for open doors, opportunities to share the gospel.* See Colossians 4:2-3. Pray as well that we see these opportunities on time.
2. *Pray for boldness.* See 1 Corinthians 2:3; Acts 18:9; Ephesians 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:7-8; 1 Peter 3:14.
3. *Pray for wisdom, wise words to explain the gospel.* See Colossians 4:4-6; Ephesians 5:19. Paul was concerned that both he and other followers of Jesus would have the right words to communicate the gospel well in each situation.
4. *Pray for open hearts.* See Acts 16:14; 11:18. Though we have been given the task of presenting the gospel, the response of the person to that message is not our responsibility but God's work.

Evangelism is not to be relegated to the evangelist and special events. Whereas they may be helpful, the norm should be that believers introduce others to Jesus. We have received something wonderful that everyone else needs. We are all simply messengers of good news.

But we are in a spiritual battle and there will be resistance. It may take work and discipline. Draw near to God and resist the enemy. Commit to praying for the lost and to praying for ourselves to be those who profess Jesus boldly and wisely.