

## Secrets of Effective Witnessers

1 Thessalonians 2

Paul is called the greatest evangelist in church history, and it's hard to argue the point: 2000 years of the Gentile Church is traced to his ministry! But he knew persecution and disappointment, too. What enabled him to be so effective? He tells us in 1 Thessalonians 2.

- *Boldness to freely and fearlessly speak the truth (1-4)*
- *No desire for personal praise or profit (5-9)*
- *Exemplary lives that 'show' what you are 'telling' (10-12)*
- *No compromise in the message of the problem of sin (13-16)*
- *Commitment to and love for people (17-20)*



1. Contrary to what you might think, the Apostle Paul was *not* always successful at witnessing! At Lystra, he was stoned and dragged out of the city for dead. After his 'Macedonian Call,' he had a few women converts at Philippi, before being thrown in jail. At Thessalonica, he escaped from the city by night. At Berea, he had to flee to Athens. *Not an enthusiastic response!* So what was it – expressed in I Thess. 2.1-4, that drove Paul, and gave him such boldness?
2. It can be tempting to brag about how many people we have led to Christ, but a negative effect of this can be to prevent us from witnessing when there is little chance of a response. Rejection is never fun, but it comes with the territory! What motivations did Paul avoid in his ministry (5-6)? What helpful attitudes and actions marked he and his co-workers in their witnessing (7-9)?
3. We all cringe when church leaders fall into sin; it reflects badly on all Christians, and Jesus Christ. But beyond this, every one of us is a walking billboard for Jesus Christ! The most effective way to reach unbelievers is through 'friendship evangelism,' or interaction with those we live and work with every day. Notice how Paul highlights this in vv10-12. How can our lives attract others to consider their need for Christ?
4. Living in a day when *toleration* has become the highest virtue, some Christian leaders avoid talking about sin. Paul didn't, as vv13-16 demonstrate. His preaching led the Thessalonians not only to faith, but to dramatic life-change. Sin is the problem of which Christ is the solution! How can we expose sin without compromising the freeness of the gospel?
5. Perhaps the 'bottom line' in our witnessing is this: Do we love people enough to share Christ with them? Paul's love for the Thessalonians was deep and sincere (17-19). How can we grow our love for unbelievers Christ has placed in our path?