

...and HOW!

2:7-12 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Last week:

PAUL DESCRIBES A FUNCTIONAL CHURCH

***The point for us?* re: "The work we share" → WHAT we do matters and so does WHY and HOW!**

- | | | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| I. | WHAT A CHURCH (that works) DOES: | a) 1:8
b) 1:8 | It "sounds forth" the word of the Lord
It lives out its "faith in God" | Evangelism Example |
| III. | WHY A CHURCH DOES WHAT IT DOES: | 2:4 | to please God | |
| II. | HOW A CHURCH DOES WHAT IT DOES: | a) 2:2
b) 2:3
c) 2:3
d) 2:5 | with "boldness in our God"
without error
without impurity
without flattery | |

N.B. With this much said (to verse 6) it seems that **HOW** Paul did the work that he did **was very matter-of-fact, very cut-and-dried, very to-the-point, even very "cold-blooded"** (at least towards the people involved!) ... but we haven't finished our **HOW** list yet. And as we do, we find that there is another side!

- e) 2:7 **gently**, like a nursing mother
- f) 2:8 **sacrificially**, with "wholehearted affection"
- g) 2:9 **laboriously**, so as not to be a burden to you
- h) 2:10 **exemplarily**, with deliberately holy and righteous and blameless conduct
- i) 2:11 **instructively**, exhorting and encouraging and "challenging" like a devoted father

NOTE: A change of "mood" on the "HOW list"!

II. HOW A CHURCH DOES WHAT IT DOES

- a) 2:2 with "boldness in our God"
- b) 2:3 without error
- c) 2:3 without impurity
- d) 2:5 without flattery
- e) 2:7 gently
- f) 2:8 sacrificially
- g) 2:9 laboriously
- h) 2:10 exemplarily
- i) 2:11 instructively

SO, to summarize (all 9 points!) ... HOW? Like an excellent parent

With all the *tender loving sacrificial care* of an excellent mother (and father!) and with all the *firm, purposeful diligent focus* of an excellent father (and mother!)

QUESTION: *Are children generally pleased to have an excellent parent or two?*
Any response is possible!!! BUT children SHOULD be pleased that their parents are excellent!

So although **WHAT** Paul was doing was “to please God and not to please man,” **HOW** he did it was generally pleasing to people.
So you see: *If we seek to please God, everyone generally benefits. (With God at the centre of your life, everything lines up)*

NOW... just as this week’s text helps us to understand last week’s “**HOW**” list, (4 “hard” + 4 “soft”)

Back to the first list...

I. WHAT A CHURCH DOES: (if it **IS** a church that works!)

- a) 1:8 It “sounds forth” the word of the Lord with **BOLDNESS and LOVE**
- b) 1:8 It lives out its “faith in God” with **BOLDNESS and LOVE**

So also it affects how we understand last week’s applications... [**THINGS REQUIRED + THINGS TO DO**]

THINGS REQUIRED:

- 1) To love God more and more *until we love him the most.*
- 2) To care what people think of us less and less *to be free to love God more and more.*

But **NOT AT ALL** “uncaring towards people”: just **NOT** afraid of them! **Proverbs 29:25** “the fear of man...”
Romans 8:31 “if God is for us...”

So we must be **willing and able** to speak the whole truth *with boldness and love* **AND** to live out our faith *with boldness and love!*

So that’s **HOW** we are to do **WHAT** we are to do! With tough love: with **BOLD LOVE!** hard **AND** soft: bold **AND** loving!

Q. Who might we begin to remind people of? “Christ!” *The lion and the lamb* → A gentle lion; an angry lamb!

So that’s **HOW!** But here, one **HOW** leads to another! **HOW** are we *going to do/become* this sort of church?
How will we become BOLD and LOVING people?

KEY → “Like Christ” = **conformed to the image of Christ!**

SO, to summarize: ... HOW? **Like Christ**

Really good news!

Romans 8:28, 29 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. *So it is what all our experiences are orchestrated by God to accomplish!*

NOW let’s go back to the **APPLICATIONS** from last week.

TWO THINGS FOR US TO DO:

- 1) **Make your choice!** **Luke 9:23** “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

There must be, **IN THE FIRST PLACE**, a giving of ourselves to God. **A surrender of ourselves.**
(Rom.8:28) Choose to be a person who loves God. Prove yourself to be a person who is called according to his purpose!

2) **Abide in the Word** (The treatment!) **Psalms 119:11** I have stored up your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against thee.

TWO MORE THINGS FOR US TO DO:

- 3) Position yourself in a church so as to find **and imitate and become good examples**

Like this!

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 ... You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake ↔ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord...

And like this!

1 Thessalonians 2:10-14 You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our

conduct toward you believers... ← → For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. ...

WHICH MEANS: To be a church that works...

√ The “community living” which keeps us in contact with one another, for the sake of having and being “good examples” **Meaning?** → **Whole-hearted participation in a small group!**

Cell Groups / Prayer Groups / Homebuilders / ForEverGreen
Early Morning Prayer Groups
Youth Group Small Groups / OCTANE and small groups on campus

Joining and showing up is just the beginning.
Make great use of the opportunity: Ask questions: set the stage!

4) Position yourself in your community to be seen and heard Arrange to be “loved and listened to”

Love and gentleness and sacrifice → a sort of relationship → a bold declaration of the gospel!

Show up at events. Join clubs. Pursue interests. Volunteer for causes.

Plus, be looking for opportunities to be bold and loving!

As a church, we are organized to help you with this!

“Gospel Out”/Outreach Sundays: e.g. April 8 (Easter) + 15 + 22 + 29
“Gospel Out”/Outreach Events: e.g. “Country Café” + Saturday, April 21

TO CONCLUDE: A 9 minute “training video”

Here’s *the gentle touch*: **A Christian comes across a deeply troubled guy and makes use of the opportunity.**

Does the Christian *under-use* the opportunity?
Should he have done more with the opportunity?
More bold? Less gentle?

Or does he get it just about right: nicely in between ***doing nothing*** and ***trying to do TOO MUCH?***