

CITYWEST CHURCH

01.03.2026 - 10 AM

SHARING THE GOSPEL AND OUR LIVES.

As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you, but instead we were like children among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. **8** We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

9 Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God's Good News to you. **10** You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers. **11** And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. **12** We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.

13 Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-13 (NLT)

Last week we talked about a slow pace and stillness focused on the inner pace of our life.

This week we look at how that inner pace and presence influences and shapes our relational presence to others around us.

Paul unwraps something powerful about how he leads in 1 Thessalonians 2. He didn't simply just preach sermons; he gave himself.

Remember Timothy is also an author on 1 Thessalonians.

Presence people don't just project faith, they embody it.

We aren't just to speak of Jesus, but live the way of Jesus.

To a hurried world, this is radical.

1. PRESENCE IS GENTLE.

As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you, but instead we were like children among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. **8** We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 (NLT)

He does not say:

- *We asserted authority.*
- *We defended our rights.*
- *We demanded respect.*

He says: We were gentle.

The Greek word implies warmth, tenderness, patience.

Then he adds the image of a father:

And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. **12** We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (NLT)

Motherly tenderness.

Fatherly encouragement.

Authority flowed from closeness, not force.

“The church is the church only when it exists for others.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

People trust truth when it arrives wrapped in love.

You can win an argument and lose a person.

Paul chose gentleness — and gained a church.

- *Parents: your tone disciplines your children as much as your teaching.*
- *Leaders: influence grows where gentleness leads.*
- *Friends: correction without tenderness hardens hearts.*

Ask yourself this week:

Presence People create safe relational space where the Spirit can work.

2. THE GOSPEL MOVES AT THE SPEED OF RELATIONSHIP.

We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NLT)

Notice the order.

Love → Shared Life → Shared Gospel.

Not:

Message → Program → Distance.

Paul didn't drop truth and leave town emotionally.

He entwined his life with theirs.

His presence didn't end when he left geographically. It continued in prayer.

The Thessalonians didn't just receive content — they experienced community.

This echoes chapter 1:

“You received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you.”

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NLT)

Why did they endure suffering with joy?

Because they saw the gospel embodied in Paul.

“The gospel is good news of a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It cannot be communicated impersonally.”

John Stott

The gospel travels best along relational bridges.

Presence is the credibility of the gospel.

- *People distrust institutions.*
- *People question authority.*
- *People are suspicious of religious language.*

But authentic presence disarms suspicion.

*You cannot microwave discipleship.
The gospel moves at the speed of trust.*

3. INTEGRITY SUSTAINS PRESENCE.

You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers.

1 Thessalonians 2:10 (NLT)

He is not boasting. He is anchoring credibility.

Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. **12** Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 (NLT)

Presence without integrity collapses.

*Paul worked “night and day” so he would not burden them (2:9).
His life matched his message.*

This consistency matters.

“A holy life is the best apology for Christianity.”

Charles Spurgeon

The Thessalonians were watching Paul's:

- *Work ethic*
- *Financial integrity*
- *Speech*
- *Suffering*
- *Prayer*

The world is not looking for perfection — it is looking for authenticity.

Integrity builds the platform that personality never can.

Small acts of consistency matter:

- *Showing up when you said you would.*
- *Speaking truth without exaggeration.*
- *Paying debts.*
- *Owning mistakes.*

Integrity sustains influence.

Paul didn't plant a church through strategy alone.

He planted it through presence.

Motherly gentleness.

Fatherly encouragement.

Shared life.

Consistent integrity.

Paul celebrates their

“work produced by faith, labor prompted by love, and endurance inspired by hope.”

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NLT)

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

- 1. Can you think of someone who shared their life with you – not just advice or teaching – and how did that shape your faith?**
- 2. Where do you see pressure to be forceful instead of gentle?**
- 3. Where have you seen integrity open doors for spiritual conversations?**