

## What's in Your Words? **1 Thessalonians 3:1-13**

When Christ returns and we all stand before Him, Scripture tells us that we all will give an account for every careless word we speak – **Matt. 12:34b-37**

At that time, "what's in your wallet" won't matter, but what's in your words will

How we use our words will either justify us or condemn us!

**But it's not just about what we get back, it's about what we give to others.**

What's in your wallet can give you 1.5% cash back on your purchases, but what's in your words can change a person's life trajectory forever!

Have you ever been the recipient of perfectly timed words, a letter that said just the right thing, a display of love when it was needed the most, etc.

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

Receiving words of encouragement can mean the difference between a person giving up or persevering, turning back or surging forward, between choosing life or choosing death. **Words have power!**

The question is whether we will use that power to build up or to tear down!

Listen to what the Apostle Paul tells the Thessalonians to focus on at the end of this letter – **1 Thess. 5:11, 14**

**Paul knows the power of words of encouragement because he knows what it's like to be on the receiving end of it. **1 Thess. 3:6-10****

Paul was struggling! He had been kicked out of town after town, Satan had hindered him from returning to the places where he had so labored for the gospel, & he had no means by which to know if his labor had been in vain.

Paul was at the end of his rope in Athens, so he sends Timothy out to go to Thessalonica to encourage them & bring back a report on how they're doing

**Timothy returns bearing good news, and the encouragement Paul receives from Timothy's words brought a joy and comfort that were unsurpassed!**

**1 Thess. 2:19 – "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before the Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy."**

For Paul, receiving word that the Thessalonian Christians were bearing fruit and living out the Christian life was all he needed to continue on with his mission, even amidst the opposition and rejection he continued to face.

**Good news & encouraging words can make all the difference in a person's life!**

Ask yourself these questions:

- Am I quick to look for ways to encourage others because I know the difference it can make in their lives?
- Am I quick to point out the good that I see in... or do I just focus on the negative? Remember **vs. 10** – there were things that were still lacking!
- **Do I celebrate progress being made or point out what is still left undone?**
- Do people generally come to me looking for encouragement or do they avoid me because they know I'm critical?

**What do your answers to these questions reveal about your encouragement quotient?** What's in your words? Are they life giving or life draining?

The Apostle Paul closes chapter 3 with a prayer of blessing over the Thessalonians. It's a prayer given in response to the encouragement he had just received from the words of Timothy! **1 Thessalonians 3:11-13**

Paul prayed that God would continue to make their love for one another increase & abound! Paul knew the reality of what Jesus said in **Matt 12**.

**If they would love & encourage one another, they would not only be able to persevere in this life, they would also be able to stand before God justified!**

We need people like Timothy in our lives to speak words of encouragement and good news to us! We also need to be like Timothy to others!

Next week is Valentine's Day! It's the holiday of love! **Just remember that 1 Corinthians 13, is not written for married couples but for the Church!**

How can we be a church/people who show that we are disciples of Jesus Christ by the way we love one another and build each other up in the Lord?

Who can you encourage this week with words that build up and bring life?

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God cares much less about what's in your wallet than about what's in your words! **Be a Timothy to someone this week & use your words to build up!**

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