

## “FOUR PRIORITIES FOR LIVING”

### 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13

The “Tyranny of the Urgent” is a small booklet with a big fist. Its message is uncomplicated and direct. Actually it is a warning to all of us. Here is the warning—Don’t let the urgent take the place of the important in your life. The urgent will plead for our time and even make us think we have done the right thing by calming its nerves. The tragedy of it all is this: While you and I were putting out the fires of the urgent, the important is neither noisy nor demanding. Unlike the urgent, it patiently and quietly waits for us to realize its significance.

Forgetting the urgent for a few minutes, ask yourself what is really important for you. What do you consider ‘top priority’ in your life. That is a big question, maybe one you need time to think about. We need to determine our priorities for living.

There’s a letter written by Paul to a growing group of Christians, 1Thessalonians 2:1-13, centuries ago. Paul starts by telling them that his time with them was not wasted, He did not stay with them for long and on occasion it was discouraging, but it was not in vain.

As I prepared for this morning’s sermon I realized that Paul, in these few verses, set forth four essential priorities for any life:

**Be Biblical** Paul looked back over the weeks they were together and recalled his initial impressions: Read 1 Thessalonians 2:2-4. I am confident that there was a constant barrage of urgent needs pounding away on Paul’s mind, but he made sure that his life and ministry were firmly fixed on the important—the Scriptures. Please read that in Hebrews 4:12-13 it says, “The Word of God is living active, and sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit. It judges the things and attitudes of the heart.” First, and foremost, let’s become people who are thoroughly committed to Biblical thinking and action.

**Be Authentic** Listen to the way Paul talks about himself. For a moment he shifts the emphasis from the message to the messenger. Please read 1 Thessalonians 2:5-6. Webster’s dictionary defines the term authentic by suggesting three things authentic is not: it is not imaginary, it is not false, it is not an imitation.

Authentic people usually enjoy life more than most. They do not take themselves so seriously. They actually laugh and cry and think more freely because they have nothing to prove—No big image to protect, nor role to play. They have no fear of being found out, because they are not hiding anything.

**Be Gracious** Paul deals with this third priority in Thessalonians 2:7-11 where he writes off the value of being gracious. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7-11. What a gracious, tolerant spirit! The man was both approachable and tender. He cared for others like a mother nursing her baby (v. 7). He had a compassionate attitude, which was a high priority to him. He wanted to share not only the gospel, but his life. A greatly needed priority for this decade is an attitude or disposition that is characterized by grace. Read Peter’s final bit of counsel in 2 Peter 3:18.

**Be Relevant** Please read 1 Thessalonians 2:12-13 where Paul speaks of yet another priority. If we are hoping to reach our generation in 2007, we must make relevance a high priority. That’s exactly what Jesus Christ did. He met people as they were, not as they ‘ought to have been.’ Angry young men, blind beggars, proud politicians, loose-living streetwalkers, dirty and naked victims of demonism, and grieving

parents got equal time. They all hung on every word. Jesus was the epitome of relevance. And still is.

- Set a firm foundation – BE BIBLICAL
- Apply the truth of the Scriptures - BE AUTHENTIC
- Develop a compassionate attitude - BE GRACIOUS
- Stay current, always up to date - BE RELEVANT

Today, think about setting your personal, professional and spiritual priorities for life!

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