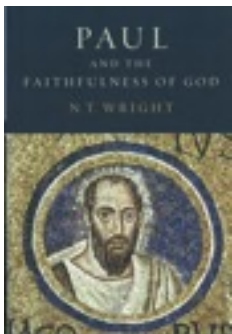


I am just back from a long trip—28 days. I was in Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, and India.

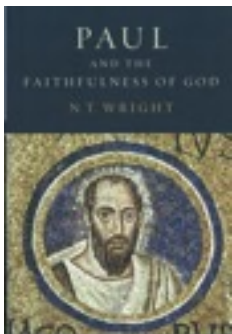
At one level things were amazing.

- Indonesia: FIECI—“divine meeting”
Richard Howell—25% of all Christians = base for country, matches their vision of affecting education
- Nepal: NCFN; 3 other associations came to event—100% of Christians in Nepal
- AEA: 21 countries = alliances and commissions



- CNI: 7 mainline denominations; sat down with Richard Howell and the Moderator, the Delhi bishop, and the top bishop for the Methodists, all at their invitation
- Bob Rao: his cohort and the cohort of the young, future orality network of India

Yet, at other times I was discouraged, because it is clear to me that many leaders, beyond these top ones, who all have their movements, are pragmatic and often not willing to pay the serious price of getting fully prepared in a disciplined manner and will pay that price of development for many years.

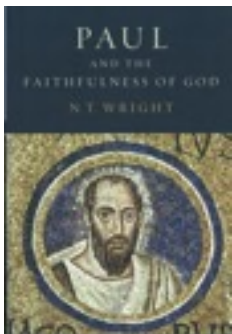


Paul's Early Epistles

I mean really training their leaders. All the way down to their elders, deacons, and leading women.

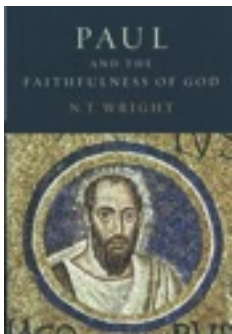
They like the ideas, are committed to them, but are easily discouraged and don't have enough discipline.

All have huge movements, but will they truly pay the price to solidify them? At times I think not, because I know what it takes.



That leads us to this morning (I could not have given this message a month ago this way). This is our last session in Thessalonians. The issue is solidifying the Thessalonians in the gospel.

What exactly does this take to solidify a new community in the gospel so that it grows to maturity and truly participates in the progress of the gospel and truly impacts its cities—meeting pressing needs and engaging in good occupations.



The Early Letters

Book 1: The Early Letters: Fully Establishing
the Churches in the Gospel

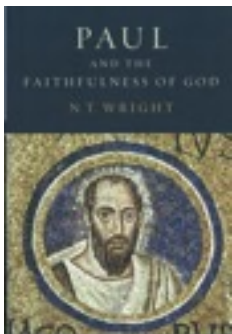
Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the
Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonians Correspondence:
Conversion to the Gospel

Book 4: The Corinthian Letters:
Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Paul's
Gospel Defended

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise
of Paul's Gospel



Book 1: *The Early Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches in the Gospel*

Session 1: The Intent of The Early Letters

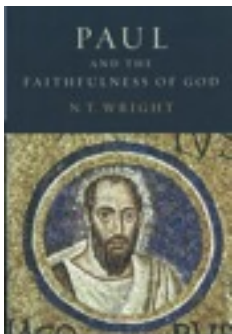
Session 2: The Galatian Problem

Session 3: The Thessalonians' Conversion

Session 4: The Corinthian Schisms

Session 5: The Roman Treatise

Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry

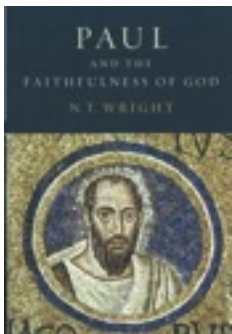


Paul's Early Epistles

The intention of these early letters is to establish the churches in the gospel.

Paul broadens the understanding of the gospel, and he roots the solutions to the problems his churches were encountering in that growing and broadening understanding of the kerygma and its implications.

This intention will become clearer and clearer as each letter unfolds.



Paul's Early Epistles

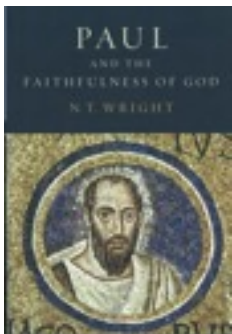
We will validate this in the six books of this series, as we will look at the correspondence of these early letters:

The Galatian letter

The Thessalonian correspondence

The Corinthian correspondence

The letter to the Romans



Paul's Early Epistles

Book 2: *Paul's Early Letters: The Galatian Problem*

Session 1: The Galatian Problem

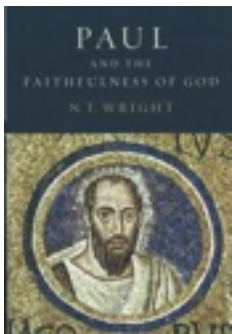
Session 2: The Pure Gospel

Session 3: The Gospel as a System of Living

Session 4: The Gospel and Walking in the Spirit

Session 5: The Gospel and Respecting Leaders

Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry



Paul's Early Epistles

Book 3: *Paul's Early Letters: The Thessalonians'* *Conversion*

Session 1: Paul's Concern for the Thessalonians

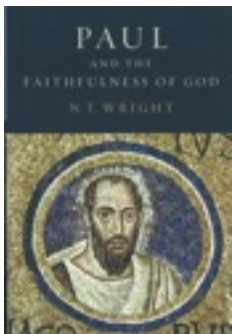
Session 2: Their Dramatic Conversion

Session 3: Three Emerging Problems—Letter 1

Session 4: Further Clarification—Letter 2

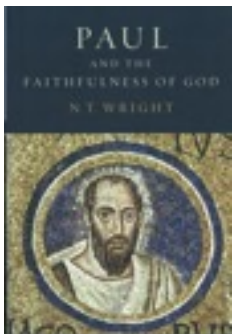
Session 5: Solidifying Their Conversion

Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry



We are finishing book 3 this morning:

Book 3: Paul's Early Letters: The Thessalonians' Conversion

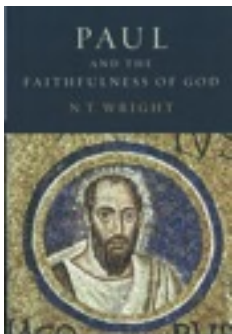


Paul's Early Epistles

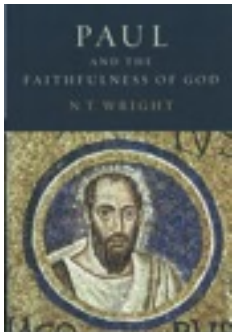
Passage: The Thessalonians Letters

Questions:

1. In the final analysis, what, according to Paul, did it take to solidify the Thessalonian churches in the gospel they so fully embraced?
2. How did he deal with the problems that were destabilizing them?
3. What was the role of local leaders in keeping them in line with the gospel and on the right course?
4. How were the local leaders and the Thessalonian churches to deal with those who would not keep in line with the gospel?



In session 1 we began by looking at Paul's intention for writing the Thessalonian letters.



Paul's Early Epistles

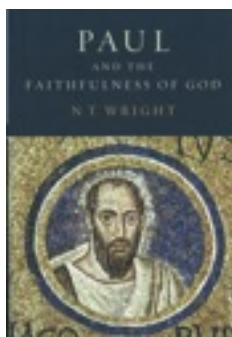
Intention Statement for the Thessalonian Letters

To further establish the Thessalonians, deepening their understanding of the full implications of the gospel they recently embraced

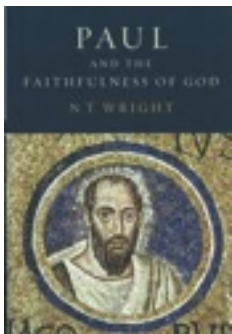
that they might not be unsettled, but would remain strong and focused amidst suffering and emerging tensions in the churches,

by challenging them, in the first letter, to fully embrace the new lifestyle in community as laid out in the emerging traditions handed down by Paul from Christ

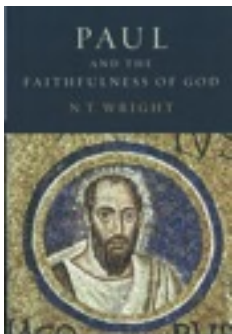
by further clarifying his challenges to them in the first letter, giving them specific instructions in solving problems that had the potential to destabilize them



In session 2 we focused on the
Thessalonians' conversion
process.

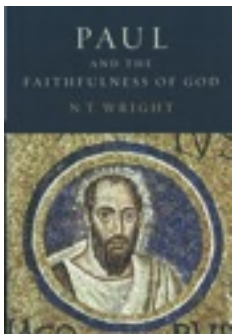


Conversion is *misunderstood* because it is removed from its literary context, *compartmentalized* because it is separated from the establishing process, and *reductionistic* because it is reduced to a moment-in-time event only.



A complete conversion process looks like this:

1. An initial solid response, in which the gospel is fully embraced, takes several weeks of exposure to the Word of God and results in those receiving the gospel beginning to proclaim it themselves.
2. It must be immediately followed up by careful nurturing and exhorting.
3. It is then followed up in the context of a new community by leaders who know the Word—a balance of modality (local) and sodality (apostolic) leaders.



Paul's Early Epistles

Marks of Solid Conversion:

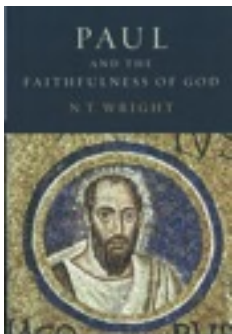
- accomplishment of your faith
- the hard work of your love
- the patience of your hope

Their faith turned into action

The *accomplishment of faith* was their own dramatic proclamation of the gospel everywhere.

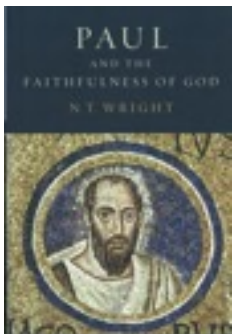
Their *hard work of love* was towards the Thessalonian churches themselves.

And their *patience of hope* was how they were responding to persecution and suffering.



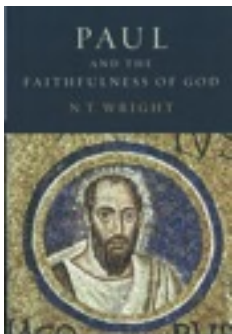
Paul's Early Epistles

To become *fully established* means that we are in line with the the tradition—the authoritative teaching handed down by Paul to the churches—in word and letter.



Paul's Early Epistles

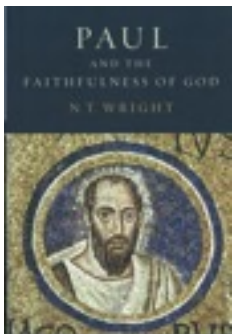
In session 3 we looked at the major problems that surfaced in the young Thessalonian church.



Paul's Early Epistles

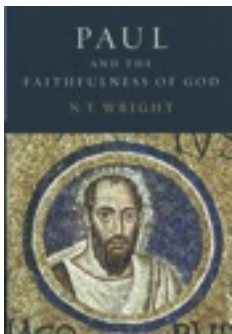
The Thessalonian churches were only 9 months old, but they needed to be challenged in 3 areas:

1. Changing their whole lifestyle from one of sexual impurity to living lives set apart to God.
2. Developing charitable concern for the whole family, demonstrated in their own hard work and generosity.
3. Fully embracing the gospel's (kerygma) claim of the return of Christ; not losing hope when loved ones die.



In session 4 we returned to two of those problems in the churches and the role of leaders in dealing with those who would not stay in line with the gospel and the teaching that followed it.

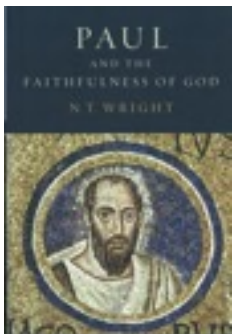
- Hold fast to the teaching.
- Deal with people who do not line up with the teaching.
- Solve emerging problems with careful explanation of the teaching.
- Continue to clarify the teaching.
- Care for people like a nurturing mother and an exhorting exploring father.



Passage: The Thessalonians Letters

Questions:

1. In the final analysis, what, according to Paul, did it take to solidify the Thessalonian churches in the gospel they so fully embraced?
2. How did he deal with the problems that were destabilizing them?
3. What was the role of local leaders in keeping them in line with the gospel and on the right course?
4. How were the local leaders and the Thessalonian churches to deal with those who would not keep in line with the gospel?



Book 3: *Paul's Early Letters: The Thessalonians' Conversion*

Session 1: Paul's Concern for the Thessalonians

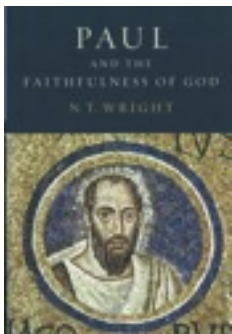
Session 2: Their Dramatic Conversion

Session 3: Three Emerging Problems—Letter 1

Session 4: Further Clarification—Letter 2

Session 5: Solidifying Their Conversion

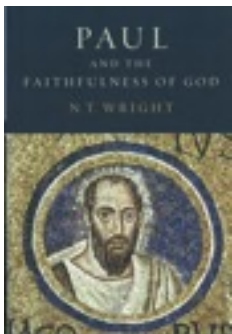
Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry



First, let's look at Paul's whole idea in the Thessalonian correspondence of solidifying the church in the gospel.

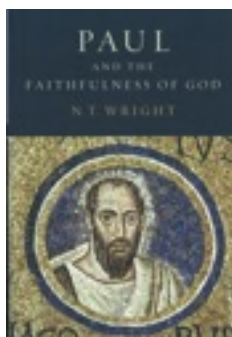
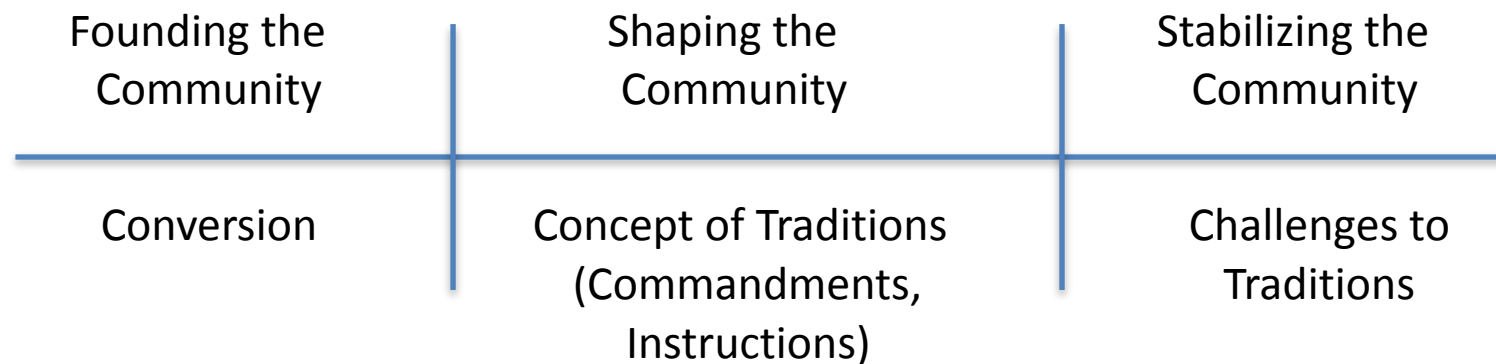
I did a chart in Book 3 of Series 3 of the First Principles which was on 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

I will briefly refer back to it here.



Paul's Early Epistles

Establishing the Thessalonian Community

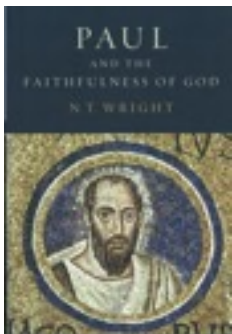


Paul's Early Epistles

First, Paul founded the community by proclaiming the gospel, which the Thessalonians fully embraced.

Then he carefully taught them the traditions—the authoritative teaching that grew out of the gospel.

Then came the challenges to the traditions.

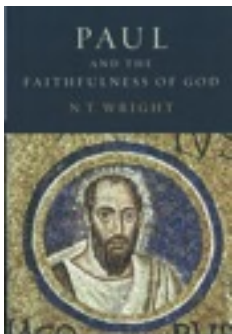


Paul's Early Epistles

He met the challenges two ways:

First, by writing a letter and sending Timothy.

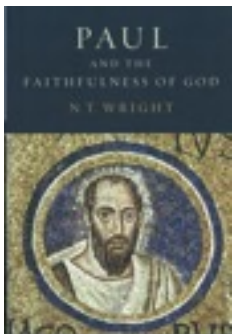
Second, by appointing leaders to solidify them in the gospel and the teaching that grows from it.



Paul's Early Epistles

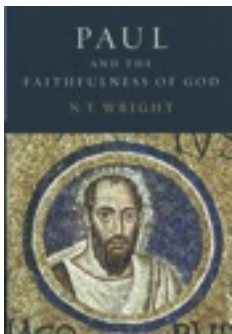
¹²This, my dear family, is the request we make of you. Take note of those who work among you and exercise leadership over you in the Lord, those who give you instruction. ¹³Give them the highest possible rank of love because of their work. Live at peace among yourselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13



These are two very important verses. They relate very much to what it means to solidify them in the gospel and the teaching that grows from it.

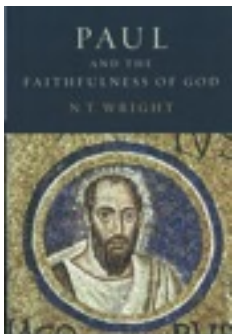
Remember some of the things we have learned so far.



Paul's Early Epistles

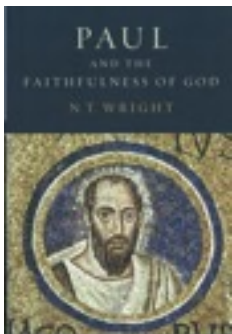
Leaders

- Hold fast to the teaching.
- Deal with people who do not line up with the teaching.
- Solve emerging problems with careful explanation of the teaching.
- Continue to clarify the teaching.
- Care for people like a nurturing mother and an exhorting exploring father.



A complete conversion process looks like this:

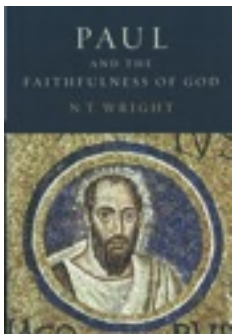
1. An initial solid response, in which the gospel is fully embraced, takes several weeks of exposure to the Word of God and results in those receiving the gospel beginning to proclaim it themselves.
2. It must be immediately followed up by careful nurturing and exhorting.
3. It is then followed up in the context of a new community by leaders who know the Word—a balance of modality (local) and sodality (apostolic) leaders.



Paul's Early Epistles

Dealing with those not following his instructions from the second letter:

1. Keep away from those who are not following this teaching and who, by word or letter, distort the kerygma by ignoring Paul's teaching about the return of Christ (and the gospel for that matter). This is a person not following Paul's authoritative teaching handed down to them from Christ, which he calls "stepping out of line."
2. Don't treat them as an enemy, just refuse to "have any dealings" with them.



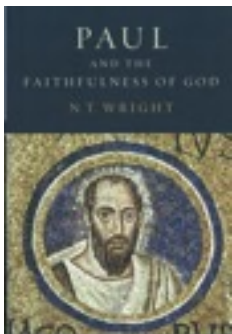
Two key words:

“stepping out of line”

a sense of not being in order (BAGD), to break rank (WSNT), disorderly life, used of a soldier (LSJ)

“have any dealings”

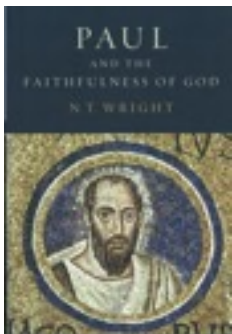
to mix up together (LSJ), to have conversation (WSNT), to meet, to be refreshed together (DBL)



Now back to our passage.

¹²This, my dear family, is the request we make of you. Take note of those who work among you and exercise leadership over you in the Lord, those who give you instruction. ¹³Give them the highest possible rank of love because of their work. Live at peace among yourselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13



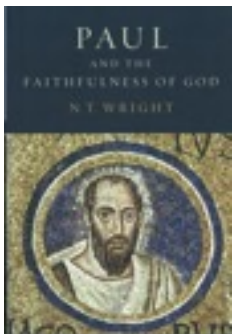
Paul's Early Epistles

Let's look at some of the key words Paul uses.

There are several very important concepts here.

“take note”—understand, comprehend (EDNT), pay proper respect (GEDNT), acknowledge, give an interview with (ESL)v—don't dismiss!!

“work among you”—toil labor, become tired (LSJ) trouble oneself (EDNT), become discouraged (ANLEX), wear oneself out, give up (Little Kittle)

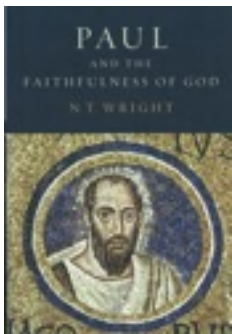


There are several very important concepts here.

“exercise leadership over you”—at the head, lead, direct, rule (ANLEX) manage, care for (ANLEX)—used of elders in Pastorals

“give you instruction”—admonish; put in mind, admonish, rebuke, advise concerning (LSJ)—those who have ability to handle the unruly

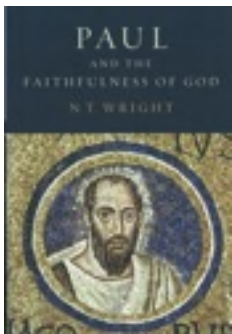
“give them the highest possible rank of love” (very interesting translation)—regard, esteem (ANLEX) very highly = superabundantly, (LSJ) as earnestly as possible (ANLEX)



There are several very important concepts here.

“because of their work” (different word for work) =
work, workmanship (DBL) undertaking,
occupation, (GEDNT)

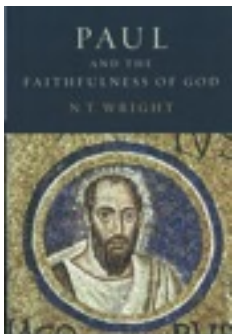
“Live at peace”—leadership is key to being at
peace within the churches.



Paul's Early Epistles

What does all this add up to?

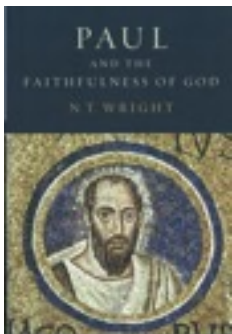
1. Do not dismiss leaders. Acknowledge them and seek to clearly understand why they are doing what they are doing, and respect them.
2. Recognize that the work they are doing will bring trouble on them—they will become tired, discouraged, and often want to give up.
3. There are leaders who are appointed to lead the churches—elders, deacons and leading women—they are real positions and expected to be honored.
4. One of their main jobs is to correct, confront, rebuke, and give strong advice.



Paul's Early Epistles

What does all this add up to?

5. Regard and esteem them very highly because of the task/occupation they have undertaken.
6. Their role is key to living peacefully in community, as the community life includes living with each other in a unified manner, recognizing that we need to be patient with each other—from major demands and problems to our differences and imperfections.

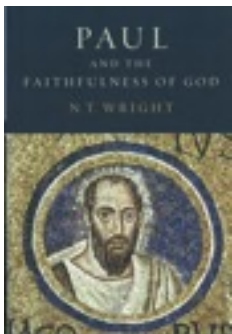


Paul's Early Epistles

Now what does this shepherding involve?

Remember what follows 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13

1 Thessalonians 5:14, which we looked at in depth earlier.



¹⁴And, my dear family, we beg you to warn those who step out of line. Console the downcast; help the weak; be warm-hearted and patient toward everybody.

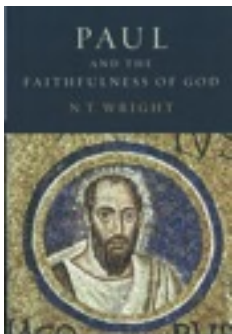
1 Thessalonians 5:12–14 (N. T. Wright)

Three categories of assistance are needed to stabilize churches in the gospel and the teaching which builds on it:

“warn those who step out of line”

“console the downcast”

“help the weak”

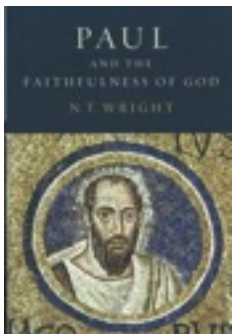


Three categories of assistance are needed to stabilize churches in the gospel and the teach that builds on it:

“warn those who step out of line”—warn = put in mind, sharply rebuke

“console the downcast” = put your arm around those with the life kicked out of them

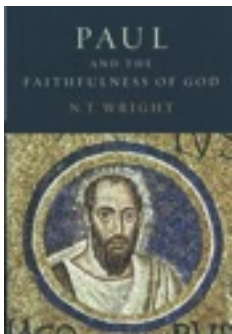
“help the weak”—be a support system to those without inner resources



Paul's Early Epistles

¹What remains, my dear family, is for us to ask you, and indeed to urge you in the Lord Jesus, that you should continue more and more to behave in the manner that you received from us as the appropriate way of behaving and of pleasing God. ²You know, of course, what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.... ¹¹You should make it your ambition to live peacefully, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, just as we commanded you.

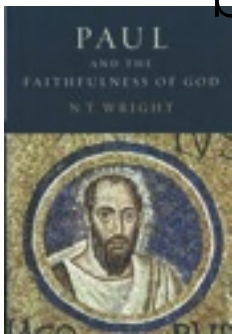
1 Thessalonians 4:1–2, 11 (N. T. Wright)



Paul's Early Epistles

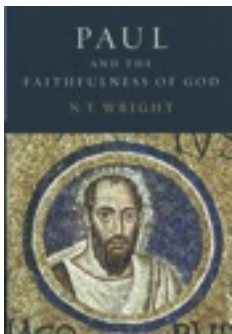
¹⁵So then, my dear family, stand firm, and hold on tight to the traditions which you were taught, whether through what we said or through our letter.... 3:4 We are confident in the Lord about you, that you are doing, and will continue to do, what we instructed you.... ⁶Here is a command we have for you, my dear family, in the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah. Keep away from any member of the family who is stepping out of line, and not behaving according to the tradition that you received from us.... We didn't step out of line... ¹¹You see, we hear that there are some among you who are stepping out of line, behaving in an unruly fashion

2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:4, 6, 11 (N. T. Wright)



¹²This, my dear family, is the request we make of you. Take note of those who work among you and exercise leadership over you in the Lord, those who give you instruction. ¹³Give them the highest possible rank of love because of their work. Live at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And, my dear family, we beg you to warn those who step out of line. Console the downcast; help the weak; be warm-hearted and patient toward everybody.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–14 (N. T. Wright)



Paul's Early Epistles

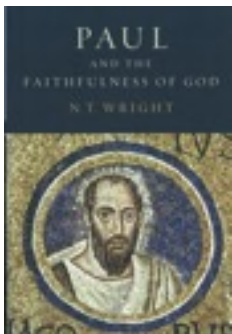
Several concepts are important here

Traditions—authoritative teaching handed down. This teaching came by his oral teaching and by his letters.

Step out of line—someone who is out of step.

1. The person “out of step” in 1 Thessalonians needs to be exhorted.
2. The person “out of step” in 2 Thessalonians needs to be disassociated with.

Here we have the emerging “teaching, instructions, traditions”—the emerging didache.



Paul's Early Epistles

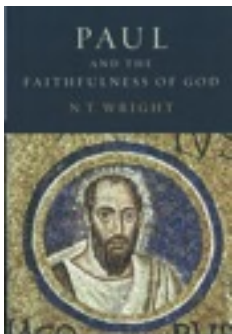
Two key words:

“stepping out of line”

a sense of not being in order (BAGD), to break rank (WSNT), disorderly life, used of a soldier (LSJ)

“have any dealings”

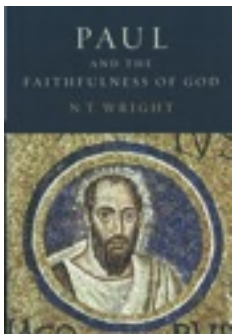
to mix up together (LSJ), to have conversation (WSNT), to meet, be refreshed together (DBL)



Paul's Early Epistles

Dealing with those not following his instructions from the second letter:

1. Keep away from those who are not following his teaching and who, by word or letter, distort the kerygma—by ignoring Paul’s teaching about the return of Christ (and the gospel for that matter). This is a person not following Paul’s authoritative teaching handed down to them from Christ, which he calls “stepping out of line.”
2. Don’t treat them as an enemy just refuse to “have any dealings” with them.



Pastoral Care Taxonomy

Special Assistance

(Lifelong psychiatric-medical—if needed)

Productive Member of Community

LifeWork (paid if able)

Mature in faith

Faithful service, fully using abilities

Special Assistance

(Psychiatric-Medical—if needed)

Establishing Process

Learning the First Principles of Faith

Developing LifeWork Skills

Strongholds

Renewing Mind

Working Knowledge of
Scripture

- The Story, LifeStories

- Psalms, Proverbs

- Biblical ideas, in context

Complex life situations

Special Assistance

(Psychiatric-medical—if needed)

Conversion Process

Embracing the Kerygma

Baptism

Join community of faith

Life Rebuilding

Living with a Family

Learning the First Principles of the Faith

Developing LifeWork Skills

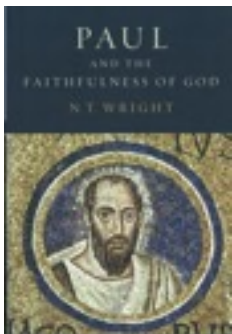
3 years on average



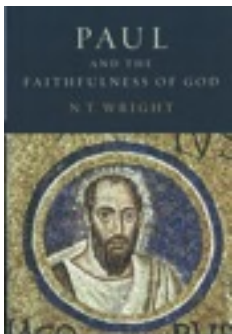
Issue: Solidifying churches in the gospel

Questions:

1. In the final analysis, what does it take to fully establish believers in the gospel and its accompanying lifestyle?
2. How should we deal with problems that are destabilizing our churches?
3. What is the role of local leaders in keeping our churches in line with the gospel and on the right course?
4. How were the local leaders to deal with those who would not keep in line with the gospel?



We have developed a system for leaders and believers to follow, which is almost identical to the actual process of establishing the churches in the First Century. The way they were established resulted in the formation of the New Testament as a body of teaching delivered by the Apostles to the churches.



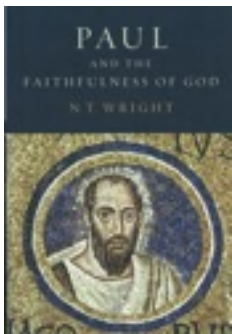
Paul's Early Epistles

The System

The Leadership Series (4 years)

The First Principles Series (3 years)—grows out of Leadership Series I

The Biblical Theology Series (7 years)—grows out of Leadership Series II



Paul's Early Epistles

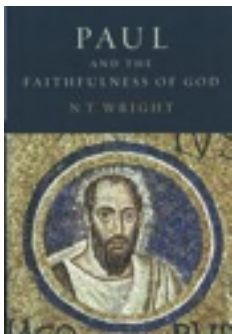
Mastering the Scriptures Series

New Testament Theology

1. **The Gospels (5 booklets)—early 2017**
2. Paul's Early Letters (13 booklets), **Early Letters (6 booklets)—early 2018**
3. The Jewish Encyclicals (5 booklets)
4. Johannine Writings (4 booklets)

Old Testament Theology

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2. The Law (2 booklets)
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Toward a NT Theology

(In order of both situational events and authorship of NT Writings)

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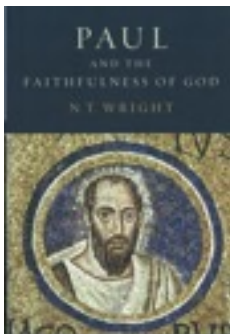
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Substructure of NT Theology—The Kerygma



Paul's Early Epistles

BILD THEOLOGY IN CULTURE SYSTEM

THE STORY

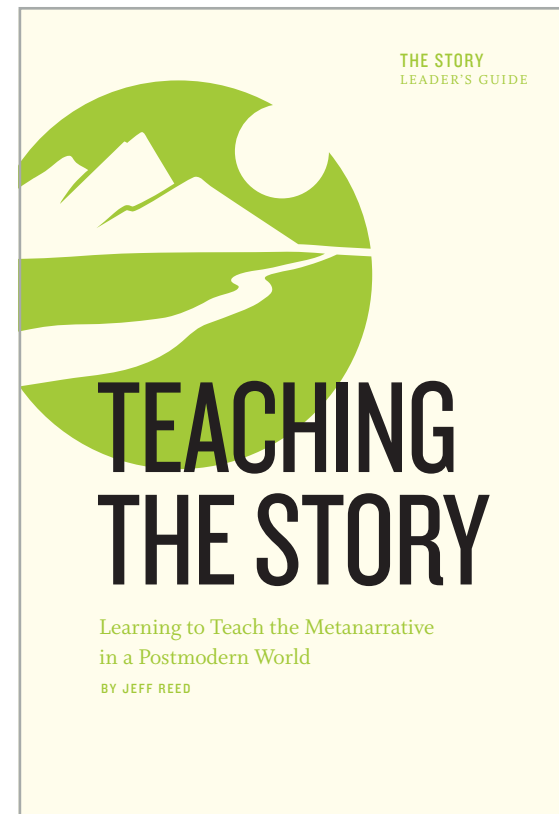
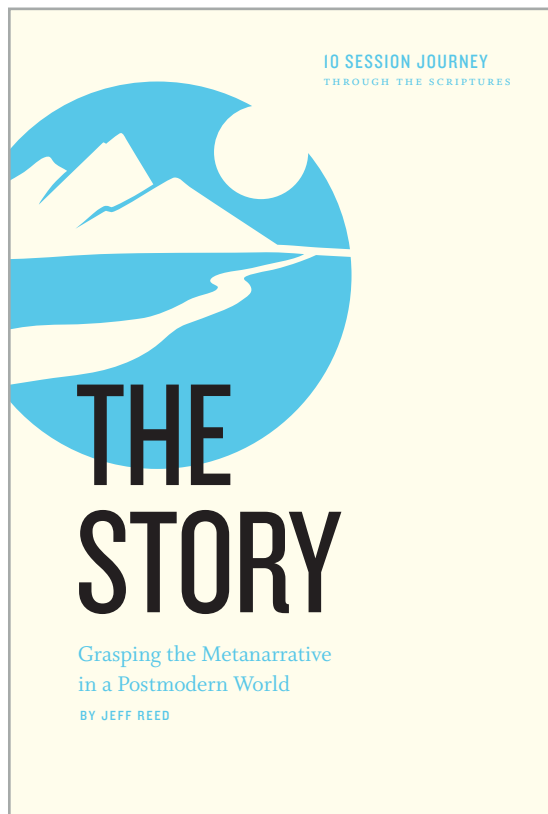


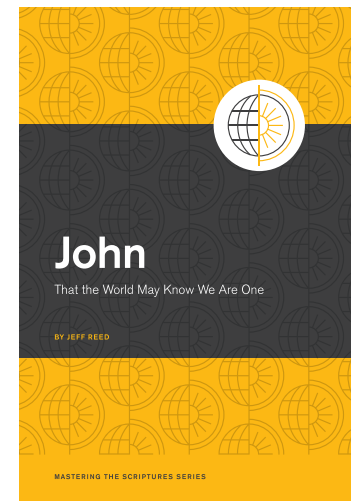
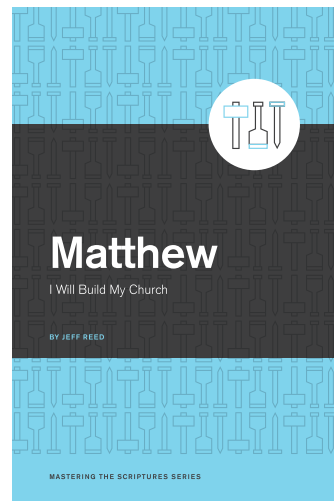
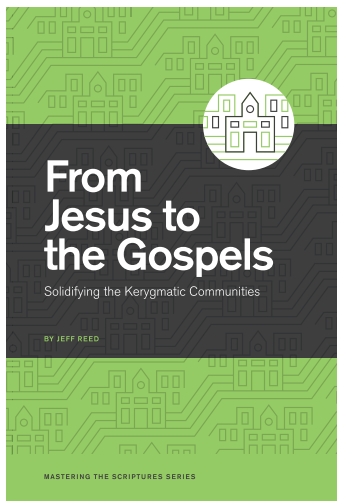
BILD THEOLOGY IN CULTURE SYSTEM

FIRST PRINCIPLES SERIES



BILD THEOLOGY IN CULTURE SYSTEM

MASTERING THE SCRIPTURES SERIES



November 2016

Late 2016 / Early 2017



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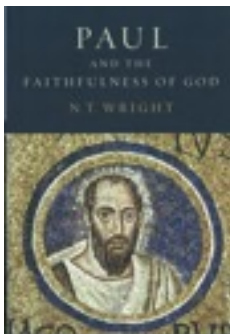
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Substructure of NT Theology—The Kerygma



Paul's Early Epistles

The Early Letters

Book 1: The Early Letters: Fully Establishing
the Churches in the Gospel

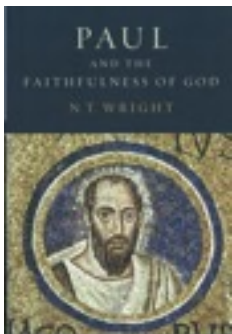
Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the
Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonian Correspondence:
Conversion to the Gospel

Book 4: The Corinthian Letters:
Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Paul's
Gospel Defended

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise
of Paul's Gospel



The Early Letters

We have finished Thessalonians today.

Then in 2017, we will do 3 more booklets:

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

Romans

It is scheduled for the whole year.

They will all be published early 2018.

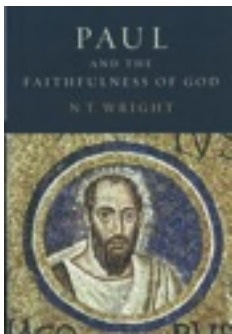
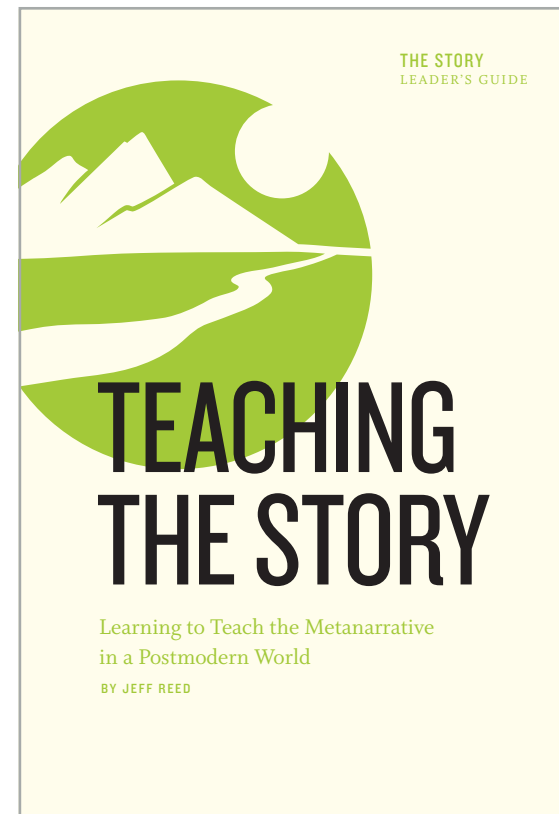
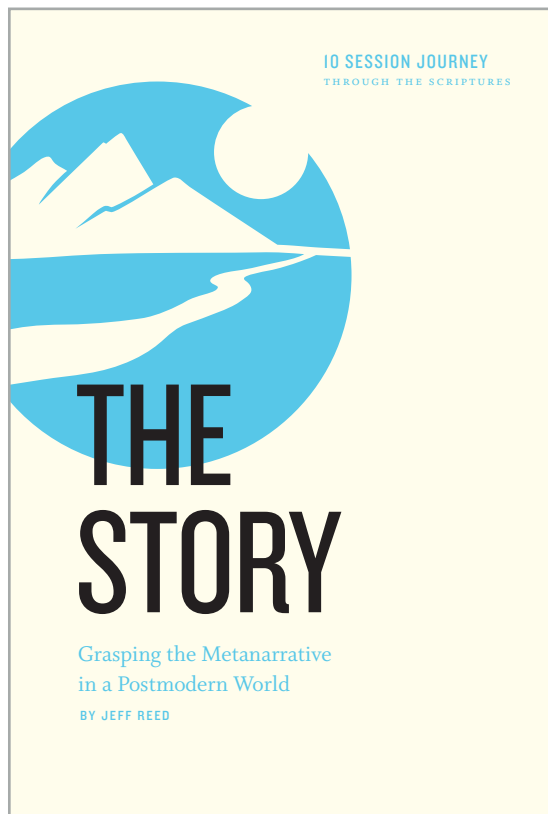


BILD THEOLOGY IN CULTURE SYSTEM

THE STORY



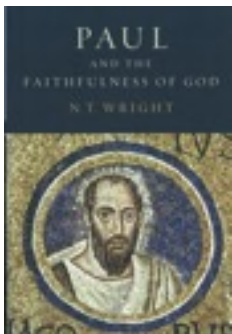
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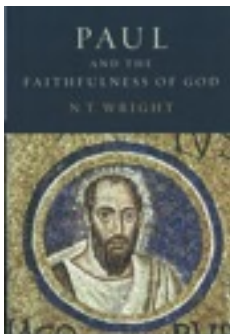
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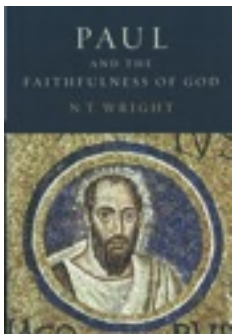
Substructure of NT Theology—The Kerygma



Paul's Early Epistles

Why do you need to understand this in depth?

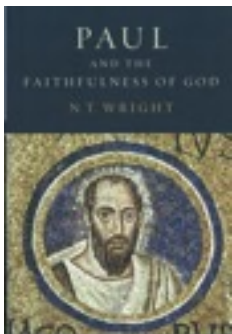
1. The Early Letters are tools for establishing the churches fully in the gospel.
2. Leaders need this to fully establish and guard the churches.
3. There is power in everyone knowing these letters with confidence and being able to use them.



Paul's Early Epistles

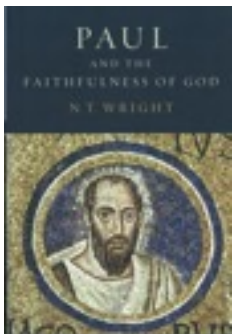
Special note to leaders:

1. Expect to be tired, weary, discouraged and feel like giving up often. It is what you signed up for.
2. You better be well prepared and continually developing.
3. Our churches will not be solidified in the gospel and high impact, unless we are up to the task.
4. This is a tireless job that we are to do, until we pass it on.



Special note to serious, maturing believers and families in our churches:

1. Honor leaders, trust them, acknowledge the importance of their role, and seek to understand fully why they are shaping the churches and solving problems the way they are.
2. Help each other in this process.
3. Become fully stable in the gospel yourself — and your family.
4. Expect to be in leadership in the future in some form if you want to see the gospel progress through the multiplication of churches.

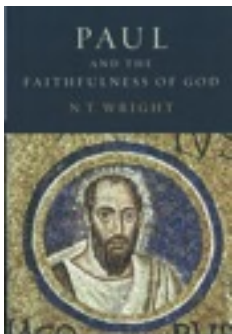


Paul's Early Epistles

I am just back from a long trip—28 days. I was in Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, and India.

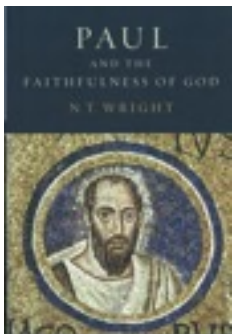
At one level things were amazing.

- Indonesia: FIECI—“divine meeting”
Richard Howell—25% of all Christians = base for country, matches their vision of affecting education
- Nepal: NCFN; 3 other associations came to event—100% of Christians in Nepal
- AEA: 21 countries = alliances and commissions



- CNI: 7 mainline denominations; sat down with Richard Howell and the Moderator, the Delhi bishop, and the top bishop for the Methodists, all at their invitation
- Bob Rao: his cohort and the cohort of the young, future orality network of India

Yet, at other times I was discouraged, because it is clear to me that many leaders, beyond these top ones, who all have their movements, are pragmatic and often not willing to pay the serious price of getting fully prepared in a disciplined manner and will pay that price of development for many years.



Paul's Early Epistles

I mean really training their leaders. All the way down to their elders, deacons, and leading women.

They like the ideas, are committed to them, but are easily discouraged and don't have enough discipline.

All have huge movements, but will they truly pay the price to solidify them? At times I think not, because I know what it takes.

