A three year old boy had been learning the game of golf by watching his
grandfather play. "The boy was so enthused," said his Grandpa, "I bought him his
own set of golf clubs."

The following week the entire family had a cookout and the little boy, who
had learned to play golf by watching his Grandpa, announced to everyone, "Watch me
play golf!" Immediately, he yelled "@#$%&*!(Curse word)and threw his golf club in a
tree."

That little fellow had learned more than golf. And he did it by simply
watching and observing his granddad. Actions always speak louder than words.

The world at large desperately needs people who don't say one thing and then
do another. Christianity desperately needs Christians who believe it is their God
given duty to bring the lost to Christ by setting a worthy or "shining example" for
others by the way they live their lives.

Matthew 5:16 (Jesus speaking), "Let your light so shine before men that
they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

A person who truly believes in Christ, lives for Christ. He works for Christ.
A person who insincerely professes Christ will still live for himself, going about
doing what he wants, when he wants. The superficial believer does not live a life
of separation from the values of the world, he does not live a life of
righteousness, purity or generosity. He professes Christ, but lives for the
pleasures and things of this day and time. The superficial believer knows nothing
of the life of Christ, of the sacrificial giving and living that Christ lived and
demands from you and me.

Actions always speak louder than words.

James 2:14-17: "What value is it, my brethren, if someone says he has
faith but does not have works? Can that kind of faith save him? If a
brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food and one of you
says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not
help them with the things which are needed for the body, what good is
that? Therefore, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

Is your faith a faith of profession, but not of possession? In other words,
do you walk the talk or do you identify with the people during the lifetime of
Isaiah?

Isaiah 29:13 (Isaiah quoting our God and our Judge), "These people (the
Hebrews) draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have
removed their hearts from Me."

Is your heart too far from God and much too close to this world?

Is your faith a dead faith, because you have done next to nothing for the
kingdom of God, because the kingdom of God is not job number one in your life? Is
your spiritual light out?

No person sincerely and scripturally believes in Jesus Christ unless he is
living his daily life by doing the works of love and righteousness, which Christ
did, as reflected in the four Gospels. By setting a Godly Christian example to the
world, by the way we live our lives, our faith will be validated and hearts will be
won for the Gospel. No one is debated and argued into accepting Jesus; they are
loved into accepting Jesus by Christians living Christian lives.

I encourage us all, from time to time, to leave our comfort zones for the
faith zone, putting "feet" to our faith as we reach beyond our own individual lives
to caring about the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ and being willing
to do the work of the Kingdom of God where we live. Let each of us refuse to pattern our faith and our lives after the hypocritical Hebrews of Isaiah's day, but wholeheartedly identify ourselves with the Thessalonians during the time of the Apostle Paul.

I Thessalonians 1:6 & 7, “And you (the Thessalonians) became followers of us (Paul, et al.) and the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, (and yet) with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia (Northern Greece) and Achaia (Southern Greece) who believe.”

The Thessalonians were so committed to the work of the Kingdom of God that all over Greece their zeal and faithfulness for the Gospel were well known. Paul goes on to say in verse eight that his mission in Greece was much easier because of all the work for the Kingdom the Thessalonians had already done. Their no-doubt-about-it Godly faith compelled the Thessalonians to live Godly lives, which set Godly examples for Greece and the world to see, which helped turn Christianity into a worldwide faith of nearly 2 billion believers today.

Actions speak louder than words.

Furthermore, for Christians, actions powerfully evidence one's faith. Perhaps if the Christians at Thessalonica and elsewhere in Greece two thousand years ago had not been faithful under immense hardships, had not set examples of sacrificial love to their brethren for all to see in Greece, you and I might not be Christians today.

Are you willing to stand tall for Christ today? Are you willing to let your life shine as a Christian example for those around you so that they may be lovingly persuaded to be part of the Kingdom?

"I met the strangest man on the way to church. He said he believed in the Bible, but he never reads it. He said a person should be honest with God in money matters, but he never gives to God. He said the younger generation needs the Lord, but he is not leading them in that direction. He said the church needs dedicated Christian members, but he isn't one. He said the church should do more in ministering to people, but he doesn't help. He is critical of some of the church workers, but he never works. He is critical of the way the church is operated, but he never participates. He says prayer will change things, but he never prays. He says the Lord is surely coming, but he lives as though the Lord will never return and he will never die."

-Anonymous

Isn't it time we put aside all excuses, all rationalizations, and dedicate (or re-dedicate) our lives - publicly, privately, and without reservation - to Christ, the Son of the Living and Loving God? The Kingdom of God on earth, the church, is in continuous and urgent need of Christian lives letting their Godly light shine in an incredibly dark and sinful world.

Sermon given 4/28/2013
By Chris Voss