

The Comparison:

Thessalonians:

- Weekly teaching for 3 weeks
- Wouldn't consider Gospel Message
- Had to argue and prove the Gospel
- 'A Few' believed
- Became jealous, slanderous and violent
- Traveled to Berea to cause trouble

Bereans:

- Learned daily
- Were eager for the message
- Motivated to study for themselves
- "Many" jews believed
- "of more noble character"
- Did not persecute the faith

Source: <https://www.berean.org/>

Offensive implications:

A people's nobility matters in how they face the Gospel

A person's nobility matters in how they face the Gospel

Offensive for those who are noble

Offensive for those who are not noble

1. Real nobility will dispose one toward the gospel and against attacking it.



2. People can have real virtue without God

People can have real virtue without God. **...and it matter to them coming to faith.**



Gospel Response

Source: <https://www.berean.org/>

The image features a network diagram as a background. It consists of numerous small, colored circular nodes (in shades of teal, yellow, red, green, and purple) connected by thin, grey lines. These connections form a complex web of clusters and individual links. The word "ACTS" is prominently displayed in the center of the image in a large, bold, teal-colored sans-serif font. The entire composition is enclosed within a thin, dark teal rectangular border.

ACTS

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Acts 17:11
Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.
Bible is happy to say "The Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

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Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

(Luke is happy to say "the Holy Spirit move on them" but he didn't)

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A people's nobility matters in how they face the Gospel

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**Offensive for those
not Christians:**

Real nobility will dispose
one toward the gospel
and against attacking it.

**Offensive for those that
are Christians:**

People can have real
virtue without God, and
it matters for them
coming to God.

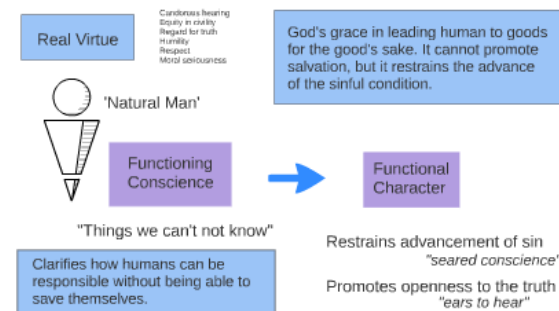
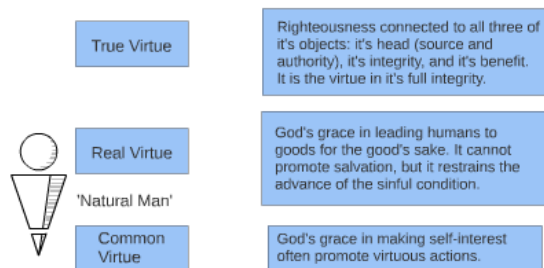
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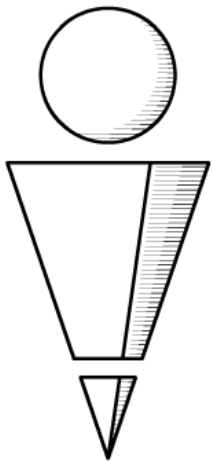
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2. People can have real virtue without God



True Virtue

Righteousness connected to all three of its objects: its head (source and authority), its integrity, and its benefit. It is the virtue in its full integrity.

Real Virtue

God's grace in leading humans to goods for the good's sake. It cannot promote salvation, but it restrains the advance of the sinful condition.

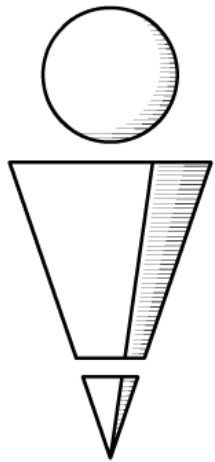
'Natural Man'

Common
Virtue

God's grace in making self-interest often promote virtuous actions.

Real Virtue

Candorous hearing
Equity in civility
Regard for truth
Humility
Respect
Moral seriousness



'Natural Man'

Functioning
Conscience

"Things we can't not know"

Clarifies how humans can be responsible without being able to save themselves.

God's grace in leading human to goods for the good's sake. It cannot promote salvation, but it restrains the advance of the sinful condition.



Functional
Character

Restrains advancement of sin
"seared conscience"
Promotes openness to the truth
"ears to hear"

Candorous hearing

Equity in civility

Regard for truth

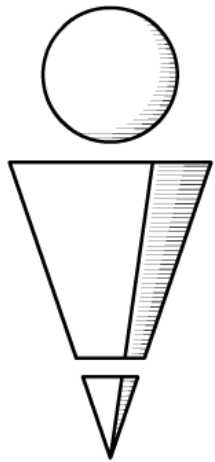
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1 Timothy 4:1
And now the Spirit says
through prophets that times
will come when men
will be deceived by the
error of their own
conscience.

The Theological Tension

Isaiah 45:1
I revealed myself to
those who did not ask
for me. I was found by
those who did not seek
me.

Matthew 23:17
You who are blind and
deaf, you say, "We do not
know who you are."
But you say, "We do not
know who you are."
You are blind and deaf,
and you say, "We do not
know who you are."
You are blind and deaf,
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know who you are."

"So you're saying people are bad?"
"Yes, much worse than we imagine."
"...and incapable of good?"
"Any real good, yes."
"But that's preposterous. Aren't
you implying non-Christian parents
don't 'really' love their kids?"



People can have real virtue without God knowing that ...and it matter to them coming to faith.

The Cultural Factor

Can Gospel people
really bypass the
moral integrity of
their culture and
"just preach the
Gospel"?



The Moral Factor:

Can we really appeal through the present or
latent real virtue of people is we are not
obviously a people of true virtue?

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1 Timothy 4:2

Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose ***consciences have been seared*** as with a hot iron.

Acts 17:11

Bereans were of ***more noble character*** than the Thessalonians, ***for*** they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day

Acts 17:26-27

From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ***God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him***, though he is not far from each one of us.

The Theological Tension

Isaiah 65:1

"I revealed myself to ***those who did not ask*** for me; I was found by ***those who did not seek*** me.

Ephesians 2:1-3

As for you, ***you were dead*** in your transgressions and sins, ***in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air***, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, ***gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts***. Like the rest, ***we were by nature objects of wrath***.

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The Evangelism Trap: (and *doubt* trap)



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Can Gospel people really bypass the moral integrity of their culture and "just preach the Gospel"?



The Moral Factor:

Can we really appeal through the present or latent real virtue of people is we are not obviously a people of true virtue?

1. The Gospel can save anyone in any state of degradation.
(even the most advanced)
(Christian or not)

even in Thessalonica there was a harvest
(which became a great church)

2. We need to be ready to build the church and its
witness in any culture

Difference: Evangelists and Pastors

Paul	Silas Luke Timothy	(realistic leadership strategy of Acts)
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Gospel Response

3. Cultural, social and public morality matter - and
matter for people being able to hear the Gospel.

In the Church

In the Culture

4. Godliness is the greatest catalyst for evangelistic success.
Do we even have real virtue (let alone true virtue)?

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In the Culture

Who do you identify with in this story?

4. Godliness is the greatest catalyst for evangelistic success.

Do we even have real virtue (let alone true virtue)?

You can only become a Roman by
assimilating you're in Theodorin.

And all Theodorin will "Roman" for you to have all the best!

Who do you identify with in this story?

You can only become a Berean by
assuming you're a Thessalonian.

Mark 4:9 Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

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