C. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; - Here Paul again calls them to account saying “you are witnesses,” but more than this he calls them to account before God stating “and so is God.” Paul is ever mindful to tell us that we will give an account to God for everything that we do and say. This is fundamental to understanding the Kingdom of God.

Hebrews 4:13 - 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. NASB

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 - 13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. NASB

We are not exactly sure Paul’s motivation is reminding them of the power and example of the Apostles’ ministry to them, but nevertheless he recounts their excellent behavior among them stating “how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers.” Not only this but he rightly identifies who the real Christians are. They are “believers” in contrast to those who do not have faith in Christ, or only a mere profession of it, not accompanied with fruit. See yet another characteristic of good Christian leaders. It is one of “devout, upright and blameless” behavior. Christian missionaries, pastors and deacons are to be men of upright character and moral purity. They are not to open to any charge of sin or blame, but rather blameless and beyond reproach. (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9.)

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 – 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and impliciting each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. NASU

A. just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and impliciting each one of you as a father would his own children – Paul, being very zealous for their growth and seeking to have them rooted and grounded in the Christian faith, was given to “exhorting and encouraging and imploring” them just “as a father would his own children.” But notice here he says he did this with “each one of you,” which shows he not only taught publically but also from house to house. See here that discipleship cannot happen by impersonal means but must happen at the personal level, as was exemplified with Jesus and the twelve. Paul had close relations with these Christians, so much so that he was able to “implore” them “as a father would his own children.” Christianity does not come without commandments and accountability that are to be fully obeyed. Proper Christian discipling comes with serious discipline and effort to see that disciples learn obedience to God’s holy Word, and this obedience is to be motivated by intense devotion and love for God and for His Son, Jesus Christ. This is essential to Christian life.

John 14:21 - 21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." NASB

Christian leaders are not offering nice suggestions for people to improve their quality of life or offering therapy for their darkened sinful hearts. They are not to coddle the selfish pride of men or to entertain them by cleverly invented stories, tickling their ears. They are instead proclaiming divine imperatives which are to be fully obeyed, and this with strong exhortation and encouragements, accompanied with much warning of serious consequences for disobedience.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-6 - 4 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. 2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. NASB

These exhortations they offer with careful instruction, with much patience and gentleness, in the Questions? shaansloan@att.net  www.heavenslight.org
sincere love of God that looks much like that of a “father for his own children.” This has always been the standard for Christian leaders, and Christians should mark their leaders by these qualities, or disqualify them by the same. Paul explains in writing to his intern, 2 Timothy 4:2-5.

2 Timothy 4:1-5 - 4 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. 5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. NASB

B. so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory – All of this “exhorting and encouraging and imploring” has an intended goal. And this goal is “so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God.” The idea is that you would live a life that is reflective of God, who in every manner is the epitomy of virtue, and Christians are to reflect this character in their own lives. That is, to live a life of moral purity and and upright integrity and virtue that is equal to or according to the worth of God. This standard is very high, yet it is our aim and constant goal to become like Christ in every way. Not only this but it was Paul’s goal, and should be the goal of every pastor for his people. And this is the reason for the “exhorting and encouraging and imploring” that we would live in “a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” We are not to be hypocrites who profess one thing and live another. But rather we are to be imitators of and followers of Christ. There could not be a higher calling.

Ephesians 4:1-3 - 4 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love; 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. NASB

1 Peter 1:14-16 - 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” NASB

1 John 2:4-6 - 4 The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. NASB

Looking even closer, consider, “the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” Here Paul speaks of our own personal calling by God. The idea of “the God who calls” really speaks to His electing grace by which we, who deserved death and destruction, instead received mercy and free grace because God has chosen to set His love upon us. By this should our hearts be glad to “walk in a manner worthy of Him.” But consider what it is that He has called us into, “His own Kingdom and Glory.” Now here is an expression of the massive ramifications involved in Christian salvation. We have been called out of the darkened world of sin and death and “into” God’s own “kingdom” of light and life. We have been delivered from the dominion of darkness, so that we are no longer bound as a slave in a kingdom of darkness but rather have come under the dominion of a new King in His kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:12-14 - 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. NASB

We have become subjects of a new authority, into a new reign with a new sovereign. Our obedience now is not sin unto death, but rather mercy and lovingkindness unto life. Not only this, but to receive and to see the “glory” of God’s beauty and experience the joy and gladness of His new creation forever and ever in a place never again to be tainted by sin or death. “Into” this kingdom we have been “called,” and it is the experience of God’s own “glory.”