



WOW: Word Of the Week

Transparency

May 21, 2025

In a world that values keeping up appearances, transparency is a contrast value, especially in the church and its calling to be a counter-cultural community. Christianity is often misunderstood as the practice of good, morally impeccable people who have (or think they have) all the answers. Nothing could be further from the truth of the Gospel.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the value of transparency in his ministry, 2 Cor. 1:12-14. Paul's ministry was characterized by transparent motives, sincerity, and God's grace more than worldly wisdom. The word he uses, *aploteti*, is sometimes translated as sincerity, simplicity, frankness, honesty, uprightness, and transparency. The NET has pure motives.

The heart of Christianity is not human perfection but divine grace. Jesus did not come for the healthy but for the sick; not for the righteous but for sinners. When Christians are honest about their struggles, failures, and doubts, they more clearly reflect the transformative grace of God to others. Being a glory-bearer, daily hosting the presence of the Lord, does not mean always looking perfect and hiding flaws. Transparency breaks barriers, eliminates fear of judgment, and creates a space where others can lower their guard and approach God as they are. The invitation song, "Just As I Am," was perhaps overused during the early years of my ministry, but the words of the song present powerful truth.

Instead of showing an impeccable life, transparent Christians show genuine faith amid imperfections. That, more than any theological argument, connects with people. Transparency declares the possibility of being loved and accepted by God amid chaos, pain, or error.

The church must be a safe place for honest, truthful communication, not an exclusive club for holy people but a hospital for injured and imperfect people. In such a church, many will find, for the first time, a Christianity that makes sense of their lives—with all of the fears, frustrations, and failures.

WOW! Transparency. Three dimensions! With God, with one another, with yourself.