

STUDY NUMBER TWO - 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Are You a Phony?

Key Verse 2:5: "For neither were we found using flattering words, even as you are knowing, nor in pretense desiring advantage--God is witness."

TEXT:

v. 1 For you yourselves are knowing, brethren, of our entrance among you, that it has not been without results,

v. 2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, even as you are knowing, we had the courage in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

v. 3 For our exhortation was not out of error, neither out of impure motive nor in deceit;

v. 4 but even as we have been found worthy by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we are speaking, not as pleasing men but God, who is examining our hearts.

v. 5 For neither were we found using flattering words, even as you are knowing, nor in pretense desiring advantage--God is witness--

v. 6 nor seeking glory from men, nor from you nor from others,

v. 7 though being able to be in a position of dignity as Christ's ambassadors. But we became gentle in your midst, even as a nursing mother is tenderly caring for her own children.

v. 8 So feeling kindly for you, we were delighting in imparting to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved ones to us.

v. 9 For you are remembering, brethren, our toil and hardship, night and day laboring that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

v.10 You are witnesses, and [so is] God, as to how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we proved ourselves among you who are believing;

v.11 just as you are knowing how to each one of you as a father his own children:

v.12 exhorting you, and encouraging [you] and bearing witness to the end that you should be walking in a manner worthy of the God who is calling you into His own kingdom and glory.

INTRODUCTION:

AN AGGIE MOTHER WRITES TO HER SON

Dear Son,

Just a few lines to let you know I'm still alive. I'm writing this letter slowly because I know that you cannot read fast. You won't know the house when you get home--we've moved.

About your father--he has a lovely new job. He has 500 men under him. He is cutting grass at the cemetery.

There was a washing machine in the new house when we moved in, but it isn't working too good. Last week I put 14 shirts into it and pulled the chain. I haven't seen one of them since.

Your sister Mary had a baby this morning. I haven't found out whether it was a boy or a girl, so don't know whether you are an aunt or an uncle. Your Uncle Dick drowned last week in a vat of whiskey in the Dublin Brewery. Some of his work mates dived in to save him but he fought them off bravely. We cremated his body and it took three days to put out the fire.

Your father didn't have much to drink Christmas. I put a bottle of Caster Oil in his pint of beer and it kept him going till New Year's Day. I went to the doctor on Thursday and your father went with me. The doctor put a small tube into my mouth and told me to keep it shut for 10 minutes. Your father offered to buy it from him.

It only rained twice last week. First - for 3 days and then for 4 days. Monday it was so windy that one of our chickens laid the same egg four times.

We had a letter yesterday from the undertaker. He said that if the last installment wasn't made on your grandmother within 4 days, up she comes.

Your loving mother,

P. S. I was going to send you \$10.00 but I had already sealed the envelope.

(Simple Faith by Charles R. Swindoll)

Several years ago I came across one of the simplest and best pieces of advice I have ever heard: "Be who you is, because if you is who you ain't, you ain't who you is."

p. 8

What we all too often observe is what John R. W. Stott portrays in these tragic words: "Some people weave round themselves such a tissue of lies that they can no longer tell which part of them is real and which is make-believe."

p. 34

(Charismatic Chaos by John F. MacArthur, Jr.)

My father had a saying, "No one counterfeits what isn't valuable." One never hears about counterfeit brown paper. People do not counterfeit trash. But they do counterfeit money, diamonds, and jewelry. Counterfeiters copy what is valuable because that is the only point in counterfeiting. Satan was busy in the Corinthian church imitating spiritual gifts, and he is busy doing the same thing today.
p. 170

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

(A Pretty Good Person: What It Takes to Live with Courage, Gratitude and Integrity by Lewis B. Smedes)

Hypocrisy, sham, cant, phoniness, fraud, humbug, dissimulation, disguise--they are bad because they prevent people from making their own, their free, their honest response to reality as it is.

One more reason honesty is important: Lying demeans people. It treats them as if they were not mature enough to be trusted with reality.

"Tell the truth to the British people," Churchill begged the leaders of Britain during the decade of self-deception about Hitler. "They are a tough people, a robust people." But the leaders of the 1930s did not trust people with truth.
p. 80

(Disciplines of a Godly Man by R. Kent Hughes)

The Day America Told the Truth, a new book based on an extensive opinion survey which guaranteed the anonymity of the participants, reveals an alarming crisis of integrity in America.

Only 13 percent of Americans see all Ten Commandments as binding on us today. Ninety-one percent lie regularly--at home and at work. In answer to the question, "Whom have you regularly lied to?" the statistics included 86 percent to parents and 75 percent to friends. A third of AIDS carriers admit to not having told their lovers.

Most workers admit to goofing off for an average of seven hours--almost one whole day--a week, and half admit that they regularly call in sick when they are perfectly well.

The survey also posed the question, "What are you willing to do for \$10 million?" Twenty-five percent would abandon their families, 23 percent would become a prostitute for a week, and 7 percent would kill a stranger. Think of it! In a gathering of 100 Americans, there are seven who would consider killing you if the price was right. In 1,000 there are seventy!

Even casual observers can see the demise of integrity in the whole range of our culture--with its Watergates, Irangates, Savingsgates, Pearlygates--the much chronicled dalliances of prominent Senators--congressmen perjuring themselves--the artful embellishment of academic records--and even the war records of recent Presidents. The straightforward poem/prayer of Fred Holloman, chaplain of the Kansas Senate, comes as no surprise:

Omniscient Father:

Help us to know who is telling
the truth. One side tells us one
thing, and the other just the opposite.

And if neither side is telling the truth, we would like to know that, too.

And if each side is telling half the truth,
give us the wisdom to put the right halves together.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

pp. 119-20

When a cultural icon such as Ernest Hemingway (who still arbitrates literary style) was an inveterate liar who lied about everything, including his childhood, his athletic prowess, his military exploits, his liaisons, so that he was, as one of his wives called him, "the biggest liar since Munchausen"--how can we expect our culture to be otherwise? If our gods be mendacious frauds, how can we escape?

p. 122

In this book of 1 Thessalonians we are encountering a very personal letter to a church of young converts who have proven to be real examples to other Christians of the kind of lives they ought to live.

Now as we approach this 2nd chapter, Paul is making it quite clear to the Thessalonian converts that there was no hidden motive in his coming other than to simply proclaim the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God; and that now because of this, there is opportunity to be saved from the wrath which is coming.

In our study of the book we are making a SPIRITUAL CHECKUP. In this checkup we are dealing with several problem areas which can confront us in a growing Christian experience.

We have noted together in the 1st chapter:

QUESTION #1:

"DID YOU MAKE THE RIGHT START?"

Now the 2ND QUESTION that comes before us in these first 12 verses of chapter 2 is:

QUESTION #2:

"ARE YOU A PHONY?"

No one likes a person who says one thing and then does another. In other words, they are not the real product but just pretending to be something they are not.

In Christian circles there are many people like this who claim to be one thing by their words and live something completely different with their lives.

1 John 1:6

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

1 John 3:18

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

In religious circles there are really 2 KINDS OF PHONIES:

PHONY #1 - is a person who has never come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and yet on the surface goes through many religious motions.

Matthew 7:20-23

So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

The other kind of PHONY is:

PHONY #2 - is a Christian who is walking out of fellowship with the Lord. He is living in the flesh rather than in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

In these 12 verses that we are going to be studying together you will be seeing the genuine product. You will see a man who is motivated by the Master to communicate a message. You will see his MOTIVATION and METHOD.

Horne says:

The apostle Paul and his associates had been accused by certain Jewish enemies as having selfishly exploited the people by means of trickery. It was not uncommon in those days for teachers of philosophy or religion to engage in an itinerant mission in order to enlarge their own income. In the light of this slander and for the sake of the gospel the apostle felt it necessary to answer the charge. This he did by reviewing the nature of his ministry, especially among the Thessalonians.

Hendricksen says:

A careful study of Paul's defense shows that the slander by means of which his enemies were trying to undermine the influence of his message amounted to this: Paul and his associates are deluded individuals who for selfish reasons and with trickery are trying to exploit the people.

Ryrie points out:

Paul now returns to the subject he briefly touched on in the last part of chapter 1:5, his conduct during the mission in Thessalonica.

In these first 12 verses lies the secret of Paul's success as a servant of Christ.

Stedman points out:

In the first 12 verses of 1 Thessalonians we find a great model for ministry. The apostle Paul was a master shepherd. And while there is no doubt that Paul is here defending himself from some criticisms that had arisen after his departure from Thessalonica, there emerges in this passage a marvelous picture of the work of a good shepherd.

Walvoord says:

Over chapter 2 can be written a very common word, "service." The chapter reveals how to serve God both by precept and by Paul's dynamic example. Chapter 2 of 1 Thessalonians is a success story.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In verses 1-6 Paul reminded his readers of his actions among them and clarified his motives. All of chapter 2 constitutes an expansion of chapter 1:9.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

For they themselves are reporting about us what kind of an entrance we had to you, and how you turned to God from the idols to serving the living and true God,

v. 1 For you yourselves are knowing, brethren, of our entrance among you, that it has not been without results,

"YOU" here is in the EMPHATIC POSITION in the Greek text.

The word "KNOWING" occurs 4 times here in these verses. He is talking about something that they already know in making his defense for his integrity.

"FOR YOU YOURSELVES ARE KNOWING, BRETHREN, OF OUR ENTRANCE AMONG YOU, THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN WITHOUT RESULTS."

"Our entrance there made an impact. Fruit had been born and lives were changed."

The rest of the verses in the passage define these results.

Paul has just reminded them of:

the results of their ministry,

the fact that word has been going all around that they had responded to Jesus Christ,

and what an example they were to other believers.

You will note also that he called them "BRETHREN" once again, even as he did in chapter 1:4.

This entrance among them certainly was not without results. The transformation within their own lives would certainly bear witness to that fact.

The apostle is making a defense for his ministry and his motives in coming to Thessalonica.

The Jews, evidently, had told the Thessalonians that he was only coming for what he might get. This being far from the truth, the apostle Paul makes a defense here in view of the fact that he did not come to Thessalonica to take anything from them but he came to bring them something--the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We will see reflected in these verses a picture of what the Christian minister ought to be today.

We are going to see that:

his MESSAGE was genuine,
his MOTIVES were pure,
and his METHODS were without guile.

The Greek word that I have translated "WITHOUT RESULTS" can also mean "EMPTY OF CONTENT." The words that Paul spoke were filled with solid content and it was these words that the Spirit of God used to bring conviction to the Thessalonians. They didn't come as windbags speaking a lot of philosophical nonsense but had a real message to convey.

We will note that Paul uses the NEGATIVE here in verse 1, and then when we come to verse 2 we have the POSITIVE.

v. 2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, even as you are knowing, we had the courage in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

2 Corinthians 7:5

For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.

2 Corinthians 4:8-10

we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

Courage is displayed when you go another round in the conflict after you have just been clobbered.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Boldness in the face of strong opposition was a sign that God was at work in his servants and proof of their genuineness.

We have noted in verse 1 the NEGATIVE side, that their entrance was not without results,

and now in verse 2 we get the POSITIVE side.

"BUT AFTER WE HAD ALREADY SUFFERED AND BEEN MISTREATED IN PHILIPPI, EVEN AS YOU ARE KNOWING."

Paul here is making reference to what is recorded in Acts 16 of the experience that they had in the city of Philippi before coming to Thessalonica:

Acts 16:20-23

and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans." And the crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them, and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

These men were just following the example of their master in going on to Thessalonica.

Matthew 10:23

But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes.

The Jews, however, would not let Paul rest and so they followed him to Thessalonica. And I'm sure they reminded his converts that he had a police record, that he was nothing less than a criminal who was on the run from justice and that obviously no one would want to listen to a man like this.

"BUT AFTER WE HAD ALREADY SUFFERED [that is, by the beating in the public square there in Philippi] AND BEEN MISTREATED."

We understand this as Paul is asked by the authorities to leave quietly, and he reminds them that his rights as a Roman citizen had been violated:

Acts 16:37

But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."

Note the next phrase:

"WE HAD THE COURAGE IN OUR GOD."

After getting clobbered in Philippi he just kept on.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

"WE HAD THE COURAGE IN OUR GOD."

God was SUSTAINING and STRENGTHENING them as they came to Thessalonica and entering upon this new ministry.

1 Samuel 14:6

Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."

1 Samuel 17:37

The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

1 Samuel 17:47

All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands.

2 Chronicles 20:17

You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

The problems which the apostle encountered in the city of Philippi did not cause him to close his mouth and become fearful to speak but rather had the opposite effect. As he came to Thessalonica, he courageously proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ once again.

Psalms 112:7, 8

He will have no fear of bad news;
his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.
His heart is secure, he will have no fear;
in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.

Proverbs 29:25

Fear of man will prove to be a snare,
but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

Lange points out:

The Lord's true messengers are for the most part prepared in the school of suffering.

Romans 8:37

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Martin Luther, in his great hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," warns us:

Did we in our own strength confide?
Our striving would be losing
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.

"BUT AFTER WE HAD ALREADY SUFFERED AND BEEN MISTREATED IN PHILIPPI, EVEN AS YOU ARE KNOWING, WE HAD THE COURAGE IN OUR GOD TO SPEAK TO YOU THE GOSPEL OF GOD IN MUCH CONFLICT."

Lenski says:

Paul and Silvanus spoke the gospel of God in much agonizing, straining like athletes who try to run so as to gain the coveted prize. This agonizing was undergone in order to obtain the prize of success of the gospel in Thessalonica. Paul and Silvanus strained in their heart and their soul with fervent prayer and with utmost devotion, ever thinking of this one thing.

Walvoord says:

Paul was called to preach and he preached boldly with much contention. The word which is translated "contention" is agoni. It is the word from which we get agony. There was an agony of soul as he preached the gospel. To be effective in our testimony, to be successful--even by worldly standards--it is necessary to have a boldness inspired by an agony of heart.

Ogilvie says:

Allow the full impact of this to stir your soul. After Philippi Paul did not need a long period to be healed of the rejection. Instead, he strolled over the mountains and began all over again in Thessalonica. He did not project onto the Thessalonians the bruises of a dejected spirit. Not for a moment did he take out on the Thessalonians what the officialdom of Philippi had done to him. He was able to close one chapter and begin the next. Shaking the dust off his feet he pressed on.

That's not easy. So often we allow our minds to brood over previous slights and oversights, hurts and diminished hopes. A protective membrane is formed over our hearts so we will never be bothered by rejection again. And when we are, the membrane thickens until we become incapable of warmth and love.

Luke 22:54-62

And having arrested Him, they led Him away, and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. And after they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. And a certain servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight, and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."

But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

And a little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!"

But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

And after about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too."

But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, a cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

(To Love Mercy: Becoming a Person of Compassion, Acceptance, and Forgiveness by C. Samuel Storms)

John Calvin was right:

Here we see that it does not take a heavy fight to break a man, nor many forces and devices. Whoever is not dependent on God's hand will soon fall, at a breath of wind or the noise of a falling leaf. Peter certainly was no less brave than any of us, and had already given no ordinary proof of his high courage (though his boldness was excessive). Yet he does not wait to be brought to the tribunal of the Pontiff, or until the enemy threatens his violent death, but, at the voice of a young woman, he is scared, and straight out denies his Master.

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2 Samuel 22:17-20

He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
 he drew me out of deep waters.
 He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
 from my foes, who were too strong for me.
 They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
 but the Lord was my support.
 He brought me out into a spacious place;
 he rescued me because he delighted in me.

v. 3 For our exhortation was not out of error, neither out of impure motive nor in deceit;

Here in this 3rd verse we have the reason why Paul speaks for God:

"FOR OUR EXHORTATION"

The word "EXHORTATION" refers us back to the "gospel of God" in verse 2. Paul is focusing here on the message which he brought to Thessalonica.

In this verse we get a statement of the NEGATIVE. This is what his message was NOT.

He has 3 THINGS to say about it:

1. "WAS NOT OUT OF ERROR,"
2. "NEITHER OUT OF IMPURE MOTIVE,"
3. "NOR IN DECEIT."

All of these things would be works of the devil, and Paul is a servant of the living God.

Ryrie observes:

The source of Paul's exhortation was not from (ek) error, nor from (ek) uncleanness, nor was it (en) the atmosphere of deceit. Who can help loving a message like this? And yet, it is this very love that many Christians do not have and that is why they find it difficult to witness.

Paul was not careless with his own life, but was very careful to live the gospel which he preached so that he would not be open to criticism from those without.

Psalm 119:42

then I will answer the one who taunts me,
for I trust in your word.

What Paul is essentially saying in this verse is that his preaching did not spring from delusion or impurity, nor was it conducted in an atmosphere of craft.

S. Lewis Johnson, in commenting on this verse, says:

He talks of the message first. It is more important to preach the truth than to live the truth. If we had a choice the message is primary.

Let us consider together the 3 things that Paul has to say about his ministry in Thessalonica.

We are going to see in these 3 phrases the focus on:

his MESSAGE,
his MOTIVATION,
and his METHOD.

1. "OUR EXHORTATION WAS NOT OUT OF ERROR."

Paul could say this with a great deal of confidence because his message was a Person. That Person was the Lord Jesus Himself, who said that He was "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

John 8:32

and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

I Corinthians 2:2

For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Psalms 119:130

The entrance of your words gives light,
it gives understanding to the simple.

A. T. Robertson says:

Truth lies in character. Christ did not simply speak the truth; He was the truth. Truth through and through, for truth is a thing not of words but of life and being.

Horace Mann says:

Keep one thing forever in view--the truth. And if you do this, though it may seem to lead you away from the opinions of men, it will assuredly conduct you to the throne of God.

Paul, focusing on the message, says that his is truth.

Secondly, he is going to focus on his MOTIVATION in the phrase:

2. "NEITHER OUT OF IMPURE MOTIVE."

2 Peter 2:18

For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

Paul means by this that there wasn't some hidden, impure reason in the presenting of his message.

2 Corinthians 2:17

For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

"FOR OUR EXHORTATION WAS NOT OUT OF ERROR, NEITHER OUT OF IMPURE MOTIVE NOR IN DECEIT."

1. The focus on the MESSAGE is that it:

"WAS NOT OUT OF ERROR."

2. The focus on MOTIVATION is that it was:

"NOT OUT OF IMPURE MOTIVE."

3. The focus now upon the METHOD is that it is not:

"IN DECEIT."

It was not Paul's purpose to try to trick them or to try to catch them with the bait of the gospel.

This word is translated in many different ways. The idea of the word is "to catch with bait" or "the use of tricks."

Joseph Parker, in commenting on this, says:

The minister who lives by tricks shall perish by tricks. He who speaks the eternal word with a faithful heart and a fearless tongue shall have a great harvesting.

So we see from this verse:

Paul's MESSAGE was not a message "OUT OF ERROR,"

His MOTIVATION did not originate from "IMPURE MOTIVES,"

and his METHOD was not to use tricks to DECEIVE THE PEOPLE.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary summarizes the verse by saying:

His message was truth, his motivation was clean, and his method was straightforward.

J. Vernon McGee observes:

If I were to pick the greatest sermon of Paul, I would actually pick none of these. I would choose instead his life in Thessalonica. His greatest sermon was not writing or speaking, but in walking. It was not in exposition but in experience. Not in his profession but in his practice. He took his text from James 2:26: "Faith without works is dead," and he made his points on the pavement of the streets of Thessalonica.

Paul's bottom line was to have truth presented with pure motives designed to save.

The #1 PRIORITY in the verse is the priority of the message.

v. 4 but even as we have been found worthy by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we are speaking, not as pleasing men but God, who is examining our hearts.

The word "BUT" forms the contrast to the previous verse. We have now the process involved in putting Paul in this position of being entrusted with the gospel.

In this verse we get the feeling that Paul has been tested by God. And now, having come through the testing, he is trusted with the message of the gospel.

Whereas in verse 3 we are focusing on the MESSAGE,

in verse 4 we are focusing on the MESSENGER.

"BUT EVEN AS WE HAVE BEEN FOUND WORTHY BY GOD TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL."

The words "FOUND WORTHY" mean:

"to put to the test,"

"to examine,"

"to prove by testing."

Genesis 22:1

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"
"Here I am," he replied.

Isaiah 48:10, 11

See, I have refined you, though not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this.
How can I let myself be defamed?
I will not yield my glory to another.

James 1:2, 3

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that

the testing of your faith produces endurance.

1 Peter 1:6, 7

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1 Peter 4:12, 13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

1 Timothy 6:11

But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

(Keeping Your Ethical Edge Sharp by Doug Sherman and William Hendricks)

As we trace the concept of trustworthiness through the Scriptures, we find that it has two edges to it. First of all, it involves keeping your word even if it becomes inconvenient. This is the idea of faithfulness. In chapter 3 we looked at Psalm 15, where the psalmist asks who gets to enjoy an intimate, satisfying relationship with God. The answer is that it's the person with integrity. In verse 4 of the psalm, we find that one of the characteristics of the person of integrity is, "He swears to his own hurt, and does not change."

In other words, when the trustworthy person signs his name on an agreement, it's a done deal; he's not going to change his mind if something better comes along.

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William Hendricksen has a pointed statement on this verse:

Man looks on the outward appearance. God looks on the heart. The human eye cannot discern the inner motive of his fellowman whether good or bad. Hence Paul, as it were, appeals to God's omniscience.

John Walvoord points out:

The final test of every life and of every message or sermon is, What does God think about it?

Paul's whole concern was to declare the truth and to obtain the praise of God no matter what men would think about it.

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

1 Timothy 1:12

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me because He considered me faithful, putting me into service;

Paul recognized the fact that we all are going to give an account to God and that one day "we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body whether they be good or bad."

This was a real incentive to the apostle Paul to labor faithfully for the Lord so that he would not have to stand in an apologetic manner for his performance.

"BUT EVEN AS WE HAVE BEEN FOUND WORTHY [after testing] BY GOD TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL, SO WE ARE SPEAKING, [negatively] NOT AS PLEASING MEN BUT [positively] GOD, WHO IS EXAMINING OUR HEARTS."

God is not only in the business of testing us to find us "WORTHY TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL,"

but He is "EXAMINING OUR HEARTS" on a regular basis.

This is a PRESENT PARTICIPLE indicating that it is a process going on all the time in our lives.

This is the same verb form that was used in the first part of the verse that we translated "HAVE BEEN FOUND WORTHY." We "HAVE BEEN FOUND WORTHY" as a result of the test. This is the process going on all of the time to continue to determine that worthiness.

Hebrews 4:13

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.

1 Corinthians 11:28-32

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?

Galatians 6:4

But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

Ephesians 5:10

trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

"BUT GOD, WHO IS EXAMINING OUR HEARTS."

God's examination is just like an X-RAY. He can see through us and knows everything about us.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Milligan has a very excellent comment on the word which Paul uses for "HEARTS" here in this verse:

Kardia according to biblical usage is the focus of the personal life, the center of all intellectual as well as emotional that goes to make up the moral character and is thus equivalent to the inner hidden man known to God alone.

We can say then that the "HEART" involves:

the intellect,

the emotions,

and the will.

The apostle Paul, recognizing the fact that only God knows our hearts, has called upon God to bear witness to the fact that his motives are pure and aboveboard.

Maybe it would be good for us now to stop and just make a HEART-CHECK, to do a test on our own:

Psalm 26:2, 3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;
for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in your truth.

Psalm 139:23, 24

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

v. 5 For neither were we found using flattering words, even as you are knowing, nor in pretense desiring advantage--God is witness--

There are 3 more THINGS that Paul wants to make clear here in verses 5 and 6 that he did not do:

1. "FOR NEITHER WERE WE FOUND USING FLATTERING WORDS"

This word is used only here in the New Testament.

Barnes points out:

The word rendered "flattering" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The meaning is, that the apostle did not deal in the language of adulation; he did not praise them for their beauty, wealth, talent, or accomplishments, and conceal from them the painful truths about their guilt and danger. He stated simple truth--not refusing to commend men if truth would admit of it, and never hesitating to declare his honest convictions about their guilt and danger. One of the principle arts of the deceiver on all subjects is flattery; and Paul says, that when preaching to the Thessalonians he had carefully avoided it.

These 3 things that are mentioned here in verses 5 and 6 are real temptations to any minister of the gospel.

Leon Morris states:

Having put positively the truth that his preaching was always done as in the sight of God, Paul now turns from general to particular, from positive to the negative, giving three things from which the preaching from Thessalonica had been free. First, flattery which is using acceptable speech for the purpose of lulling another into the sense of security so that one may obtain one's own ends. Two, a cloak of covetousness. Three, seeking glory from men.

1. First of all, Paul says to us that he was not guilty of using "FLATTERING WORDS."

He was not trying to impress his hearers by using words which would flatter them in any way. But he was deeply concerned about transmitting the gospel of Jesus Christ in a language that they could understand.

Paul for the 3rd time in the passage uses the word "KNOWING." They heard his message and they know firsthand that he was not in the habit of seducing them by flattery.

2. "NOR IN PRETENSE DESIRING ADVANTAGE."

Paul tells us here that he was not pretending to be something that he was not in order to gain unfair advantage of them.

"GOD IS WITNESS." Paul calls God to witness because He is the only one who looks on the heart.

Paul is fully aware that the Thessalonians would not know his inner heart but that certainly God would, and so he calls God as his witness.

Lenski points out:

It is the natural assurance of a Christian who constantly lives under God's eye that God can be his witness.

This is our KEY VERSE in the study. And in making our SPIRITUAL CHECKUP, we would do well to examine our own personal motives to see whether things which we are doing in our heart of hearts, and the things which we think in our thought life, are really things that please the Lord.

Or, are we falling prey to some of these SINS which are herein described as:

using "FLATTERING WORDS,

or living a life "IN PRETENSE" in order to gain an unfair advantage,

or are we "SEEKING GLORY FROM MEN"?

The Bible calls this type of person who is playacting a HYPOCRITE. In modern high school terminology he would be known as a PHONY.

Job 13:16

He also shall be my salvation,
for an hypocrite shall not come before him.

In Matthew chapter 23 the Lord is very severe with the religious leaders who were hypocritical:

Matthew 23:13-15

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, even while for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Matthew 6:5

And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Someone has said:

The devil rejoices more over one hypocrite than over 99 real sinners.

Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

Billy Graham gives an account of one of his first crusades in Georgia in 1947:

It was about 2:00 in the morning and in a big room next door to us in the hotel they were having the wildest party I think I'd ever heard or seen. They were tearing the roof down, singing lewd songs, swearing, drinking--all of which we could hear. It was impossible to sleep. Grady Wilson came to my room and asked what shall we do.

I put on my bathrobe, went next door and knocked. A man answered and asked, "What do you want?"

I said, "I am a minister and tomorrow, or today, is Sunday. We are trying to get some sleep next door but we can't."

He turned to the crowd packed in there saying, "Say, wait a minute, everybody, here's a preacher who wants to talk to us."

So I gave them the gospel and they all listened. I said, "I'm sure most of you are church members and some of you are Sunday School teachers even."

One lady, with tears streaming down her cheeks, said, "Mr. Graham, you're right. I'm a Sunday School teacher."

Imagine the conviction. How do you act when no other Christians are around? Do you live for Christ, witness for Christ? Do you let them know where you stand?

The world is filled with people who enjoy acting the part, who enjoy pretending they are wealthy when really, if the truth were known, they just make a normal wage; who pretend to be wise but who are really ignorant. This, of course, spills over into the religious realm, and man pretends to be good when really at heart he is sinful.

A classic illustration of one who pretended is seen in JUDAS. He was a man who was WITH Christ, a very close companion, but was not IN Christ.

Hawthorne has wisely said:

No man can for any considerable time wear one face to himself and another to the multitude without finally getting bewildered as to which is the true one.

Christianity was never meant to develop your acting ability.

Why do we wear the mask?

1. We don't like ourselves the way we are.
2. We are afraid others will not like us.
3. We are trying to cover an empty religious experience.
4. As a cover of my own selfishness.

What a joy it is to be honest with everyone, for people to see us in every situation as consistent and have the ability to call God as a witness to the hidden motives of our hearts. This is the true Christian experience. In our SPIRITUAL CHECKUP it is vitally necessary for us to examine the inner recesses of our hearts.

v. 6 nor seeking glory from men, nor from you nor from others,

Here the apostle states the 3rd thing of which he is free.

We have noted together in verse 5 that:

1. He was not using "flattering words,"
2. nor was he coming "in pretense desiring an advantage."

Here in verse 6 we find that he is:

3. "NOT SEEKING GLORY FROM MEN, NOR FROM [the Thessalonians] NOR FROM OTHERS" for that matter.

Paul was charged here with seeking personal prestige in the work which he was doing.

One need only read chapter 1:5 to be convinced of the folly of such an accusation:

Chapter 1:5

because our gospel came unto you not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; even as you are knowing what sort of men we showed ourselves to be among you for your sakes.

Here is a man who was lost in his message.

Paul had learned a long time ago that God was the One to receive the glory and that we are just instruments in His hands to be available for His use.

Captain Maurice M. Witherspoon, director of the Laymen's National Committee, tells the unusual story of a college friend:

When I was a student at Washington and Jefferson, I went into the room of a classmate one day. There above his desk was tacked a simple hand lettered sign: I am third.

I said to him, "Bill, I know you play baseball, but I don't understand what you mean by that sign."

But Bill wouldn't tell me what he meant. All through college that sign stayed above his desk and he never told me why. Then just before he was graduated I asked him again. This is what he said:

"When I left home, my mother told me always to remember that God is first, others are second, and I am third. I was afraid I wouldn't remember so I made that little sign and tacked it up."

I'm sure Bill was the only one in college to whom that sign did apply. He always followed its teachings.

The acrostic:

Jesus

Others

You

truly does spell out JOY."

Paul was not guilty of using:

- 1.PERSONAL, POSITIVE PRATTLE,
- 2.PRETENDING,
- 3.PRIDE

His MESSAGE was genuine,

his MOTIVES were pure,

and his METHODS sincere.

v. 7 though being able to be in a position of dignity as Christ's ambassadors. But we became gentle in your midst, even as a nursing mother is tenderly caring for her own children.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

Paul shifts emphasis from the preachers to the hearers at this point.

Walvoord observes:

Through verse 6 Paul has itemized the things that he did not do. He was not covetous or deceitful and he did not have errors in his message. In verse 7 and through verse 12 we have what he did do, the positive side of his message.

Hogg and Vine give a very good summary statement at this point saying:

Having denied categorically the seven-fold imputation made upon them by their enemies at Thessalonica of deception, sensuality, sycophancy, fraud, flattery, covetousness, seeking material advantage, the apostle proceeds to describe what their manner of life in Thessalonica had been.

Paul said we did not seek glory from men, though because of our position of dignity as Christ's ambassadors we certainly could have acted differently than we did.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The apostle and his team had surrendered their rights along this line in order to serve and to give.

In contrast Paul says:

"BUT WE BECAME GENTLE IN YOUR MIDST, EVEN AS A NURSING MOTHER IS TENDERLY CARING FOR HER OWN CHILDREN."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The gentleness and unselfishness of Paul as a spiritual parent shines through here in this verse.

William Hendricksen points out:

The missionaries, far from trying to promote their own interests, had become both father and mother to the Thessalonians.

"BUT WE BECAME GENTLE," that is "GUILLELESS and GOOD."

Their gentleness was a manifestation of the Spirit's presence in their lives.

Their gentleness is illustrated by the next phrase:

"EVEN AS A NURSING MOTHER IS TENDERLY CARING FOR HER OWN CHILDREN."

"A NURSING MOTHER" is involved in 3 THINGS:

1. she is CARING
2. she is FEEDING
3. she is GUARDING her child

The word for "TENDERLY CARING" is the picture of a mother bird warming her young.

Matthew 23:37, 38

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

Here we get an inside picture of Paul's attitude toward his own converts and the very gentle way he cares for them.

MOSES gives us a very descriptive presentation when he talks to God in:

Numbers 11:12

Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers?

Paul also descriptively presents an insight to his ministry in writing to the Galatians:

Galatians 4:19

My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you--

(To Love Mercy: Becoming a Person of Compassion, Acceptance, and Forgiveness by C. Samuel Storms)

A few years ago a young couple in Florida was brought to court and charged with obtaining their adoptive child through illegal measures. The natural mother had filed suit in her attempt to regain legal custody. With tears streaming down his face and his voice cracking under the emotional strain, the judge ruled on behalf of the natural mother. His distress was evoked by the fact that, although the adoptive parents had acted in disregard for the law, there was no mistaking their love for the child.

When the court bailiff took the child from the loving arms of the adoptive father, no words could have described his pain. As I watched this tragic scene on television, I couldn't help but think of Paul's words here in 1 Thessalonians. Bereft of his spiritual children, Paul's heart was breaking. Such tender affection among Christians is in pitifully short supply today. Few of us ever experience such love and unity of faith.
p. 20

Paul will now go on and explain what he means by the statement "a nursing mother who is tenderly caring for her own children":

v. 8 So feeling kindly for you, we were delighting in imparting to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved ones to us.

"SO" introduces us to the result:

"SO FEELING KINDLY FOR YOU."

This is the only place where this word is used in the New Testament. It is a term of endearment that has been derived from the NURSERY.

Rather than being greedy they were feeling kindly toward them.

"SO FEELING KINDLY FOR YOU," just like a nursing mother would for her own children, our conduct was affected by this--for "WE WERE DELIGHTING."

There was great joy in "IMPARTING TO YOU NOT ONLY THE GOSPEL OF GOD [which we had come to present to you] BUT ALSO OUR OWN SOULS."

Barnes, in his commentary, says:

The word here rendered "feeling kindly" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means "to long after," "to have a strong affection for." The sense here is that Paul was so strongly attached to them that he would have been willing to lay down his life for them.

Stedman says:

Literally, it means a "yearning," "a longing" for you. I sometimes feel this myself, especially when I am talking with a young person. I feel my heart longing to help them, to bless them, to teach them, to lead them, to fulfill them. That is how parents feel about their children. There is a yearning after them, an affection, a desire to see them blossom and grow in the right direction.

Because of these intense feelings which they had for the Thessalonians, Paul said:

"WE WERE DELIGHTING IN IMPARTING TO YOU NOT ONLY THE GOSPEL OF GOD BUT ALSO OUR OWN SOULS."

You have a NEGATIVE and a POSITIVE here:

It was a "DELIGHT TO IMPARTING TO YOU [negatively] NOT ONLY THE GOSPEL OF GOD BUT [positively] ALSO OUR OWN SOULS."

They were delighting in giving the gospel and in giving themselves. They did not come to get.

Rather than being GREEDY they came to GIVE.

Paul concludes the verse by stating the reason for this delight:

"BECAUSE YOU BECAME BELOVED ONES TO US."

Paul's attachment and love for his converts certainly was not a passing thing.

(Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned, But I Have Several Excellent Excuses by James W. Moore)

One of my favorite stories was told by Bishop Gerald Kennedy some years ago. A young man was proposing marriage to his girlfriend: "I admit that I'm not wealthy like Jerome; I'm not as handsome as Jerome; I don't have a country estate or a yacht or a private plane like Jerome's. But my darling, I love you."

The girl answered, "I love you too, but tell me more about Jerome!"
p. 107

Philippians 2:17

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

There was great delight in what the apostle was doing because of his sincere love for them.

Hannah Hurnard has stated:

Sacrifice is the ecstasy of giving the best we have to the one we love the most.

There are 2 THINGS mentioned here in the verse which they brought to the Thessalonians:

1. First of all, their original mission was to bring the "GOSPEL OF GOD,"
2. The 2nd thing which they gave so willingly to the Thessalonians was their "OWN SOULS" as well.

The reason the 2nd gift is given is because these Thessalonians had become "BELOVED ONES" to the apostle Paul.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Genuine love finds expression in giving to people.

v. 9 For you are remembering, brethren, our toil and hardship, night and day laboring that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

Here in this verse he is calling to their remembrance what they had actually done when they were in Thessalonica.

In this verse, also, I feel he is telling us what he means by the last phrase in the previous verse:

"imparting . . . also our own souls."

He calls them "brethren" again, which he has done on two previous occasions in the letter.

Even as to a nurse who knows no schedule, no toil or hardship was considered too great for the health and protection and welfare of the child.

"FOR YOU ARE REMEMBERING, BRETHREN, OUR TOIL AND HARDSHIP."

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

"NIGHT AND DAY LABORING."

The reason that Paul felt it necessary to labor night and day was so that they "MIGHT NOT BE A BURDEN TO ANY" of the saints in Thessalonica.

This "LABORING" was entered into with one purpose in mind:

THAT "WE PROCLAIM TO YOU THE GOSPEL OF GOD."

From Acts 18:3 we learn that Paul was a TENTMAKER by trade, and evidently he set up his trade here in Thessalonica during his stay and labored at this in order to gain his support.

As we read this verse, we are reminded of England as she stood tensely waiting for the Germans to begin fighting in the early days of World War II, and when Winston Churchill had nothing to offer his beloved land but blood and sweat and tears.

The gospel of Jesus Christ as described here in verse 9 must have involved all of this.

The purpose behind their "TOIL AND HARDSHIP" and their "NIGHT AND DAY LABORING" is seen in the phrase:

"THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE A BURDEN TO ANY OF YOU."

It is our purpose not to burden you while we proclaim to you the gospel of God.

2 Thessalonians 3:8

nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you;

Paul in essence is saying, "We proved our love for you by our labor during the time we were there."

Lenski points out:

Paul continues the idea of a nurse doing everything for her children. Neither a nurse nor the apostle expect anything from their charges.

Acts 20:31

Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

Paul here in this 9th verse calls to their remembrance the "TOIL AND HARDSHIP" that was involved in order that they not put a burden upon them financially, with the one purpose in view:

They "PROCLAIMED [to them] THE GOSPEL OF GOD."

(A Pretty Good Person: What It Takes to Live with Courage, Gratitude and Integrity by Lewis B. Smedes)

Early on, he didn't know exactly when, Larry Den Besten had a hunch that he was here in the world to heal people. Maybe healing their bodies in medicine, maybe their souls in the church, maybe both. So he covered his bets and studied both theology and medicine. He earned a degree in theology, then one in medicine, and the day after he finished his last medical exam he left for Nigeria.

Once he had gotten a working knowledge of Hausa, a tribal tongue of northern Nigeria, he planned and built a small hospital from the ground up in a village called Mkar. For the next decade he spent most of his waking hours in its white-washed, bare-walled operating room. He stood on his feet ten or twelve hours a day, six days a week, hunching over the bodies of people who suffered from almost every conceivable malignancy, improvising new slices and stitches as he went. Some evenings, after operating on people for ten hours straight, he would get into a Piper Cub and fly a couple of hundred miles into the bush to take care of one or another old person too sick to make her or his way to the hospital.

But he did not intend to write his whole story in Africa. He worked there for ten years, then came home, and eventually he joined the medical center of the University of California in Los Angeles as a surgeon and teacher of surgery. Around the surgical units he earned the nickname "Quick Fingers Den Besten" because nobody else could operate with his speed. And swiftness mattered a great deal when it came to building an entire new esophagus out of a patient's intestines, the sophisticated sort of operation that added extra sheen to his rising star.

He was determined, however, not to be a captive of his own success. So, after ten years, he took the whole package in his hands--with its prestige and money and all the other perks that successful surgeons enjoy--looked at it hard, and set it all aside. (Some people said he threw it all away.) This time he bewildered his medical fraternity by choosing to become, of all things, the hands-on director--the provost--of a graduate school of theology, Fuller Seminary, where I work.

Less than three years into the seminary chapter, he did lose control: to chronic pain, to enervating cramps, to mistaken diagnoses, to cancer, and finally to death.

He used to say, after years of watching people live and die, that people tended to die the way they lived. It was true of him. He died the way he lived, fighting for control.

His cancer-shot body would beg him to go home and rest, but he did not want to lose control yet. So he swallowed some pills and stuck around the office. When he finally did leave for the day, he would pull his old surgeon's smock and his leather doctor's bag out of his closet, plod on over to a mission a couple of blocks away, and tend to the medical needs of the homeless people who hung out around there.

But he did lose control and he did die.

pp. 87-88

v.10 You are witnesses, and [so is] God, as to how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we proved ourselves among you who are believing;

The word "YOU" is in the EMPHATIC POSITION just like it was back in verse 1.

"YOU ARE WITNESSES, AND [SO IS] GOD."

Paul in this verse not only calls God to witness as he did back in verse 5 but he also makes reference to the fact that because of their conduct in Thessalonica, the Thessalonians are witnesses, as well, with God.

He points up 3 THINGS that they have witnessed:

1. "AS TO HOW DEVOUTLY,"

2. "UPRIGHTLY,"

3. "AND BLAMELESSLY WE PROVED OURSELVES AMONG YOU WHO ARE BELIEVING."

Paul has talked to us in this section with regard to:

his MESSAGE,

his MOTIVE,

and his METHOD,

and now we get a little look at the MINISTERS,
and how aboveboard they were in all their relationships.

Horne, in defining the meaning of these adverbs here, points out:

"Holily," or devoutly, means that they carried on their work as though separated unto God and his service; and then "uprightly," or righteously, they had constantly endeavored to do that which was right according to the law; and then "blamelessly," or unblamably, they had therefore acted in an irreproachable manner. The apostle would teach us that the pastor ought so to live that his life will bear close inspection.

S. Lewis Johnson points out:

The adverb "devoutly" looks upward toward God. The adverb "uprightly" looks outward toward them or to men, and the word "blamelessly" looks inward toward Paul; and as far as God and the folks in Thessalonica and Paul was concerned, everything was all right. What a marvelous testimony of a man who has nothing to hide and whose life could bear very close scrutiny on the part of both his Master and the people that he is ministering, to as well as his own conscience.

Isaiah 32:17

The fruit of righteousness will be peace;
the effect of righteousness will be
quietness and confidence forever.

Hogg and Vine point out:

The word for "devoutly" or "righteously" means the uprightness of character and conduct which Paul had maintained when under the law, which is recorded in Philippians chapter 3, he now manifested in the power of "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." And then the word "blamelessly" signifies that no charge can be maintained, whatever charges might be made.
p. 65

A preacher was once told that his life hollered so loud that no one was able to hear what he was preaching in the pulpit. How true this is, and how it behooves us Christians to learn well the lesson that our life must back up what our lips profess.

Ken Taylor paraphrases this verse very beautifully:

You yourselves are our witnesses--as is God--that we have been pure and honest and faultless toward every one of you.

Acts 24:16

In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.

"YOU ARE WITNESSES, AND [SO IS] GOD, AS TO HOW DEVOUTLY" - that is, in a manner pleasing to God, or in a holy manner,

"AND UPRIGHTLY" - that is, conforming to the laws of God and man. They were model citizens. They were doing what is right,

"AND BLAMELESSLY" - that is, they acted in an irreproachable manner. Their lives can bear close inspection.

Psalms 119:42

so shall I have wherewith to answer him that
reproacheth me,
for I trust in Thy word.

(A Pretty Good Person: What It Takes to Live with Courage, Gratitude and Integrity by Lewis B. Smedes)

I have tried to say in this chapter that integrity is about holding our lives together so that we are the same person inside and out, backward and forward. We create integrity as we own whatever story we are called on to write by the living of our lives. If we begin by owning our own stories in truth, we are ready to own reality and resist the corruption of our consciousness. And when we are able to own reality for what it is, we are ready to speak our minds with honesty and love.

Integrity is not an optional part of ourselves. A good car can lack air-conditioning and still be a splendid automobile. But if we lack integrity, we lose our hold on the other components that go into the making of a pretty good person. Losing integrity is more like having our lungs cave in; everything else goes out with them.

No living person has yet arrived whole at the place called integrity. If anyone tells you that he is a person of integrity, get a second opinion. We do well just to keep moving in the right direction. We have to check on our own intentions regularly, and see whether we are still moving on the journey or whether, at some shadowed station, we left the train and went off to nowhere. For, without integrity, anywhere is nowhere.

pp. 85-86

(Point Man: How a Man Can Lead a Family by Steve Farrar)

Ted Engstrom makes a poignant observation when he writes:

I've noticed that behavior put under close scrutiny tends to change for the better. People who are made accountable to a mentor, to a group of friends . . . become more serious about changing their behavior . . . When there is improvement, invariably it means that a person has been called to account. An unaccountable spouse is living on the edge of risk; an unaccountable CEO is in danger of taking his company down a wrong road; an unaccountable pastor has too much authority; an unaccountable counselor has too much responsibility and needs too much wisdom to be able to handle it on his own.

Between a husband and a wife there is a built-in accountability. If there is a breakdown in accountability, a breakdown in the marriage is imminent.

pp. 174-75

(A Grief Observed by C. S. Lewis)

It is often thought that the dead see us. And we assume, whether reasonable or not, that if they see us at all they see us more clearly than before. Does H. now see exactly how much froth or tinsel there was in what she called, and I call, my love? So be it. Look your hardest, dear. I wouldn't hide if I could. We didn't idealize each other. We tried to keep no secrets. You knew most of the rotten places in me already. If you now see anything worse, I can take it. So can you. Rebuke, explain, mock, forgive. For this is one of the miracles of love; it gives--to both, but perhaps especially to the woman--a power of seeing through its own enchantments and yet not being disenchanted.

p. 84

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

An old Scottish woman used to pray, "Oh God, make me as holy as a forgiven sinner can be." It is a good prayer. And those who pray it out of honesty and integrity, out of a sense of need, are the ones who are blessed. The meek, who live in submission and gentleness before God, will inherit the earth; they are God's kind of people. And blessed are those who hunger and thirst to be right before God. That constant, continual desire, will be continually filled.

p. 61

(Molder of Dreams by Guy Rice Doud)

What I'm trying to say here is that no matter where you grew up, the people on your list had a tremendous influence on you--they helped shape and mold your life and your dreams. And when you grow up, you're going to be on someone's list as well.

The rest of this book is about that very subject--how your life affects the lives of others, and how others have affected you. This is especially significant if you have felt the call of Christ in your life and have sought to be His light in the world.

You can't help but be a witness; your very life is a letter that others read, and you are writing messages on the tablets of their hearts. The apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth: "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts"

(2 Cor. 3:2-3).

Have you ever stopped to wonder whose letters you've read to lead you to believe what you do today? Have you stopped to consider what kind of letter you are writing on others' hearts?
pp. 7-8

v.11 just as you are knowing how to each one of you as a father his own children:

The illustration changes from:

"a nursing mother" in verse 7

to "A FATHER" in verse 11.

We have the words "YOU ARE KNOWING" for the 4th time in the passage.

Paul is now going to complete his admonition and turn the illustration from the "nursing mother" to "A FATHER." He has shared with us his concept of motherhood in the fact that when they were in Thessalonica they acted just like a mother in caring for her own children. They not only cared for them but gave them their own souls, as well as the gospel.

No hardship was too great for them to bear, even if it meant working and laboring long into the night and the early morning hours so as not to burden them unnecessarily, and to have the opportunity of proclaiming to them the gospel.

There are 3 THINGS that we are going to note in this verse and verse 12 which Paul feels a father should do, and which they did when they were there in Thessalonica. They were:

- 1.EXHORTING THEM,
- 2.ENCOURAGING THEM,
- 3.BEARING WITNESS.

We shall consider each of these in our exposition of these verses.

Boyce Blackwelder, in his book Toward Understanding Thessalonians, translates these three words as:

urging,

encouraging,

and appealing,

and tells us that these three words set forth the three phases of the Apostolic ministry.

You notice that Paul mentions "EACH ONE OF YOU" here. This, of course, includes a great deal of work with them on an individual basis. Each one of them separately "AS A FATHER HIS OWN CHILDREN" would do these 3 things that he here describes for us.

"JUST AS YOU ARE KNOWING HOW TO EACH ONE OF YOU," that is, each one of you separately.

(The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic by Stephen R. Covey)

Dag Hammarskjöld, past Secretary-General of the United Nations, once made a profound, far-reaching statement: "It is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses."
p. 201

Hendricksen observes:

Paul, Silas and Timothy, while in Thessalonica, had loved these people like a mother loves and cherishes her own children (v. 7), and had admonished them as does a father. As Bengel points out, they had admonished them so that they would act freely, encouraged them so that they would act gladly and testified so that they would act reverently with a proper sense of respect for the will of God as expressed in His word, hence with fear. They had dealt with each one of them, having done individual pastoral work among them.

(Missing from Action by Weldon M. Hardenbrook)

The chilling reality is that children without dads have potential for great harm, not only to themselves, but to others in society as well. For starters, check this "hall of fame" chronicled by author Daniel Amneus:

Few readers will have heard of Richard Lawrence, Charles Guiteau, Leon Czolgosz, John Schrank, or Giuseppe Zangara. These gentlemen were the assassins or attempted assassins of Andrew Jackson, James Garfield, William McKinley, and Theodore Roosevelt, respectively. Some recall the name of Dean Corll, the Houston mass murderer, and everyone recalls that of John Wilkes Booth. Lee Harvey Oswald, James Earl Ray, Sirhan K. Sirhan, Charles Manson, Andreas Baader, and Lynette Fromme are household words.

These people experienced the extreme but logical end of what can occur when dad disappears, for they all "share an interesting biographical oddity. They all grew up with no fathers in their daily lives."
pp. 89-90

v.12 exhorting you, and encouraging [you] and bearing witness to the end that you should be walking in a manner worthy of the God who is calling you into His own kingdom and glory.

Now that the apostle has turned from the "nursing mother" to the "father," he describes the FUNCTION OF THE FATHER in 3 WAYS.

It involves:

1.EXHORTATION

2.ENCOURAGEMENT

3.An EXAMPLE by word and deed: "BEARING WITNESS"

Paul first speaks of the ministry of the father as being one of "EXHORTING" them.

Paul means by this that he spent time with them, pointing out not only the gospel to them and being concerned about their response, but he also spent time dealing with them in very practical areas of Christian living, showing what God expects of them as Christians and as representatives of the living God.

Dawson Trotman was famous for exhortation. Whenever he would meet with one of his men he would ask them

2 QUESTIONS:

1. What have you gotten from the word today?
2. What verse are you memorizing?

Hebrews 10:24

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

Whereas the FIRST FUNCTION described of the father here is:

1. "EXHORTING,"

the 2ND FUNCTION is:

2. "ENCOURAGING."

He not only EXHORTED them in pointing out areas that needed development as far as their relationship to God was concerned, but he also ENCOURAGED them--which involved the fact that he built within them a spirit of confidence. He inspired them with courage to go on toward being approved by God in every relationship.

It is the word for "coming alongside."

(Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life
by Barbara Johnson)

Most of us miss out on life's big prizes.
 The Pulitzer.
 The Heisman.
 Oscars.
 But we're all eligible for life's small pleasures.
 A pat on the back.
 A kiss behind the ear.
 A four-pound bass.
 A full moon.
 An empty parking space.
 A crackling fire.
 A great meal.
 A glorious sunset.
 Enjoy life's tiny delights.
 There are plenty for all of us.

Source unknown

p. 21

We will note that the father is:

1. "EXHORTING,"
2. "ENCOURAGING"

and now:

3. he is "BEARING WITNESS."

I believe what Paul refers to here is in verses 9 and 10--as to how they have conducted themselves, or bore witness in themselves of what it means to be a Christian.

Chapter 2:9, 10

For you are remembering, brethren, our toil and hardship, night and day laboring that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and [so is] God, as to how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we proved ourselves among you who are believing;

- 1.He not only was "EXHORTING" them in their responsibility to God,
- 2.and "ENCOURAGING" them by showing them that he had confidence in their ability,
- 3.but he backed up his exhortation and encouragement with a real live flesh-and-blood example of how a Christian is supposed to live and act.

We note the reason for Paul's acting like a father among them in the last part of this verse:

"TO THE END THAT YOU SHOULD BE WALKING IN A MANNER WORTHY OF
THE GOD WHO IS CALLING YOU INTO HIS OWN KINGDOM AND
GLORY."

There is nothing more thrilling to a parent than to have his child represent him well in the battle of life. It is the deep concern of every parent that their child be successful and well adjusted in all of their relationships with people, and also that they be successful in their business.

Paul is stating here the goal of it all in a summary fashion:

He has acted as a nursing mother in caring for them, and as a father in exhorting and encouraging and bearing witness to them, with the purpose in view that they might be a real honor and tribute to their heavenly Father who is calling them into His own kingdom and glory.

Findlay points out:

"Ye would walk worthy of God" is the noblest possible ideal for life.

Taylor, in paraphrasing this verse, says:

Your daily lives should not embarrass God but bring joy to Him who invited you into His kingdom and into His glory.

John Walvoord points out on this verse:

Many problems of Christian conduct are answered in the question, "Is it worthy?" Is it something that is honoring to God? Would God be pleased with this situation?

In this verse we also have stated the goal of the apostle in any of his ministry, and that is to not only see people come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior, but to be nurtured and admonished and encouraged to the point where they are actually living lives that are worthy of God who is calling them.

"CALLING" is in the PRESENT TENSE, so God's call never ceases.

Colossians 1:10

so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Philippians 1:27

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Ephesians 4:1

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Lenski says:

Our whole walk from day to day is to be of equal weight with God as the One who calls us, etc. Place the way in which we live into one pan of the scales and God with His call into the other pan, then the two ought to balance. The one that has our conduct in it ought not to scale upward because of the heavy weight in the other.

(Why Christians Sin: Avoiding the Dangers of an Uncommitted Life by J. Kirk Johnston)

As Keith Phillips said, "One of the great tragedies of twentieth century Christianity is that many biblically knowledgeable believers are educated beyond their obedience."

Many believers know far more about Scripture than they are practicing. Others are obeying what Scripture they know; yet they are still ignorant of important biblical principles and truths. An overemphasis on either knowledge or obedience can eventually lead to disappointment. If people do not know what God wants them to do, they will not be able to obey; if they do not obey, they will not know what God wants them to do. This mad circle can lead to severe disillusionment. Good disciplinarians emphasize both knowledge and obedience.

p. 50

This admonition ought to really challenge us, lest we hear the message of God that Belshazzar heard in:

Daniel 5:27

You are weighed in the balances and found wanting.

(Uneasy Manhood: The Quest for Self-Understanding
by Robert Hicks)

A Mandate from Our Mentor

1. You don't have to be in control of everything and have it all together.
 2. It's OK to cry once in a while.
 3. You can be gentle and see many rewards.
 4. You don't need all the toys, perks, and affairs to be happy. You can be satisfied in doing the right thing.
 5. The way you treat others is the way they will treat you. Be kind.
 6. You don't have to spread yourself so thin you never see God.
 7. You don't have to win every argument, close every deal, or be successful to be a good son.
 8. You can risk your job if you think you are right.
 9. Don't worry about what people think or say about you if you are doing what is right.
 10. You are not the only one who has been fired for doing what is right. Celebrate! You stand in a long line of real men!
- Author's paraphrase of Matthew 5:1-12
- pp. 239-40

"TO THE END THAT YOU SHOULD BE WALKING IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE GOD WHO IS CALLING YOU INTO HIS OWN KINGDOM AND GLORY."

When we think of "KINGDOM" we think of the LORD'S PRAYER:

Thy kingdom come
thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.

And when we think of "GLORY" we think of:

John 17:5

And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Fruit was born and lives were changed because the ministers' lives had been changed.

LESSON #2: Paul persevered in preaching the gospel even though he knew he was going to suffer the consequences.

LESSON #3: Paul was sustained and strengthened in his suffering.

LESSON #4: His message was genuine, his motives were pure, and his methods sincere.

LESSON #5: Paul did not come to Thessalonica to get but to give the gospel and to give of himself.

LESSON #6: Paul's life could bear close inspection.

LESSON #7: A father's function is 3-fold:

- 1.exhortation
- 2.encouragement
- 3.an example

LESSON #8: The goal of Paul's ministry is that they should be "walking in a manner worthy of a God who is calling them into His own kingdom and glory."

Paul and the men who are working with him certainly conducted themselves in a deeply-concerned manner toward the Thessalonians.

Stedman observes:

These are surely "the times that try men's souls." These are also times of great possibilities. What a challenge to live today as Paul lived and ministered in his day. As I review his record and see his courage, his loving, gentle spirit and his faithfulness, I have to pray, "Lord, make me a blessing in my own time."

We have learned from this study that there is a way of life which is pleasing to God, a way of life that is honest before men without anything to hide.

The BIG QUESTION that confronts each of us as we conclude this study together is:

ARE WE LIVING THE KIND OF LIFE THAT GOD HAS INTENDED FOR US TO LIVE, OR ARE WE REALLY PHONIES?

To make a proper SPIRITUAL CHECKUP, we need to ask ourselves this basic question so we can come up with an honest evaluation.

If we are having problems in this area, it behooves us to realize our responsibility to walk in a way which would please our heavenly Father, that we might bring honor and praise to Him during our lives here on earth so that we can stand without apology, calling both God and our fellow men as witnesses to the kind of lives that we have lived to His glory.

Isobel Kuhn, in her book Assent to the Tribes, has wisely said:

I am not very wise in spending, Lord. This small coin of myself is apt to be frittered about on trifles foolishly or given away on impulse needlessly. And yet I would not say "no" to thy needy nor refuse to pay my indebtedness, nor ever any day let thy forlorned go comfortless away. Lord, wilt thou put me in thy purse and spend me somehow in thy universe?

If you find yourself in the position of being phony in the sense that you are RELIGIOUS WITHOUT A RELATIONSHIP, may I help you to understand that you are the one who is going to lose? For, to have no relationship with the Lord Jesus is to have no eternal life.

Perhaps you are a Christian in relationship but out of fellowship, and as you are walking out of fellowship, you again are the loser because you have no abundant life.

May I urge you to set aside some time to spend with the Lord on a daily basis and to learn how to walk with Him.

(The Priority of Knowing God by Peter V. Deison)

Out of all the problems of meeting with God, we agreed that there were four big ones. They seemed to loom like giants among all the other problems. These four seem to be universal.

There is loss of concentration. It likes to trap us in confusion and chain us to small accomplishments. There is loss of feeling. It likes to keep us guessing and take away our motivation. There is lack of discipline. It likes to keep us inconsistent and seldom on target. Finally, there is the biggest giant of all--lack of practice. It likes to keep our minds full, our hearts stirred, and our hands tied.

p. 109

These lay the foundation of why we have a quiet time:

To know Him more fully.

To enjoy Him more completely.

To love Him more deeply.

To worship Him more satisfactorily.

p. 40

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

Jesus did not call us to be magnificent chandeliers for people to admire. He called us to be a single bulb in a back hall to keep people from breaking their necks when they go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. He called us to make a difference in the darkness. Doing so makes us significant.

On June 5, 1910, American short-story writer O. Henry spoke his last words: "Turn up the lights--I don't want to go home in the dark."

As lights in the world, our mission is to make sure no one ever does.
pp. 106-7

(Cages of Pain by Gordon Aeschliman)

I began to understand. I picked up my journal and penned the following prayer: "Lord you have prepared a way for me to go and I want to walk that path unflinchingly in order that all the plans you have determined to accomplish through my little frame will see their fulfilled end. Please do with me as you desire and don't put a hold on your sovereign intentions because of my feeble heart."
p. 152

(Molder of Dreams by Guy Rice Doud)

A couple of months after Grandma's death, we were studying poetry in school. We were assigned to write a poem. A sophomore in Mr. Tomsy's English class, I composed the following verses:

Grandma's Hands

I remember her hands, my grandmother's hands
All crippled and twisted in pain.
The hands that held children, the hands that baked bread,
Would never be useful again.

I remember her hands, my Grandma's hands,
All gnarled and painfully bent.
But I saw in those hands a black precious book,
The key to the life that she spent.

I remember her touch, Grandma's touch,
 As she grabbed my hand with hers.
 With love and tenderness she drew me close,
 And whispered these precious words:

"Jesus loves you, always remember,
 Jesus loves you, Guy!
 Jesus really loves you, son,
 He does, and so do I!"

Yes, I remember that voice, Gram's voice,
 As one day she read from the book.
 She read of His hands, of nails driven through,
 Of the pain and suffering He took.

She said, "I look at my hands gnarled in pain,
 And sometimes I've questioned why.
 But Jesus always answers by taking my hands
 And offers a tender reply:

"I suffered on Calvary, the spear pierced my side,
 The nails were driven by bones.
 I suffered and died on Calvary's tree;
 I suffered and died alone.

"I know your pain; I've felt it too.
 Believe me, my child, I care.
 Just give me your hands and I'll hold yours,
 And help you your burden to bear."

"I reached for His hands," she said, "as He reached for mine.
 And I felt the holes pierced through.
 And my hands, though gnarled, crippled and bent,
 Know no pain like the pain that He knew."

I remember her hands, my Grandmother's hands,
 Folded, as she lay at rest.
 And as I touched those hands one last time,
 I thanked God that her life was so blessed.

Those hands that held the Bible, those hands that held me,
 Now hold the Master's hands.
 No longer gnarled or twisted in pain,
 They are strong and tender again.

At the bottom of the poem, I wrote, "In memory of a great woman in Christ,
 Mayme Tooley Rice, by her grandson, Guy Doud."
 pp. 14-16

STUDY #2 - 1 Thessalonians

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Fruit was born and lives were changed because the ministers' lives had been changed.

LESSON #2: Paul persevered in preaching the gospel even though he knew he was going to suffer the consequences.

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