

Ready for Christ's Return | Part 2

Lesson 3

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

September 17, 2023

Leadership Qualities That Work

INTRODUCTION

Paul's message in his first Thessalonian letter (1:2-10) overflows with joy and satisfaction with the believers' acceptance of the gospel. Such emotion is lacking in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 when his tone becomes defensive. Why and before whom does he defend the integrity of his ministry?

Returning to Paul's experience in Thessalonica, we read in Acts 17:5, "...other Jews were jealous, so they rounded up some bad characters...started a riot...rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul..."

The preceding chaos occurred at the end of Paul's Thessalonian tenure, a memory that undoubtedly haunted him. It was in his character to "set the record straight" for those who doubted his motives: to present an accurate account of what his objectives were *and* were not. Praise God, who equipped him thoroughly in writing lines of clarification.

Memory verse: "Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well."

—1 Thessalonians 2:7b-8

Pray, and read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

OBSERVATION: What do the passages say?

1. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1, Paul affirms his visit to Thessalonica “was not without results.” To what results does he refer? (2 Thessalonians 1:10)
2. What is the “outrageous” aspect of Paul’s and Silas’ treatment in Philippi which he mentions in 1 Thessalonians 2:2? (Acts 16:19b-24)
3. What are the eight offensive and/or unrighteous leanings which Paul insists he has never used in his teaching? (1 Thessalonians 2:3, 5-6)
4. Why does Paul compare himself to “a nursing mother”?
(1 Thessalonians 2:7b-8)
5. Who, besides Paul’s converts, is witness to his blameless teaching of the word? (1 Thessalonians 2:10)

INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?

1. 1 Thessalonians 2b reports Paul and Silas as teachers of the gospel “in the face of strong opposition.” (Acts 16:19b-24) Paul encountered hostility wherever he taught. How was his experience in Thessalonica different? (Acts 17:1-10a)

2. Paul never wavered from his strict adherence to the truth. (1 Thessalonians 2:3-4a) To what other churches besides Thessalonica did he make his principles known? (2 Corinthians 2:17, 4:2; Galatians 1:10-12)

3. Greed and impurity are two of the more serious offenses which Paul disallows in his life, not only in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:3-5), but elsewhere. To what other churches did he emphasize the damage caused by these transgressions? (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:5-6; 1 Timothy 6:9-10)

4. 1 Thessalonians 2:2-9 includes a list of methods and standards Paul used and did not use when teaching the gospel. What was his goal? (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?

1. In John Piper's podcast of June 23, 2022, he specified deceit, pleasing people, and flattery (1 Thessalonians 2:3b, 4b-5) as means to attain worldly goals as stated in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12) Explain how the three named methods would be effective in obtaining power, human praise, wealth, and sexual favors.

2. How can people of the 21st century avoid falling into the trap of covetousness, which is represented by the goals listed in Application Question #1.

3. Paul encourages, comforts, and urges us “to live lives worthy of God, who calls (us) into his kingdom and glory.” (1 Thessalonians 2:12) Honor this “invitation” by composing a prayer for God’s guidance in all aspects of your life.