



A Study in 1 Thessalonians

Review: 1 Thessalonians 2.1-4

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. ² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.

³ For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, ⁴ but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2.5-13

⁵ For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed – God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. ⁸ So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. ⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. ¹¹ For you know how, like a father with his children, ¹² we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. ¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved – so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!

Without Flattery, Pretext, or Entitlement (2.5-6)

⁵ For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed-- God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

1. “As you know ... God is witness” (i.e., two witness; cf. Deut 17.6; 19.5; 1 Tim 5.19; Heb 10.13)
2. “for we never came with words of flattery ... nor with a pretext for greed (cf. 2.9)¹ ... nor did we seek glory from people”
3. “though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ”²
4. “but we were gentle³ among you”

Moved by Maternal Love (2.7-8)

⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. ⁸ So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

1. “Like a nursing mother taking care of her own children” (cf. Eph 5.29)⁴
2. So, being affectionately desirous of you,
 - a. we were ready to share with you
 - i. not only the gospel of God
 - ii. but also our own selves

¹ Paul worked as a tentmaker to support himself: **2 Thessalonians 3:7-8** For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. **Acts 20:33-35** I coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. ³⁵ In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

² lit. “we could have thrown our weight around as apostles of Christ” (i.e., those who are sent by Christ and speak with his authority)

³ There is a textual issue here. The ESV’s “gentle” translates the Greek word ἤπιοι (*ēpioi*); however, the best manuscripts have νήπιοι (*nēpioi*), “infants.” Paul likely used “infants” to contrast the previous statement. They did not throw their weight around as apostles, but we were like infants. Also, infants have a certain innocence about them, which Paul is also claiming.

⁴ **Isaiah 49:15-16a** “Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶ Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” **Isaiah 66:12-13** For thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees. ¹³ As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”

- b. because you had become very dear (*ἀγαπητοὶ; agapētoi* – “beloved”) to us

Holy Work (2.9-10)

⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers.

1. “For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil
 - a. we worked night and day
 - i. that we might not be a burden to any of you
 - b. while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God” (cf. 2 Thess 3.7-8; Acts 20.33-34)
2. “You are witnesses, and God also” (cf. note about two witnesses above)
3. “how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers”

Exercising Paternal Love (2.11-12)

¹¹ For you know how, like a father with his children, ¹² we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

1. “like a father with his children
 - a. we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you (exhortation, persuasion, and insistence)
 - i. to walk in a manner worthy of God⁵
 - ii. who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

⁵ **Ephesians 4:1-3** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **Colossians 1:9** And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.