



**How Paul and the Team Does Ministry
Examples for us today
1 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

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One of the more interesting things I have discovered since stepping out in faith and launching Calvary Chapel Martin County, is the number of “ministries” that have discovered my email address or linked with me on social media and immediately want to “add value” to the enterprise. That term alone is enough to set warning bells and alarms off as it is characteristic of the genus, consultant. I worked as one of those for several years in the insurance industry. Unlike most consultants, the firm I was with, we had all actually been executives in the insurance industry and led organizations at one time or another. But there are many who are of the genus consultant, who never have and never will.



Many of these are well meaning folks who have excelled in school and have decided that their intellectual prowess needs to be expressed in telling others how to do their job. By the way, certain unnamed firms were famous for having staff who had never worked in the industry they were consulting in...ever. They also write popular business books explaining how to do their way of doing things and all you must do is follow their instructions. Simply engage their services, pay their fee and you too can be just as successful as they are, except, many simply aren't.

This exists in the church these days.

I have been approached by folks who want to help me grow the church, for a fee of course. Do bulk mailings to all new arrivals in the area every month, for a fee of course. Set up in depth marketing plans for us to determine the unmet needs of the Hobe Sound community in order to help meet those needs, for a fee of course.

I have also been "offered" assistance on addiction ministries, youth ministries, children ministries, how to podcast daily, and my personal favorite, I was offered to be shown how to set up security from someone who took a class and worked a couple of years in law enforcement. When I thanked him and told him the size of our fellowship, he disappeared and has not come back.

In other words, we have many today, just as in Paul's day, who were going from town to town and trying to tell believers in this new faith, just how they should really do it, for a fee of course.

This had become so large of problem for the newly birthed churches that Paul had to address it and he does so here by comparing and contrasting how he and the team does ministry versus those slick pros who roll into town with the cards, radio spots, foot teams and slick marketing. Yeah, we haven't done that either. But get this, Jesus had gone to the cross only 20 or so years prior.

It didn't take Satan long to figure out next steps post resurrection.

Satan declared war and was out to kill believers wherever he could. He also began undermining the faith by whispering in the ears of many false teachers, various doctrinal aberrations such as Gnosticism, or legalism in the form of Judiazers. Some impersonated as apostles.

Paul and the team will be reminding the flock in Thessalonica just how they came into town and how they operated very differently from others. In fact, he will be saying how they did not act, implying that others were doing what they did not do.

1 Thessalonians 2:1–8

"For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our reception among you was not in vain, but after we had already suffered and been treated abusively in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not intending to please people, but to please God, who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is our witness—nor did we seek honor from people, either from you or from others, though we could have asserted our authority as apostles of Christ. But we proved to be gentle among you. As a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children, in the same way we had a fond affection for you and were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us." (NASB 2020)

The truth of the matter is that by the time Paul and Silas showed up in town, they were a mess physically. Both of them were being actively tended to by Doctor Luke who was traveling with them, and they had at least one young man, Timothy, along to help as well.

The trip from Philippi was 100 Roman miles by foot and may have taken a 3 days or so. The distance being traveled as well as the stops required to tend to the injuries sustained most likely ate into the day. The two cities along the Egnatian Road they passed through were each about 30 miles apart. We are not told if the team stopped and ministered. Normally, they would stop at a synagogue first and there may have not been one until arriving in Thessalonica.

Acts 17:1 “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.” (ESV)

Amphipolis



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

As Paul and the team entered Amphipolis, they also would have seen the Lion of Amphipolis standing guard as it had since the 4th Century BC.



(Bolen, Lion of Amphipolis, 4th c BC 2012, Used with Permission)

Apollonia



(Bolen, Apollonia from the north 2012, Used with Permission)

We have very little of Apollonia to look at since excavations only started there on 2000 and there is simply not much to see at present. But there is the lake. “Still, it remained a major trade and travel route, and Apollonia often became a stopping point along the way for travelers.” (Peach 2016)

As Paul and the team arrived, they looked, to the people of Thessalonica, like just another traveling team of orators. At this time, oratory and rhetoric was a highly respected spectator sport. “As far back as the ancient Greeks there were those who made their living by traveling from city to city giving speeches. They were highly respected persons, the stars of their day. Amphitheatres were built, at least in part, for this ‘spectator sport.’ Speeches were presented in a dramatic oratorical fashion that was impressive. This type of presentation was doubtless in the mind of the Apostle Paul as he explained his manner of speaking to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, contrasting it to the expectations of the day.” (Hamilton 2007, 336-337)

Paul knew he was not a polished orator like many of those who were traveling about at the time. Even the church would have it star preacher, Apollos. But Paul was dealing with expectations versus reality.

When I was in High School, I competed in oratory. Yes, there is active competition that takes place at the High School level and the collegiate level.

I met a lot of very different people competing all over the state of California. I also learned about the problem of bias as well. If your topic is one that is political, social, or emotional in content, you win or lose based on the bias of the judge. If the judge was liberal, and most were, and you came across as supporting a liberal idea, you had a leg up on possibly winning. But if you were conservative in your approach, or even talked about the Lord, then you were doomed to lose.

This level of competition was the same among professional traveling orators in the Roman Empire and earlier in ancient Greece.

There was a format to be followed, a lifestyle to be followed, and followers to be attracted. And all of this = cash.

This is really no different than what we see today with popular music and traveling musicians who roll into town to perform a concert. There are expectations to be fulfilled and the local papers many times even go



so far as having someone attend to critique the concert and compare it with last time and with other artists.

Traveling orators were not that much different from that.

Traveling orators were common in the area. "The world of Paul's day was deeply enamoured with the public oratory of the virtuoso rhetors known as 'sophists'. Because Christianity spread its message in part by means of speeches, the canons of rhetoric would have been used to judge its preachers' performances by at least some of their hearers in the East of the Roman empire. Christian missionaries themselves needed to determine their attitude to the use of classical rhetoric for preaching." (Winter 1993, 55)

This is not much different than what we see today in the church. Thanks to radio, television, the occasional crusade hitting town and now podcasts, people have their favorites. No longer are you limited to who the Pastor of your church is or the occasional guest speaker who rolls into town. Now we all can be compared with folks who are home with the Lord such as Dr. McGee and Thru the Bible Radio. Or those who have podcasts or television ministries that no longer even require broad cast stations to be seen.

We can enjoy the word 24/7 now. We can also listen to the "stars" as they teach and then turn right around and ask our own pastor why his examples aren't as dynamic.

Here is the thing, we all speak and minister differently. I can honestly say I am not trying to copy anyone. I am exhausted enough just being me. But do we need to be excellent at what we do since we are being compared? Indeed, but excellence in all things for Jesus, not for comparison purposes.

I find I now worry about recording levels for audio and ensuring the right bitrate is used for podcasting. Then there is livestreaming and encoding as well as the quality of the image. We live stream currently in 750p but record in 4K for Sundays. I use a green screen and loops for background too, as most think I am in the backyard or at the beach.

We have one camera, should we be using a switcher and multiple cameras? Sure. But that all takes \$\$ as well as people serving in production. How do we deal with being compared to the big church ministry with the staff and budget; to do what we are doing with just the pastor and a teeny tiny budget? We are not in competition.

Zechariah 4:6

"Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts." (ESV)

Paul had the same issue.

He was being compared, constantly, to the best of the Greek orators and philosophers who have passed through town. Then as time went on, he was compared to various preachers passing through town, and some of them were no better than the false teachers we have today who teach everything but the gospel using all the tools the world can supply to command an audience.

Marketing was everything, even then and it all began with how you entered town. Normally you would not come in injured, bruised, and appearing that you had been chased out of the last place you were in, like Paul and Silas looked as they entered Thessalonica.



As I have learned, there is also a supposed method or methods for starting and planting a church too, depending on which book you read.

I am amazed though that these books by “experts” for the most part, do not talk about the necessity of prayer and calling from the Lord being paramount. Hobe Sound is unincorporated Martin County, where I have lived for over 20 years. This is where we have been called to minister, yet I have already been counseled by others that based on the name, Calvary Chapel Martin County, it doesn’t matter where we meet. But based on the Lord, it does.

Paul and others who were spreading the gospel had to decide “in advance whether they would observe any of the conventions related to the initial ‘coming’ of orators into a city in the first century and their professional conduct as teachers and declaimers. The ‘entry’ was crucial because by it a reputation could be secured in public life and orators could recruit fee-paying pupils or ‘disciples’ as they were often called.” Paul had already established how he did this. He took advantage of his Jewishness and former Jewish celebrity cache rapidly fading away. (Winter 1993, 56)

Acts 17:2–3

“And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”” (ESV)

This methodology was not unusual to the Jews of the day. They had teachers, also known as scribes or rabbis in the synagogue.

“Ordination by laying on of hands later accompanied the successful completion of the course of study. Most scribes were married, in observance of the command associated with the creation in Gen 1:28, and were involved in manual work in order to earn their living, since they received no remuneration for teaching.” (Balz and Schneider 1990-, 259-260) The Torah provided for the upkeep of Levites and Priests, not rabbis.

This was not to be the case with the church. Paul knew that.

1 Corinthians 9:13–14

“Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.” (ESV)

Paul and his team though had decided not to seek support from those they were teaching. That is not the way the world would operate. He and the team would have to earn the right to be heard by speaking as a traveling teacher in a Jewish manner but also begin to engage gentiles in the marketplace, just as traveling orators would.

Professional orators had long attracted criticism because of what was judged to be their unethical conduct. These had by no means abated in Paul’s day. So, some of what we see when Paul discusses his conduct and that of the team is to combat some of the general opinion in the marketplace of the day. (Winter 1993, 60)

Televangelists had such a poor reputation after several very public moral failings in the 80’s and 90’s, that many a ministry that considered moving into television, paused to rethink. The internet changed all that.

Now, for less than \$1,000, you too can sound like you are an expert on whatever you want to talk about and podcast about. Now, false teaching sounds more authoritative. With some electronic magic, they



can now podcast or videocast their message and get thousands of views. Subscribe now to their site, for a fee of course.

This cash drive was no different in the time of Paul. This is not the last time Paul will bring up the issue of support, giving and the church.

Plutarch also noted that some rhetors and sophists were motivated by pecuniary interests. Orators clearly needed to defend themselves against the charge of greed. Some argued that people only value the things for which they pay and therefore it was not improper to charge fees. (Winter 1993, 61)

Paul knew he had entered a stronghold of Satan, and a battle was on hand. He and the team had just been one on one with the enemy in Philippi. They entered ministry in Thessalonica as if nothing had happened in the last town.

1 Thessalonians 2:2–6

“but after we had already suffered and been treated abusively in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not intending to please people, but to please God, who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is our witness—nor did we seek honor from people, either from you or from others, though we could have asserted our authority as apostles of Christ.” (NASB 2020)

Paul and Silas did not hide the injuries or color the story of what took place in Philippi. They probably pointed the injuries out during their teaching. Boldly proclaiming the word and being opposed from others from almost the very beginning was normative for Paul and the team. What did this look like, Paul is responding to the charges.

A durable scholarly tradition understands this section to be an apology in which Paul defends himself and his colleagues against actual charges that were being made against them in Thessalonica. Although no charges are cited, this approach employs the technique of mirror reading, assuming that Paul's denials respond to actual accusations, that he represents himself as he does in this section because he is being misrepresented by opponents in Thessalonica. (Boring 2015, 79)

It would be the Jews who would attack, and once they have him out of town, continue to attack and persecute and even kill or attempt to do so. But Paul points out that they started off speaking boldly about Jesus. The Greek word here is ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα (from parrēsiazomai) which means to “express oneself freely, speak freely, openly, fearlessly...have the courage, venture... deal openly (boldly)” (Arndt, et al. 2000, 782)

This term would be one familiar to those used to traveling orators. It was “frequently used of the freedom of speech considered an essential virtue of the authentic Hellenistic teacher. The paragraph continues with several echoes of the claims made by such traveling philosopherteachers, who found it necessary to distinguish themselves from uneducated charlatans who roamed about, crowd pleasers who passed themselves off as legitimate teachers, fleecing their audiences and moving on.” (Boring 2015, 81)

Paul was bold, but that simply reflects the boldness of Jesus. Here is the thing we also need to remember as we see this boldness, the Holy Spirit, when we speak out for Him, gives us the same boldness as our Lord. This is part of the fulfilling His prophetic word to us in John 14:12, “I tell you the solemn truth, the person who believes in me will perform the miraculous deeds that I am doing, and will perform greater deeds than these, because I am going to the Father.” (NET 2nd ed.)



When Jesus spoke, it was with boldness only possible because He knew God was with Him. God is with us too.

Paul and the team boldly told the truth no matter how hard it was to hear. What was said was clear with no intent to deceive.

Transparency was important to Paul and should also be important to us as well. As we follow Jesus, the world should see Him, not us. We are nothing more than sinners saved by grace and given time, the world can and will find multiple reasons why they should not listen to any of us. We are fallible, but Jesus, He is perfect. We too have been approved by God simply because we are united to and in Christ. We live differently as a result.

It is tough not being politically correct these days. If we stick with the scriptures and not the culture, then we will indeed come under attack, be canceled, demeaned and now, in some places, persecuted. We don't agree with the culture that God winks at sin, has changed His mind on sexuality or creation, and has placed self-fulfillment at the top of the how to have a good life pyramid.

We are not in it for the money. We are not in it to receive praise from the world. We are in it to hear, "well done good and faithful servant."

When it is all about Jesus, it truly is all about Jesus. We have His mind because the Holy Spirit lives in us and as such, He too has entrusted you and me with the gospel. We to desire to please God.

As we enter in the stadium of service, we expect to see those there who are in support of the ministry the Lord has given us. But what do we do if the only one there and applauding, is Jesus Christ.

We should all be like the little boy who is performing on stage with others for the very first time in his life. He's scared and uncertain so as he walks out on stage, he is looking for his father. Why? Because that is someone who he knows always supports him no matter what.

When I see Jesus and no one else, there is no more fear, I'm good because I now have all the support I need. That is what it means to be approved by God.

Romans 8:38–39

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (CSB)

Paul later reminds Timothy to minister no matter what "and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day." (2 Timothy 1:12, CSB)

1 Thessalonians 2:5–6

"For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is our witness—nor did we seek honor from people, either from you or from others, though we could have asserted our authority as apostles of Christ." (NASB 2020)

Paul and the team told them of their need for salvation. This means they were told they were sinners that Jesus died for. How do I know that? Paul told us.



1 Corinthians 15:1–5

“Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve.” (NLT)

Being told you are a sinner is not flattering. Plutarch nailed it.

On Flattery

One mode of protection, as it would seem, is to realize and remember always that our soul has its two sides: on the one side are truthfulness, love for what is honourable, and power to reason, and on the other side irrationality, love of falsehood, and the emotional element; the friend is always found on the better side as counsel and advocate, trying, after the manner of a physician, to foster the growth of what is sound and to preserve it; but the flatterer takes his place on the side of the emotional and irrational, and this he excites and tickles and wheedles, and tries to divorce from the reasoning powers by contriving for it divers low forms of pleasurable enjoyment. (Plutarch 1927, 327-329)

Genuine compliments are not flattery but affirmation and builds up the one you are talking to without any benefit being sought for yourself. But flattery is all about manipulation. Jude diagnosed this for us, Paul is saying that this is not how they operated. “...salespeople may flatter buyers, even when the “goods” for sale are religious. That kind of misleading flattery ruins souls.” (Barton 1995, 256) We call them false teachers.

Jude 16

“These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want.” (NLT)

Yes, there were gentiles who were saved because of the work of Paul and the team in the short time they were there but it was not due to flattery. Yes, some were of high station in life, but that was not the goal of the ministry. There was not a strategy team meeting with Paul, Silas and Timothy to strategize just what they would need to do to see some “large donors” sign on by making salvation attractive to them. But that does happen in some places today, usually over chicken dinner. Trolling for pledges is a real thing.

They also did not insist on their positions and authority being noticed.

It is popular today to announce some star power traveling ministry speaker who is coming to town; by the way, they just want your money. The invitation to come announces the power they will exhibit in the meeting and the apostolic authority they will exhibit as they do ministry.

They have titles, from whom we do not know. But if you sign up for their podcast and website and then donate \$XX per month you will be on the inside track to blessing and you will receive a link to a special prayer that I just for you via email.

Then look out for the “love bombing” that takes place via the mail as you begin receiving the ever present, ministry letter. The problem, discerning from those ministries which are real versus the fake.

I say that because there are some excellent ministries who have also relied on some of the consultants telling them how to grow their ministry.



Just continue to Acts 17:11 everyone.

“Evangelicals have their cult-heroes and cult followings. This is true both inside and outside the local church. We have our groupies who pine after their “Christian rock stars.” Such stars are given almost infallible status, at least by their devoted fans, and if they are not careful, they may begin to believe what blogs, fans, and fellow superstars say.” (Akin, et al. 2013) In Calvary Chapels? Yes, and we have seen some of those “stars” go down in the flames of infidelity, bullying, and believing that somehow, they deserved it all.

Paul is making it clear; he did not operate that way. “In other words, it was pure in its content and in its intent. It was pure in the sense that there was no deceit or, literally, no error. There was no uncleanness or impurity of motive either.” (Walvoord 2007, 21)

Paul has outlined for us, those things he did not do. The accusations are all false.

Paul loved the flock that the Lord gave him there in Thessalonica. He has the heart of a pastor and loves the sheep.

1 Thessalonians 2:7–8

“But we proved to be gentle among you. As a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children, in the same way we had a fond affection for you and were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.” (NASB 2020)

Paul knows what Jesus said would be a defining characteristic of believers, to love one another. Here Paul tells them of his love for them and we already know his level of success because, as we learned in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, this unconditional love was evident in the body.

This congregation was the one given to Paul by the Lord, and he took that seriously. From the team's ministry, they were saved, and he tells us that from his perspective, the resulting relationship is the same as that between a mother and her nursing child.

Being in ministry, for the team, was personal. They were not simply “doing a job” for pay. Sharing the gospel was not a one-time thing but also included discipleship and ongoing commitment to see new believers grow further in the Lord. Doing life together.

Unfortunately, we see this becoming a rare thing in churches. Too many see their positions on a church staff as jobs and not ministries.

This then is seen and copied by the flock. Also, those teachers, group leaders and worship leaders serving in a church suffering these issues simply copy what is modeled to them. Some, not all, will think that is normative for the church.

I remember, as a college group leader, having to deal with a “minister” who had that mindset. I needed some clarification on a point I was preparing to teach, I did not want to say something that was not supported by him.

I was not used to operating in a denominational environment and wanted to make sure I would be “politically correct” as a quasi-Southern Baptist. But it was after office hours, and he never returned phone calls left on the answering machine.

As a result, I went forward with what I knew from the evidence I had in front of me.



I worked and was also doing grad school and yes, I did indeed say something that was not politically correct to say in “that” church.

The problem was simple, he was on paid staff but acted like an employee, not like a servant of Jesus Christ. He literally demanded that I observe his office hours. But I work? Too bad, don’t call them at home, because they are an employee, not a shepherd.

For me, I no longer wished to serve in that church at all and once my commitment was over that semester, I stopped serving.

Soon, the entire body reflects the attitude of a hired hand, love is now an obligation, but only when I need to reflect it, like on Sunday or midweek.

Everyone looks good, but good and dead at the same time. The love is gone.

Revelation 3:15–21

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth. For you say, ‘I’m rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,’ and you don’t realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I advise you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be zealous and repent. See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. “To the one who conquers I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (CSB)

All of us are shepherds and sheep. Parents, you shepherd your family. Sunday school teacher, group leader, worship team member, you are shepherding chunks of the flock on behalf of the King. The Pastor or pastors are indeed a shepherd and carries a huge responsibility, but it is all of us as the church exercising our spiritual gifts as we do life together that makes things truly happen.

John 10:11–13

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.” (NRSVue)

Paul and the team love the sheep. They have invested, heavily, in their well-being and they are concerned about them. This exists in some places today. There are still places where the word is taught, the sheep are fed and loved and are healthy, growing, and replicating. Healthy sheep make healthy sheep.

This does not mean that the way the team operated was like a bunch of amateurs. Yes, they intentionally went against the grain for traveling speakers, but that was on purpose as their goals were not the same as the world. They were intent on making disciples, not feeding the bottom line with subscribers. They wanted to see new followers of Jesus Christ, not new followers of the Apostle Paul and Silas Tent Meeting Miracle Healing Ministry. What they did was the level best possible in excellence for King Jesus, and that is what we desire to do as well.

Ministry is messy. We are all fallen, and we all make mistakes. Paul knew that. He knew that sheep are smelly and like to run off on their own from time to time. But he also knew they needed loving continual care and that was his calling as a shepherd.



The problem with some churches today is this, the sheep are being driven, not led. And they are being driven to a pasture that might not be the best for them.

You simply do not care for the sheep by making unreasonable demands of them for your own convenience. Sheep have no concept of office hours. Sheep are sheep and when they are young, they need lots of love and care in order to mature.

Paul knew that and being forced away after just a few weeks was intensely disturbing to him and the entire team.

Here's the question, how dedicated was the team to the mission? What does it mean to minister with Paul?

Long hours and tent making.

1 Thessalonians 2:9–12

“For you recall, brothers and sisters, our labor and hardship: it was by working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, that we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how devoutly and rightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” (NASB 2020)

Paul reminds them that he and the team not only worked hard to tell them about Jesus, but they all had second jobs as well to pay for the ministry as well as for their own support. Paul uses the terms labor and hardship. “The two terms connote not just hard work but also the fatigue and pain associated with it. Instead of demanding money and support from them, they “worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone.” We know that the Philippian church sent money to help them (Phil 4:15–16), but they had to work as well.” (Osborne 2018, 45)

Odds are that they did ministry while working. People would come by to see what they were selling, and they would work while talking about Jesus. “There is evidence that this was permitted behavior by philosophers, and Paul, Silas, and Timothy likely proclaimed the gospel and engaged in discussions with people while working with leather. Still, the demands of the two meant they possibly had to begin before dawn and work past sunset, the normal hours for manual labor.” (Osborne 2018, 45-46)

John 13:34

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” (ESV)

Paul, Silas and Timothy were motivated by agape love. “Yet, for the sake of the gospel of God and out of love for the Thessalonians, most of whom were ordinary laborers, the burden had been gladly borne.” (Hendriksen and Kistemaker 1953-2001, 66)

For those in ministry today, we forget the example of Paul. This destroys the idea of church ministry being a 9 to 5 kind of a job. I am not advocating anything like the hours I used to work in business. 60-hour work weeks is not healthy for anyone long term. But 35-hour work weeks is not healthy for the sheep.

The ministry of the church is done by all the members of the body, not just the pastor or other members on staff if the church can support a staff. For Paul and the team, they are motivated by their love for



Jesus and for the flock He has given them. The hours no longer mattered because it no longer seemed like work to them.

In light of the charges, Paul asks the Thessalonians to remember just how he and the team acted while they were there. "Here the implication is that they trained and instructed the Thessalonians as a responsible father disciplines his children." (Constable 1985, 695)

As new believers, they were now subject to the love of Christ as well as the love of His servants, Paul and the team.

They are all now brothers and sisters, the team's spiritual children and they wanted to see them grow and become mature in Christ. This is called discipleship which Paul had been unable to follow up on since they were chased from town. His heart is still there, and he wants them to remember how the process began while they were still with them.

The goal of our discipling others is the same as Paul, "so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." (1 Thessalonians 2:12, NASB 2020)

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