

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
I Thessalonians: Discipling Afflicted New Christians
Part II: Encouraging Afflicted New Believers In Recalling God's Power In The Disciplers
B. God's Certifying Power Seen In The Disciplers' Treatment Of The Discipled
(1 Thessalonians 2:5-12)

I. Introduction

- A. As we noted before, afflicted Christians often need assurance that those who disciple them are God's true servants, for trials can easily shake the weak to doubt their disciplers, and thus their words.
- B. One notable way to reassure such afflicted new converts is to remind them of the way their disciplers have treated them, for such treatment bears significance as to their spiritual credibility.
- C. Paul and his ministry team exemplified quality treatment of those discipled as follows, setting the standard for all God's servants to follow if they would demonstrate that they are God's true servants:

II. God's Certifying Power Seen In The Disciplers' Treatment Of The Discipled, 1 Thessalonians 2:5-12.

- A. As we learned in our previous lesson, in 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Paul claimed his ministry team had not sought to please men as would ministerial deceivers, but to please God Who tests their hearts.
- B. To give evidence of their validity as God's true servants, Paul added that they had not used flattery to try to manipulate the Thessalonians as if they were deceptive, self-serving teachers, 1 Thessalonians 2:5a.
- C. Another signal of their credibility was the way Paul's team had not tried to get his listeners to give them material possessions or money, 1 Thessalonians 2:5b. This is a very realistic, relevant sign, for material greed is a hallmark characteristic of false teachers according to Philipppians 3:17-19.
- D. Paul added that he and his ministry team did not seek the praise of men, whether it be from Paul's readers or from anybody else that his readers could observe, even though Paul and his team could have made demands of them and the others under the authority they had as Christ's apostles, 1 Thessalonians 2:6a,b.
- E. Rather, going beyond not being demanding, Paul's team exhibited great graciousness, 1 Thess. 2:7-9:
 - 1. In contrast to using their office as apostles to demand a following (verse 6), Paul claimed his team had been as gentle among his readers as a nursing mother was with her children, 1 Thessalonians 2:7 ESV.
 - 2. Indeed, Paul's team had been "affectionately desirous" of his readers, "(a)n unusual word indicating the yearning love of a mother for her children," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to 1 Thess. 2:8.
 - 3. This affection and gentleness left Paul's team willing not only to share with the Thessalonians the Gospel of Christ, but to impart their very persons unto them, for the Thessalonian believers had become very dear unto the Apostle and to his ministry team, 1 Thessalonians 2:8b.
 - 4. This considerate attitude had been exemplified in deed: Paul and his team had worked night and day to earn their own livelihood so as not to be a financial burden to the Thessalonian believers, and that while they were proclaiming the Gospel unto them, 1 Thessalonians 2:9.
- F. Accordingly, Paul's team had conducted themselves as separate (holy) from sin and worldliness, as righteous and blameless in conduct so that no one could even charge them with misconduct, and this all indicated they were true servants of God, 1 Thessalonians 2:10.
- G. Also, Paul's team had taken oversight of these believers much like a responsible father does his children in that they exhorted each of their hearers, encouraging and charging them to walk worthy of God Who had called them unto the attaining of His own kingdom and glory, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 ESV.

Lesson: *Paul's ministry team signaled they were God's messengers by how they treated those they discipled: namely, (1) they had not used flattery to manipulate, (2) they had not tried to extract material possessions out of their hearers, (3) they had not sought the praise of men even though they had the authority as Christ's apostles to demand their hearers respect them, (4) they had expressed great gentleness (5) and affection for their hearers (6) seen in their work to bear their financial burdens and not burden their hearers, (7) they had lived holy, (8) righteous, (9) blameless lives and (10) responsibly overseen their hearer's welfare in charging them to walk worthy of God Who called them to His glory.*

Application: *(1) If those who disciple us act as Paul's ministry team did to the Thessalonians, may we realized they are of God, and (2) may we who disciple rely on the Holy Spirit to act like Paul did.*