

A Model of Ministry to Follow
1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Introduction: Acts 17 tells us that the Apostle Paul was forced to flee the city of Thessalonica and the new church that he had planted there due to growing opposition. Jewish opponents had stirred up the crowds and the authorities against Paul. These were people who sought to destroy the work of Paul in Thessalonica. Apparently, one of the ways they sought to do this, once Paul left, was to try to discredit Paul. They wanted the new converts to believe that Paul was not what he really presented himself to be. And so in this chapter Paul makes a defense against such attacks. In this defense, we see a model of ministry and it is a model that we can follow.

Opening Discussion: When was a time that you were criticized? How did you handle it?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1. What general observations do you have of this passage?
2. What false charges were apparently being made against Paul and his ministry by his adversaries?
3. What are some of the positive qualities of Paul's ministry? How did he go about his ministry?
4. What evidence is there that Paul did not do what he did in ministry for selfish reasons?
5. In verse 12, Paul said that the goal of his ministry was that the Thessalonians would walk in a manner worthy of God. What does it mean to walk in a manner worthy of God?

Brian said:

The accusation was that Paul did what he did for selfish reasons. But he was not motivated by having a good looking ministry or by personal acclaim or by financial gain. Rather, he was motivated by two noble things. First, he was motivated to do that which was truly good and helpful for those to whom he ministered. It was all about the Thesalonians and what would truly help them grow up in Christ. . . .But secondly, I believe his highest motivation was. . . . God and His worth. He believed God deserved that people live lives that honor Him.

6. Where do you see these motivations in this passage?

Brian said:

As you think about your ministry or about our challenge to you to befriend someone who is far away from God or even about those people with whom you have influence, what motivates you in those areas? Do you serve and do what you do for the good of others and for the glory of God or would you have to say you really do what you do because of selfish reasons?

7. How would you evaluate your motives for serving?

8. What can you do to make sure you are trying to please God and not people in your areas of service?

9. Brian said that Paul went about his ministry with integrity, love and commitment. How do you see these things in the passage?

Brian said:

Do we have integrity in our ministries? Is everything appropriate, above board? Have we put away greed and selfish ambition? Is everything done with purity? Do we avoid flattery? Do we do what we do with integrity?

Do we do what we do because of love? Do we truly love those that we minister to . . . ? Do we truly love that person who is far away from God?

[And in terms of commitment] are we fully in? Or are we holding back in some way? I'm not saying you need to be in full time ministry, but what I am saying is that in the areas of influence that you have are you fully committed there? Are you willing to make sacrifices that would bear good fruit in the lives of others? Or are you only willing to give up to a level where it really doesn't cost you anything? Paul didn't do that; he was fully committed.

10. How would you evaluate yourself in these areas of integrity, love and commitment?

11. Where do you sense the most need for growth?