

Wenstrom Bible Ministries
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**First Thessalonians: 1 Thessalonians 2:5-God is a Witness that Paul, Silvanus
and Timothy Never Flattered the Thessalonians Because of Greed**

Lesson # 21

1 Thessalonians 2:1 For you yourselves in contrast to those who oppose us, possess the conviction brothers and sisters that our reception which was among all of you is by no means characterized as being without results. 2 But in fact, although we previously suffered, yes, we were verbally and physically abused in Philippi as each one of you are well aware of, for our benefit we courageously communicated the one and only gospel originating from the one and only God (the Father) in the presence of each of you by means of our God's (the Spirit) power in the face of great opposition. 3 For our appeal was absolutely never from error, nor motivated by impurity nor by means of deception. 4 In fact, on the contrary, just as each one of us are approved by this God to be entrusted with communicating this gospel, so each of us are speaking as absolutely never pleasing people but rather God, who does test our hearts. 5 So therefore, each one of us never at any time conducted ourselves with flattering speech as each one of you are well aware of, in fact, nor motivated by greed-God is a witness. (My translation)

The statement here in 1 Thessalonians 2:5 presents an inference from the previous statement in 1 Thessalonians 2:4.

This indicates that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy communicated the gospel to the Thessalonians to please God rather than people “so therefore” they never appeared with flattering speech, nor with a motive for greed.

In other words, these three communicated the gospel to the Thessalonians in order to please God and never people which was evidenced by the fact that they never appeared to them with flattering speech nor motivated by greed.

1 Thessalonians 2:5 is actually making a reference to one of the responsibilities of the pastor-teacher in relation to the body of Christ, namely, exemplifying the Christian way of life or in other words, he is to set example of Christ-like behavior.

The pastor-teacher has four responsibilities that are the means by which he tends and shepherds the flock of God: (1) Study (2 Tim. 2:15) (2) Teach (1 Tim. 4:13) (3) Pray (Acts 6:1-4) (4) Set an Example (Phlp. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; 1 Tim. 4:6-13; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3).

Now, as we noted, 1 Thessalonians 2:5 asserts that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy never at any time conducted themselves with flattering speech when interacting with the Thessalonians.

These men did not tell the Thessalonians what wonderful people they were but rather they told them the truth that they were sinners by nature and by practice.

Consequently, they were under the wrath of God.

They told them that in order to avoid the wrath of God they must trust in His one and only Son Jesus Christ as their Savior.

As was the case in 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:5 contains the phrase *kathōs oidate* (καθὼς οἴδατε), “**as each one of you are well aware of.**”

In verse 2, this expression pertains to information that the Thessalonian Christian community would be familiar with and accept as fact.

They were “well aware of the fact” that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy suffered undeservedly and specifically they were verbally and physically abused for communicating the gospel in Philippi prior to visiting in Thessalonica.

Now, here in verse 5, the expression speaks of the Thessalonians being “well aware of the fact” that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy never at any time conducted themselves with flattering speech when interacting with them.

“**Greed**” in 1 Thessalonians 2:5 pertains to an arrogant, aggressive, inordinate and insatiable desire to accumulate wealth or more material possessions without any regard for the rights of others and irrespective of need.

In Colossians 3:5, Paul instructed the Colossian Christian community to appropriate by faith their identification with Christ in His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session at the right hand of the Father in order to protect themselves from the sin of greed, which is characterized as idolatry.

Therefore, since 1 Thessalonians 2:5 reveals that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy did not conduct themselves with a pretext produced by greed, we can infer that they never committed the sin of loving money.

In First Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7, the apostle Paul stipulated that in order for the man with the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher to be ordained to hold the office of overseer, he must be characterized as someone who is not greedy or loves money.

In First Timothy 3:8, Paul taught that those who desired to serve in the office of deacon also must be characterized as not greedy individuals.

In 1 Timothy 6:3-10, Paul instructs Timothy to warn the rich in the Ephesian Christian community about the consequences of loving money.

The problem of Christians loving money was not only a problem in Ephesus for Timothy but also for Titus on the island of Crete according to Titus 1:11.

Greed of those teaching false doctrine is condemned in other places in the New Testament (Hebrews 13:5; Titus 1:10-11; Jude 4-16).

In 1 Peter 5:1-2, Peter warned his fellow elders to shepherd the flock of God voluntarily according to the will of God rather than for sordid gain.

In Second Timothy 3:2, the apostle Paul makes eight assertions about unrepentant, apostate Christians living during the church age, one of which is that they will be lovers of money.

Now, 1 Thessalonians 2:5 concludes with Paul, Silvanus and Timothy asserting that God the Father is a witness to the fact that they never conducted themselves with flattering speech when interacting with the Thessalonians and they never conducted themselves motivated by greed.

Several times in his writings Paul has identified God as his witness (cf. Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phlp. 1:8).

These men are essentially stating that the Thessalonians were not the only ones who could attest to the godly behavior of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, but also God could do so as well.

God knew their motives when interacting with the Thessalonians, which 1 Thessalonians 2:4 alludes to when it mentions that God tests their hearts.