



## “Marks of a Godly Minister, & Ministry” (I Thessalonians 2)

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Intro: The people who put my NIV Bible together have labeled this chapter with the heading “Paul’s Ministry In Thessalonica.” And from what we learn from this chapter about Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica, I have chosen this title for my message: “Marks of a Godly Minister, & Ministry.” So God has provides help in this section not only for every Christian personal, but for churches and ministries corporately. Read the text.

### I. SATANIC OPPOSITION (v.18b)

\* See Eph.6:12

\* Over the years people have encouraged me for my transparency. So if I can be transparent once again, let me share my present struggle with the enemy. I struggle these days with mental fatigue. Next month I will have been here at CCSP 29 years. It has always been hard for me to put together messages, but it’s harder these days than ever before. Some days after hours of reading and study, nothing materializes in the way of a message. So what do I do? In answering that question, let me share something John MacArthur said at a pastor’s conference 27 years ago. I’ve been to a lot of pastor’s conferences over the years, and most messages I’ve heard I’ve forgotten. But every now & then a minister says something that just sticks. This has stuck with me now for all these years. During a question and answer session at this conference, someone asked a question related to what a pastor/minister does when a message isn’t materializing, even after vigorous study. And this was John MacArthur’s answer: “You keep your derrière in the chair until the job is done.”

\* What’s your struggle in the Christian life right now? Christians/ministers who are doing something that is making a difference will face opposition, so don’t be surprised when you do, even after 29 years in the saddle.

### II. A PERSEVERING SPIRIT (vv.1-2)

\* Refer to Acts 16 and Paul’s experiences in Phillipi...When Paul arrived in Thessalonica, the wounds on his back from Phillippi were still fresh.

\* I Cor.4: 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

\* You can see what a minister is made of by what it takes to cause him to quit. Perseverance proves the genuineness of one's commitment to the kingdom of God and the calling of Jesus Christ...

\* Adoniram Judson labored diligently for six years in Burma before he baptized a convert. At the end of three years he was asked what evidence he had of ultimate success. He replied, "As much as there is a God who will fulfill all His promises." A hundred churches and thousands of converts answered his faith.

### III. PASSION FOR PEOPLE (vv.6b-12)

#### A. Expressed As A Mother Caring For Her Children (vv.7-10)

\* A mother does not work for pay, nor does she punch a clock. What drives her is a sincere love for her children and family.

#### B. Expressed As A Father (vv.11-12)

\* A godly father understands that children will never mature unless they are pushed to endure the pressures of life, and so he encourages self-denial, sacrifice, service to others...

#### C. Expressed As A Brother (v.9)

\* Paul did not present himself as one who was "above them." He was willing to work side by side with them. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...

#### D. It Was People That Paul Anticipated Presenting Before Jesus Christ One Day (v.19).

\* Another piece of a message I will never forget is Jim Cymbala commenting on this verse. He referred to his best-selling book and how ridiculous it would be to try presenting that to God who wrote the Bible. He mentioned how his wife had won several Grammy awards for her musical accomplishments, but that God was not impressed with those. Then he tells a story of a girl dominated by the devil, who was miraculously set free in one of the church services at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, concluding the story with heart-felt emotional anticipation of presenting this girl before the Lord as a fruit of the ministry God had graciously given him.

\* You think God is impressed with this building. How foolish for me to stand before Jesus Christ one day and glory in this church building.

\* Acts 7:47... But it was Solomon who built a house for him. <sup>48</sup>Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?' <sup>50</sup>Did not my hand make all these things?'

\* Acts 17: <sup>24</sup>The God who has made the world and all things which are in it, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

\* Col.1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

\* Note: We are called individually & corporately to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. See Philippians 1:4-5; 4:17.

#### IV. GIVING THE WORD OF GOD A PRIMARY PLACE IN MINISTRY (vv.13-16).

\* If you examine some ministries, you will notice that the Word of God does not have the primary place in their ministries...People often thank me for preaching & teaching the Word of God, usually adding that the church they grew up in never taught the Word, or that they've had a hard time finding a church that just taught the Word...

\* John 17:17

\* It was the truth of the gospel in the Word that saves people, & it's the Word that sanctifies them...

#### V. PURE MOTIVES (vv.3-6a)

##### A. The Mystery In Motives

\* Motive: something, as a need or desire, that causes a person to act.

\* Prov.16: All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord.

\* I Cor.4: 5Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

\* Jeremiah 17:9-10a

##### B. Impure Motives

###### 1. Flattery

- This is exaggerated or insincere praise; Absalom did this when over a four year period he won the hearts of the people away from his father David and to himself (II Sam.15:2-6); The Jewish teachers of the law & the chief priests tried flattering Jesus in order to catch him in something he said (Luke 20:20-22); The people of Tyre & Sidon flattered Herod (Acts 12:19b-22). Acts 17:4b tells us that "not a few prominent women" were among those saved through Paul's ministry in Thessalonica. Paul could have "battered these women up" in order to get something from them.

###### 2. The praise of men

- Paul did not "batter people up" through flattery, and he could not be battered up by others through flattery/praise.

- Prov.27:21 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.

- Mark 11:27-33; Matt.14:3-11; Matt.27:15-26
- John 5: 44 How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?
- Gal.1:<sup>10</sup> Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

### 3. Envy & rivalry

- See Philippians 1:15-18
- This actually happened in the first Baptist church of Judea (see John 3:22-27).
- It was the downfall of Israel's first king (I Sam.18:6-9)
- Some ministers are competing with other ministers, some churches are in competition with other churches.

### 4. Greed

- I Peter 5: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;
- Examples of greed in a minister: Gehazi, in taking a gift from Naaman (2 Kin. 5:20–27); I Tim.6:5; Luke 16:14-15.

### 5. Lust

- The word translated "impure motives" is the word for "uncleanness," and is used not only for greed, but lust as well. I find it interesting that a lot of false teachers are in some way connected with sexual sin (see II Peter 2:13b-15; Numbers 22; Rev.2:15, 20; II Tim.3:5-6. Another example is Islam's heaven, 72 virgins awaiting you in paradise. I don't what women have to look forward to in that kind of heaven! 72 virgins, and yet Jesus said that in the true heaven they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. So the heaven I'm headed to has something awaiting me that's better than sex. I can't wait!

## CONCLUSION

\* Lord, we're not surprised by opposition, grant us a persevering spirit in the face of that opposition. Renew daily our passion for people, because we know it was for people that Jesus died. Help us not to preach our opinions or religious traditions, but be true to the pure Word of God. And examine our hearts, and purge us of any impure, unclean motives. We thank you for your Word, and for hearing our prayer, because we pray in Jesus name. AMEN.