

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

1st Thessalonians

Jan 2017

Model for Ministry: *Motive and Method*

INTRODUCTION

What was one of your most memorable *failures* in your senior high days?

EXPLORATION

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

*Note: False teachers assailed Paul, as they often do other faithful shepherds, by impugning his character and challenging his authority. Thus, the opening statement of chapter 2 is a polemic in defense of Paul's ministry to the Thessalonians. Opponents of his ministry were lying to the church in Thessalonica concerning his integrity and sincerity. They hoped to ruin the new church by destroying its confidence in the person God had used to found it. That group probably included both unbelieving Jews and pagan Gentiles, both of whom were extremely hostile to the gospel.*¹

1. What did Paul do when he arrived in Thessalonica? **Acts 17:1-4**
2. Under what conditions and from what background did Paul share the gospel with the Thessalonians? (vs.2) **Acts 16:22-24; 37**. Why was his sharing so bold?
3. Would Paul say that hostile reaction to the Gospel is a sign that truth was being taught? Vs. 2 What can we learn from Paul's experience? **Eph 6:10; 2 Cor 12:9-10**
4. How did Paul know that he was doing what God had called him to do? Vs 4 **Acts 9:15** How do we?
5. What do images of a mother (Vv. 7-8) and a father (Vv. 9-12) teach us about ministry?
6. What did Paul want the Thessalonians to remember about his time with them? Vs. 9
7. How did the Thessalonians receive the Word of God? **2 Cor 2:16**
8. How can we judge the success or failure of our (& God's) work with people?
9. How could Paul's example of perseverance in the face of persecution have encouraged them?

APPLICATION

- What will you imitate from Paul's example as you are ministering to others?
- What will you do this week to ensure that you are trying to please God and not other people?

The world often fails to recognize true success. In 1902, the poetry editor of Atlantic Monthly returned a stack of poems with this note, "Our magazine has no room for your vigorous verse." The poet was Robert Frost. In 1905, the University of Bern turned down a doctoral dissertation as "irrelevant and fanciful." The writer of that paper was Albert Einstein. In 1894 an English teacher noted on a teenager's report card, "A conspicuous lack of success." The student was Winston Churchill. Another student once graduated 42nd out of a class of 58 at military school. This student with so little potential was named Napoleon Bonaparte. The world often fails to see the potential for success that lies within a man or a woman, so what do we care what they think. God knows us and He sees our true potential.

¹ MacArthur, J. (2002). *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (32-33). Chicago: Moody Press.