

## THE BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

### "Paul's Method At Thessalonica" (2)

#### 1 Thessalonians 2:4-8

#### Introduction

1. There is a popular dichotomy today: maintain your message, but change (be flexible) with your method. Unfortunately, this is a manmade arrangement. It is utterly inconsistent with the Word of God.

2. Paul's message is stated (vv. 1-2; cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-5). His method is also (vv. 3-10). There is no hedging or dichotomy suggested. The two concepts are complementary. They are inseparable. To dilute either is to lower the value and profit of both. There is a peculiar "becoming" which relates to both.

3. On this account, Paul was called for God's work (v. 4). He was considerate in his ministry (v. 3). He was a very conscientious worker (v. 3). To these qualities, others are added. Consider them:

#### 1. TOWARD GOD

a. He was pleasing v. 4. The plain facts are given. He did not seek to please men. The generic term for "man" is used. The present tense verb shows that he did not make it his practice to get the praise of men. His eyes were always on the Lord. After all, it is the Lord by Whom he is tested or approved. It is not the intent of any true servant of God to satisfy fickle men. They must please the Lord, the unchangeable God.

b. He was submissive v. 5. Paul knew that covetousness of heart could only be known by God. He appeals to Him as his witness. Just two words in the Greek New Testament, but worth a billion to a man who reckons with them. Mark how Paul appealed to God as a solemn witness unto veracity (Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8).

#### 2. TOWARD HEARERS

##### a. Negatively

1) No flattery v. 5. This is a word only used once in the New Testament. It means selfish conduct. It relates to cajolery, blandishment, fawning. It means to satisfy the vanity of hearers. It means to ingratiate yourself to some person or persons. In essence, it is to portray too favorably, hence to charm or beguile. Paul denies any contact with such a method of approach.

2) No covetousness v. 5. Paul's preaching was not employed to cover up some sort of avaricious design. The ministry was no place for this. It only is a place to

glorify the Lord. The word "cloke" means to "show forth" or to "speak forth." It is used of something to mislead others to one's real motives (John 15:22). It is rendered "color" in Acts 27:30. It is often a pretext for greediness. It is a fatal sin for preachers or any servant of God. Paul, therefore, disclaims any involvement in unlawful gain.

b. Positively 1) Gentle v. 7. It is noted that Paul uses the verb to "become" and not the simple form "to be." It was a process with Paul among them. He had a growth situation for himself with these believers. The word "gentle" means kindness of parents toward children, as both the context and the uses of the term indicate this (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24). The illustration of this attitude is given of a nurse (actually a "nurse-mother") who suckles and nurses her children. The verb form of this noun for "nurse" means to "nourish." It is also rendered "feed" (Luke 23:29) and "bring up" (Luke 4:16). What a fine illustration of "gentleness."

2) Affectionate vv. 7, 8. This is taken from the verb "cherish." This verb means "to keep warm with tender love." In the LXX, it is used of birds warming their young with their feathers (Deut. 22:6). Both this verb and the one for "nourish" above are used by Paul when he wrote to Ephesus (5:29). This concept is supported by the verb "affectionately desirous" (v. 8a). It means to "long for." Paul had a real emotional attachment for the believers at Thessalonica

### 3. TOWARD SELF

a. No glory v. 6. While some would limit this to the concept of a stipend or finances, the word may well include the idea of dignity and pre-eminence. In any case, Paul repudiates all worldly ambition. He could have done this by extraction "out of" them (so the Greek preposition) or "from" two others as channels (so the Greek prepositions). The point is well taken: Paul wanted nothing from anyone for himself.

b. No burden v. 6. Paul was in a position to make himself a burden, a weight, but he didn't. This may be limited to temporal matters. He disclaimed his rights here (cf. Neh. 5:1-18). He was the "apostle of Christ" and therefore waived his privileges (cf. 2 Cor. 8, 9, 11:7). Verse 5 shows he denied any unlawful gain and here he disclaims any lawful gain. He was a selfless person indeed in his work.

Conclusion It is true that the man makes the ministry. But the man, the message, and the methods are all interwoven. God give us a ministry in all of our activities in the Lord as work which magnifies Him. Paul's method is surely to be emulated.