

The Profile of a Godly Leader

1 Thessalonians 2

INTRODUCTION:

- Group Discussion: Your family moves to a new area and now needs to find a new church. Obviously, the pastor of that church is a major part of the decision you are now facing. One of the most important factors in a pastor is that they must be a Godly leader. Describe the profile of a Godly Christian leader. *Allow for discussion...*
- Paul was a missionary church-planter. He was very interested in discipling Godly leaders to lead the young churches that he had worked so hard to establish. In chapter 2 of 1 Thessalonians Paul provides for us a profile that every Godly Christian leader should strive for.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. A Leader's Character **Before** the People (vs. 1-12)
 - a. Paul tells us what it takes to be an effective, Godly, leader. Before we look at what Paul describes, what does the world say that makes a good leader? *Discuss*. It should not surprise us that Paul's profile looks nothing like what one often finds today.
 - b. It begins with the leader's *character* – not their talents, charisma, and charm – but their character. He offers three marks which demonstrate strong character:
 - c. First, a leader's character must possess a strong sense of **mission** (vs. 1-2).
 - i. They do not want their work "to be in vain" (1).
 - ii. A strong sense of mission keeps a leader "bold" in the face of persecution (2).
 - d. Second, a leader's character must possess a pure sense of **motive** (vs. 3-6). Paul had three specific charges brought against him:
 - i. He was accused of being wrong in **message** (4). The Thessalonians tested the Apostle's calling. God will always test you before He trusts you.
 - ii. He was accused of being wrong in **motive** (3a, 5). A leader must strive for the purest of motives.
 - e. Third, he was accused of being wrong in **method** (5-12).
 - i. Paul refused to offer "flattering words" to present the Gospel. True Gospel preaching isn't always well-received, but it is what each person needs most and can never be compromised.
 - ii. Paul states that even when he was preaching the hard truths of the Gospel, he remained gentle among them and used three metaphors to illustrate a Godly leader's character:
 1. A leader is like a **mother** (vs. 7-8).
 2. A leader is like a **laborer** (vs. 9-10).
 3. A leader is like a **father** (vs. 11-12).
2. A Leader's Character **With** the People (vs. 13-16)
 - a. A leader's ability to communicate with the people is also significant (13). Two types of hearers exist to which the leader must communicate.
 - i. The first type is the **receiver**. We see in verse 13 that some welcomed their teaching, and the result was that the Word worked in their hearts effectively.
 - ii. The second type of hearer is the **rejecter** (vs. 14-16). Paul experienced that in his day just as we experience it in our times today. In fact, our problem is not so much a lack of the Word of God as much as the lack of spiritual receptivity to it.

- b. Paul goes on to make the point that those who receive the Word can expect a certain response from the world who has rejected the Word.
 - i. First, they can expect **persecution** (vs. 14b-15).
 - ii. Second, they can expect to be **silenced** (vs. 16).
3. A Leader's Challenges **Beyond** the People (vs. 17-20).
 - a. Paul had a unique challenge in that he was having to lead this church from a distance. This is seen at the beginning of verse 17. We see how God works when things are not ideal.
 - b. We see Paul's **absence** (17). This was far from ideal. His enemies would have undoubtedly taken advantage of his absence. We see in Paul responded emotionally. The phrase "taken from you" literally means "orphaned." Some translations actually say "torn from you." It hurt Paul emotionally to be away from his flock.
 - c. We see Satan's **hindrance** (18). The word "hindered" is a military term, often used when enemies cut up a road, making it impossible to pursue them. Satan is the great enemy of the believer, always cutting up our pathway as we follow Jesus.
 - d. We see God's **presence** (19). God's presence offsets and hindrance Satan may bring!

APPLICATION:

- Go back and discuss how this outline differs from how even the Christian "world" promotes leaders today. How well do we measure up?
- What is true for the Godly leader is true for the Godly man or woman. Go back through the outline and apply the same truths to our own lives. How do we measure up?
- How should this outline challenge our thinking of what makes a good spiritual leader/preacher? Our TV's are littered with access to churches and pastors and Christian leaders. How do apply God's criterion to them?

TO DO: Read and study 1 Thessalonians 3 before next Sunday!