

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2026**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS**

Message Seven

The Pattern of the Apostle Paul

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 2:1-12

1 Thes. 2:1-12—For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain. ²But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle. ³For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; ⁴But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. ⁵For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. ⁸Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. ⁹For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe, ¹¹Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying, ¹²So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

I. The best way to shepherd people, to cherish and nourish them, is to give them a proper pattern; we need to give ourselves to the Lord so that He has the full way to constitute us with Himself to make us patterns to the believers—2 Thes. 3:9:

2 Thes. 3:9—Not because we do not have the right, but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern that you might imitate us.

A. The Lord Jesus was a pattern of enjoying the Father as the richest grace and the sweetest love to live because of the Father for the Father's glory—John 6:57; Isa. 7:14-15; John 5:19; 4:34; 17:4; 14:10, 24; 5:30; 7:18; Luke 22:27; Matt. 20:26-28. **John 6:57**—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

Isa. 7:14-15—Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵He will eat curds and honey until he knows how to refuse evil and choose good.

John 5:19—Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

John 4:34—Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

John 17:4—I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.

John 14:10—Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

John 14:24—He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

John 5:30—I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 7:18—He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.

Luke 22:27—For who is greater, the one who reclines *at table* or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at table*? But I am in your midst as the one who serves.

Matt. 20:26-28—It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

- B. The Lord Jesus charged us to learn from Him, taking Him as our pattern in being constrained by the Father's will and abounding in the work of carrying out the Father's will—11:28-30; cf. Eph. 4:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:58.

Matt. 11:28-30—Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

cf. Eph. 4:20-21—But you did not so learn Christ, ²¹If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

cf. 1 Cor. 15:58—Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

- C. Peter said that Christ left Himself as a model so that we may follow in His steps to become His reproduction—1 Pet. 2:21.

1 Pet. 2:21—For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;

- D. Peter charged his fellow elders not to exercise lordship over the believers but to be a pattern of the flock—5:1-3.

1 Pet. 5:1-3—Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:

²Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly; ³Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

- E. John said that “even as He is, so also are we in this world”; this refers to Christ, who lived in this world a life of God as love and who is now our life so that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is—1 John 4:17; cf. 3:3, 7.

1 John 4:17—In this has love been perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, *so* also are we in this world.

cf. 1 John 3:3—And everyone who has this hope *set* on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

cf. 1 John 3:7—Little children, let no one lead you astray; he who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous;

- F. Paul was a pattern to the believers of living Christ for His magnification by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ for the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:16; Phil. 1:19-21a; Gal. 6:17.

1 Tim. 1:16—But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.

Phil. 1:19-21—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Gal. 6:17—Henceforth let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus.

- G. Paul charged Timothy to be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity—1 Tim. 4:12.

1 Tim. 4:12—Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

- H. Paul charged Titus to present himself as a pattern of good works, speaking with healthy words the healthy teaching of God’s economy as the supply of life to people—Titus 2:7-8; John 6:63; 1 John 5:16a.

Titus 2:7-8—Concerning all things presenting yourself as a pattern of good works: in your teaching *showing* incorruption, gravity, ⁸Healthy speech that cannot be condemned, that he who opposes may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

1 John 5:16—If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

- I. Paul said that we should be imitators of God, as beloved children—Eph. 5:1; Matt. 5:48.

Eph. 5:1—Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children;

Matt. 5:48—You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- J. Paul said that we should be imitators of him, as he was of Christ—1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16; 1 Thes. 1:5-6; 2 Thes. 3:9; Phil. 3:17.

1 Cor. 11:1—Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.

1 Cor. 4:16—I exhort you therefore, Become imitators of me.

1 Thes. 1:5-6—For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit,

2 Thes. 3:9—Not because we do not have the right, but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern that you might imitate us.

Phil. 3:17—Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe those who thus walk even as you have us as a pattern.

II. Paul said that he and the apostles with him were a pattern of the glad tidings that they spread—“you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake”—1 Thes. 1:5b:

- A. In the church the most important thing is the person; the person is the way and the person is the Lord’s work; what you are is what you do—John 5:19; 6:57; Phil. 1:19-26; Acts 20:18-35; Matt. 7:17-18; 12:33-37.

John 5:19—Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

John 6:57—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

Phil. 1:19-26—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²²But if *I am* to live in the flesh, if this to me is fruit for *my* work, then I do not know what I will choose. ²³But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *this is* far better; ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith, ²⁶That your boast may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming again to you.

Acts 20:18-35—And when they came to him, he said to them, You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you all the time, ¹⁹Serving the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials which came upon me by the plots of the Jews; ²⁰How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring

them to you and by *not* teaching you publicly and from house to house, ²¹Solemnly testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance unto God and faith in our Lord Jesus. ²²And now, behold, I am going bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what will meet me there, ²³Except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in city after city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. ²⁴But I consider my life of no account *as if* precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more. ²⁶Therefore I testify to you on this day that I am clean from the blood of all men, ²⁷For I did not shrink from declaring to you all the counsel of God. ²⁸Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰And from among you yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears. ³²And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified. ³³I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my needs and to those who are with me. ³⁵In all things I have shown you by example that toiling in this way we ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Matt. 7:17-18—Even so every good tree produces good fruit, but the corrupt tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit.

Matt. 12:33-37—Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for by the fruit the tree is known. ³⁴Offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good man, out of his good treasure, brings forth good things, and the evil man, out of his evil treasure, brings forth evil things. ³⁶And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

- B. We need to follow the pattern of the apostles to pay more attention to life than to work—John 12:24; 2 Cor. 4:12.

John 12:24—Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

2 Cor. 4:12—So then death operates in us, but life in you.

III. Paul was a pattern to the believers of living and ministering Christ as the Spirit in his spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; Rom. 8:16:

1 Tim. 1:16—But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.

1 Tim. 4:12—Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

A. The Lord appeared to Paul to appoint him as a minister and a witness both of the things in which Paul had seen Him and of the things in which He would appear to Paul—Acts 26:16-19; cf. 1:8; 23:11; 20:20, 31.

Acts 26:16-19—But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this *purpose*, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you; ¹⁷Delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you, ¹⁸To open their eyes, to turn *them* from darkness to light and *from* the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. ¹⁹Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

cf. Acts 1:8—But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

cf. Acts 23:11—But in the night following, the Lord stood by him and said, Take courage, for as you have solemnly testified to the things concerning Me in Jerusalem, so also you must testify in Rome.

cf. Acts 20:20—How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring *them* to you and by *not* teaching you publicly and from house to house,

cf. Acts 20:31—Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.

B. Paul took Christ as everything—as his living, pattern, goal, and secret—Phil. 1:19-21a; 2:5-16; 3:7-14; 4:11-13.

Phil. 1:19-21—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Phil. 2:5-16—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. ¹²So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for *His* good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without murmurings and reasonings ¹⁵That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted

generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world, ¹⁶Holding forth the word of life, so that I may have a boast in the day of Christ that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.

Phil. 3:7-14—But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. ⁸But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count *them* as refuse that I may gain Christ ⁹And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God *and* based on faith, ¹⁰To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing *I do*: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, ¹⁴I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called *me* upward.

Phil. 4:11-13—Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. ¹²I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. ¹³I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

- C. Paul lived by the Spirit, walked by the Spirit, sowed unto the Spirit, and ministered the Spirit as a spiritual man who lived and served in his spirit—Gal. 5:16, 25; 6:8; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 2:13; Rom. 1:9; 8:16.

Gal. 5:16—But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Gal. 5:25—If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Gal. 6:8—For he who sows unto his own flesh will reap corruption of the flesh, but he who sows unto the Spirit will of the Spirit reap eternal life.

2 Cor. 3:6—Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

1 Cor. 2:15—But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

2 Cor. 2:13—I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.

Rom. 1:9—For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

- D. Paul did not base his confidence on himself but on God, who raises the dead (2 Cor. 1:9), which includes related matters such as conducting himself in the

world not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God (v. 12) and being one with the unchanging Christ of the faithful God (vv. 18-20).

2 Cor. 1:9—Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

2 Cor. 1:12—For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.

2 Cor. 1:18-20—But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not yes and no. ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you through us, through me and Silvanus and Timothy, did not become yes and no, but *our word* has become yes in Him. ²⁰For as many promises of God as *there are*, in Him is the Yes; therefore also through Him is the Amen to God, for glory through us *to God*.

- E. Paul was attached to Christ, anointed and sealed by His Spirit, and captured, subdued, and led by Christ to scatter His savor—vv. 21-22; 2:14-16.

2 Cor. 1:21-22—But the One who firmly attaches us with you unto Christ and has anointed us is God, ²²He who has also sealed us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

2 Cor. 2:14-16—But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place. ¹⁵For we are a fragrance of Christ to God in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing: ¹⁶To some a savor out of death unto death, and to the others a savor out of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

- F. Paul was filled with Christ so that he spontaneously ministered Christ to those whom he contacted, inscribing Christ in their hearts with the Spirit of the living God to make them living letters that conveyed Christ—3:3-6.

2 Cor. 3:3-6—Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh. ⁴And such confidence we have through Christ toward God, ⁵Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

- G. Paul was infused with Christ to shine forth Christ in the ministry of the new covenant, which is the ministry of the Spirit, the ministry of righteousness, and the ministry of reconciliation—vv. 7-11, 18; 4:1; 3:6; 5:18-20.

2 Cor. 3:7-11—Moreover if the ministry of death, engraved in stone in letters, came about in glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to gaze at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, *a glory* which was being done away with, ⁸How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory? ⁹For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory. ¹⁰For also that which has been glorified in this respect has not been glorified on account of the surpassing glory. ¹¹For if that which was being done away with was through glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

2 Cor. 4:1—Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;

2 Cor. 3:6—Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 5:18-20—But all things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹Namely, that God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself, not accounting their offenses to them, and has put in us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as God entreats *you* through us; we beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.

- H. Paul was being transformed into the image of the Lord from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit, by beholding and reflecting like a mirror His glory with an unveiled face—3:16-18.

2 Cor. 3:16-18—But whenever *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

- I. Paul lived and did everything in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:1-6, 15-16; Col. 2:19.

Rom. 12:4-5—For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1 Cor. 12:12-27—For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. ¹³For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member but many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be? ¹⁸But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed. ¹⁹And if all were one member, where would the body be? ²⁰But now the members are many, but the body one. ²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³And those *members* of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely *members come to* have more abundant comeliness, ²⁴But our comely *members* have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked, ²⁵That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another. ²⁶And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with *it*. ²⁷Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually.

Eph. 4:1-6—I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, ²With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, ³Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: ⁴One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Eph. 4:15-16—But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, ¹⁶Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

IV. Paul was a proper pattern to the believers by feeding his spiritual children with his own living of Christ—1 Thes. 2:1-12; 2 Cor. 1:23—2:14; 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; Acts 20:28:

1 Thes. 2:1-12—For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain. ²But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle. ³For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; ⁴But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. ⁵For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. ⁸Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. ⁹For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe, ¹¹Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying, ¹²So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

2 Cor. 1:23—2:14—But I call on God as a witness against my soul that to spare you I have not yet come to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are fellow workers with [you] for your joy; for by faith you stand.

¹But I determined this for myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. ²For if I cause you sorrow, who then is the one who makes me glad, except the one who is made sorrowful by me? ³And I wrote this very thing *to you* that when I come I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice, having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. ⁴For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you through many tears, not that you would be made sorrowful but that you would know the love which I have more abundantly toward you. ⁵But if anyone has caused sorrow, he has not caused me to sorrow, but in part (lest I lay *too heavy* a burden) all of you. ⁶Sufficient for such a one is this punishment by the majority, ⁷So that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with excessive sorrow. ⁸Therefore I

exhort you to confirm *your* love toward him. ⁹For to this end also I wrote, that I might know your approvedness, whether you are obedient in all things. ¹⁰But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ; ¹¹That we may not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes. ¹²Furthermore, when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and a door was open to me in the Lord, ¹³I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia. ¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.

2 Cor. 11:28-29—Apart from the things which *have not been mentioned, there is this*: the crowd of *cares* pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?

1 Cor. 9:22—To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak. To all men I have become all things that I might by all means save some.

Acts 20:28—Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

A. The apostles not only preached the gospel but also lived it; their ministering of the gospel was not only by word but also by a life that displayed the power of God, a life in the Holy Spirit and in the assurance of faith—1 Thes. 1:5.

1 Thes. 1:5—For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

B. The saints in Thessalonica became imitators of the apostles; this led them to follow the Lord, to take Him as their pattern, thus making them a pattern to all other believers and imitators of the churches of God—vv. 6-7; 2:14.

1 Thes. 1:6-7—And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷So that you became a pattern to all those who believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.

1 Thes. 2:14—For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, for you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, even as they also from the Jews,

C. The apostle Paul stressed repeatedly the apostles' entrance toward the believers; this shows that their manner of life played a great role in infusing the gospel into the new converts—1:5, 9; 2:1:

1 Thes. 1:5—For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Thes. 1:9—For they themselves report concerning us what kind of entrance we had toward you and how you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God

1 Thes. 2:1—For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain.

1. The apostles were struggling and speaking the gospel to the Thessalonians in the boldness of God—v. 2.

1 Thes. 2:2—But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle.

2. The apostles were free from deception, uncleanness, and guile—v. 3.

1 Thes. 2:3—For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile;

3. The apostles were first tested and approved by God and then were entrusted by Him with the gospel; hence, their speaking, the preaching of the gospel, was not of themselves to please men but of God to please Him; God proved, examined, and tested their hearts continually—v. 4; Psa. 26:2; 139:23-24; 2 Cor. 1:12; 6:6; 7:3.

1 Thes. 2:4—But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts.

Psa. 26:2—Examine me, O Jehovah, and try me; Test my inward parts and my heart.

Psa. 139:23-24—Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxious thoughts; ²⁴And see if there is some harmful way in me, And lead me on the eternal way.

2 Cor. 1:12—For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.

2 Cor. 6:6—In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love,

2 Cor. 7:3—I do not say *this* to condemn *you*, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for *our* dying together and *our* living together.

4. The apostles were never found with flattering speech nor with a pretext for covetousness—1 Thes. 2:5:

1 Thes. 2:5—For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness.

- a. To have any pretext for covetousness is to peddle or adulterate the word of God—2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2.

2 Cor. 2:17—For we are not like the many, adulterating the word of God for profit; but as out of sincerity, but as out of God, before God we speak in Christ.

2 Cor. 4:2—But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every conscience of men before God.

- b. It is also to pretend to be godly for the sake of gain—1 Tim. 6:5; Titus 1:11; 2 Pet. 2:3.

1 Tim. 6:5—Perpetual wranglings of men corrupted in mind and deprived of the truth, supposing godliness to be a *means of gain*.

Titus 1:11—Whose mouths must be stopped, who overthrow whole households, teaching things for the sake of base gain, which they ought not to do.

2 Pet. 2:3—And in covetousness, with fabricated words, they will make merchandise of you, for whom the judgment of old is not idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

5. The apostles did not seek glory from men—1 Thes. 2:6a; Gal. 1:10:

1 Thes. 2:6—Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ.

Gal. 1:10—For am I now trying to win the assent of men or of God? Or am I seeking to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of Christ.

a. To seek glory from men is a real temptation to every Christian worker; many have been devoured and spoiled by this matter—cf. 1 Sam. 15:12. **cf. 1 Sam. 15:12**—Then Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, saying, Saul went to Carmel and has now set up a monument for himself, and he has returned and passed on down to Gilgal.

b. The fall of the archangel was due to the seeking of glory; he became God's adversary, Satan, because of his glory-seeking; anyone who seeks glory from men is a follower of Satan—Ezek. 28:13-17; Isa. 14:12-15; Matt. 4:8-10. **Ezek. 28:13-17**—You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, diamond, chrysolite, onyx, jasper, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald, with gold. The workmanship of your tambourines and your pipes was prepared with you on the day that you were created. ¹⁴You were the anointed cherub who covered *the Ark*; indeed I set you, *so that* you were upon the holy mountain of God; you walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. ¹⁶By the abundance of your trading they filled your midst with violence, and you sinned. So I cast you out as profane from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I cast you to the ground; I presented you before kings that they may look at you.

Isa. 14:12-15—How you have fallen from heaven, O Daystar, son of the dawn! How you have been hewn down to earth, You who made nations fall prostrate! ¹³But you, you said in your heart: I will ascend to heaven; Above the stars of God I will exalt my throne. And I will sit upon the mount of assembly In the uttermost parts of the north. ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. ¹⁵But you will be brought down to Sheol, To the uttermost parts of the pit.

Matt. 4:8-10—Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to Him, All these will I give You if You will fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, Go away, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.”

- c. How much we will be used by the Lord and how long our usefulness will last depend on whether we seek glory from men—cf. John 7:17-18; 5:39-44; 12:43; 2 Cor. 4:5.

cf. John 7:17-18—If anyone resolves to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. ¹⁸He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.

cf. John 5:39-44—You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. ⁴⁰Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. ⁴¹I do not receive glory from men. ⁴²But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. ⁴³I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. ⁴⁴How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that is from the only God?

cf. John 12:43—For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

cf. 2 Cor. 4:5—For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

6. The apostles did not stand on their own authority or dignity as apostles of Christ—1 Thes. 2:6b:

1 Thes. 2:6—Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ.

- a. To assert authority, dignity, or right in Christian work damages that work; the Lord Jesus, while on earth, gave up His dignity (John 13:4-5), and the apostle preferred not to use his right (1 Cor. 9:12).

John 13:4-5—Rose from supper and laid aside His outer garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself; ⁵Then He poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

1 Cor. 9:12—If others partake of this right over you, should not rather we? Yet we did not use this right, but we bear all things that we may not cause any hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

- b. If we follow this pattern, we will kill a deadly disease in the Body of Christ, the germ of assuming a position—Matt. 20:20-28.

Matt. 20:20-28—Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshipping and asking something of Him. ²¹And He said to her, What do you want? She said to Him, Say that these two sons of mine will sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your kingdom. ²²But Jesus answered and said *to them*, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink? They said to Him, We are able. ²³He said to them, My cup you shall indeed drink, but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but *it is for* those for whom it has been prepared by My Father. ²⁴And when the ten heard *this*, they were indignant concerning the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. ²⁶It shall not be so among

you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,²⁷ And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;²⁸ Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

7. The apostles cherished the believers and yearned over them as a nursing mother would cherish and yearn over her own children—1 Thes. 2:7-8; cf. Gal. 4:19; Isa. 49:14-15; 66:12-13:

1 Thes. 2:7-8—But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. ⁸Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us.

cf. Gal. 4:19—My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

Isa. 49:14-15—But Zion has said, Jehovah has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me. ¹⁵Can a woman forget her nursing child, That she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? Even though they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.

Isa. 66:12-13—For thus says Jehovah, I now am extending to her Peace like a river, And the glory of the nations Like an overflowing stream; And you will nurse, you will be carried on the hip, And you will be bounced on the knees. ¹³As one whom his mother comforts, So will I comfort you; And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.

- a. To cherish people is to make them happy, to comfort them, to make them feel that you are pleasant to them, easy to be contacted in everything and in every way.
 - b. To cherish people in our natural humanity is not genuine; we must cherish people with the Lord's presence as the charming factor, as the reality of resurrection.
 - c. Cherishing includes nourishing; to nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry of three stages—Eph. 5:29.
Eph. 5:29—For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
8. The apostles not only imparted the gospel of God to the Thessalonians; they also imparted their own souls—1 Thes. 2:8:
- 1 Thes. 2:8**—Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us.
- a. To live a clean and upright life (vv. 3-6, 10) and to love the new converts, even by giving our own souls to them (vv. 7-9, 11), are the prerequisites for infusing them with the gospel.
1 Thes. 2:3-6—For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; ⁴But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. ⁵For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from

men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ.

1 Thes. 2:10—You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe,

1 Thes. 2:7-9—But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. ⁸Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. ⁹For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

1 Thes. 2:11—Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying,

- b. Paul was willing to spend not only what he had but also himself, his very being, on behalf of the saints—2 Cor. 12:15.

2 Cor. 12:15—But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?

- 9. The apostles considered themselves as fathers in exhorting the believers to walk in a manner worthy of God, to have a walk that will enable them to enter into the kingdom of God and usher them into the glory of God—1 Thes. 2:11-12.

1 Thes. 2:11-12—Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying, ¹²So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.