



LESSON THREE

Kingdom Courage 1 Thessalonians 2

You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children[a] among you.

**Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,
encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.**

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way. For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

1. Why is being a “people pleaser” so dangerous? How has it gotten you or someone you know into trouble?

2. Take a few minutes and have everyone read Acts 16:16-34 to themselves. Then discuss all or some of the following questions:

- How did Luke describe the slave girl?
- What did Paul and Silas do to outrage the crowd?
- Why do you believe Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown in prison?
- Why were the prayers and songs from Paul and Silas so powerful?

3. In the video lesson, Nikko was talking about how bold Paul was before he became a Christian. She said, "God didn't take away Paul's boldness, He just showed him how to use his boldness for His glory." What other stories from Paul's life show his boldness?

4. The phrase "with the help of our God" in vs. 2 could literally be translated, "We were made bold by God." It carries the idea of "courage" or being courageous. Looking back on your life, share a time when God made you courageous.

5. According to vs. 13-14, what role did God's Word play in the lives of the Thessalonians?

6. Read Psalm 119:33-40. List the different ways that God's Word is described in these verses. According to these verses, how does God's Word help the believer?

7. The Thessalonians experienced persecution (vs. 14-15). Why is it natural for Christians to experience some form of opposition or persecution regardless of when and where they live? How have you experienced opposition for your faith?

8. Read vs. 19-20. In what ways are the Thessalonians Paul's hope, joy and crown? How does Paul's "taking pride in the Thessalonians" actually glorify God? How might we better take pride in the lives of others?

PERSONAL GROWTH

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 2 in a different Bible version every day this week (or listen to it on the YouVersion Bible app).
2. Choose a verse or more to memorize from 1 Thessalonians 2.
3. Do your own study on 1 Thessalonians 2! Read the entire chapter (once to yourself and once aloud). Then, write down your answers to the following questions about the passage:
 - Is there sin to avoid?
 - Are there mistakes to bypass?
 - Are there promises that God made?
 - Is there an attitude that is affirmed or not affirmed?
 - Is there a challenge that you should take?
 - Is there an example to follow or to not follow?
 - Is there a prayer to pray?
 - Is there a new thought on God?
4. After listening to Pastor Dudley's message, attending your Life Group meeting, and doing your own study of 1 Thessalonians 2, what is Paul's main point in 1 Thessalonians 2? Try writing down the main point in 1 sentence.