

# ***Spiritual Integrity***

## ***I Thess 2:1-6***

### ***Pt 2***

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. <sup>2</sup> But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. <sup>3</sup> For our exhortation *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

<sup>4</sup> But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup> For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness— God *is* witness. <sup>6</sup> Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

## **Introduction**

I'm not a pessimist, but that doesn't keep me from making a realistic assessment of the distressing state of current affairs in the visible church. The evangelical movement right now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, is in a spiritual condition not very much different from the medieval church just before the Protestant Reformation. Think about it. Luther had to deal with

Tetzel, the charlatan fund-raiser who went through Europe promising people miracles in return for money so that the Pope could build St. Peter's church in the Vatican. We've got at least a dozen Tetzels appearing daily on TBN, promising people miracles in exchange for money so that Jan Crouch can make the sets of their television studios gaudier than any room in the Vatican while she adds enough pink hair extensions to rival the Dome of St. Peter's. The medieval church was overrun with superstition and ignorance. We've got people reciting the prayer of Jabez every day who are convinced that it's a magic formula that will bring them wealth and good luck. The medieval church had Leo X and Machiavelli. We've got Bill Gothard and Gary Ezzo. The medieval church saw a decline in doctrine and morality in the church and a corresponding increase in corruption, scandal, and man-centered worship. All of that is true today. Worst of all, in the medieval era, the gospel was in eclipse and people were so woefully ignorant of biblical truth that men in Martin Luther's time could complete seminary and enter ministry without ever having learned "the first principles of the oracles of God." We're well on the road to that same situation today. Many seminaries are deliberately eliminating biblical and theological courses and replacing them with courses in business and marketing. And Christian leaders who call themselves evangelical are actually encouraging these trends.

Listen, for example, to Tony Campolo, arguing that today's evangelical seminary students need to be taught marketing savvy rather than theology and Scripture. This is from a book he co-authored with Brian McLaren, ironically titled *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel*. Yet Campolo himself has missed the point. He is actually arguing that church leaders should follow the culture and study marketing techniques rather than theology. And he suggests this would be a good thing. He writes:

What if the credits eaten up by subjects seminarians seldom if ever use after graduation were instead devoted to more subjects

they will actually need in churches—like business and marketing courses? It is *not* true that with a gifted preacher, a church will inevitably grow. Good sermons may get visitors to stay once they come, but getting folks to come in the first place [will] take some marketing expertise.

It was a marketing degree, not an M. Div., that Bill Hybels had when he launched the tiny fellowship that would one day be Willow Creek Community Church. It's not that Hybels is a theological lightweight, [but he's "brilliantly relevant"]—and the relevance comes not from giftedness or theological discernment, but from thoughtfully studying his congregation. As any good marketer would, Hybels deliberately surveys his people with questionnaires in order to determine what they worry about, what their needs are, what's important to them. . . . Then he schedules what subjects he will preach on in the coming year, and circulates the schedule to those on his team responsible for music and drama in the services.

The result is preaching that is . . . acutely *relevant*. But the process isn't something you'll learn in most seminaries. Maybe it's time that some business school courses find their way into seminary.

Now, I don't know where Tony Campolo has been for the past twenty-five years or so, but if his advice sounds the least bit fresh or novel to you, you haven't been doing much reading, and you haven't been paying attention to the drift of the church growth movement over the past three decades. What Campolo is suggesting is precisely what many evangelical seminaries started doing some twenty years ago. Pastors these days are carefully indoctrinated with the notion that they must regard their people as consumers. Religion is carefully packaged to appeal to the consumers' demands. There are marketing agencies that offer seminars for church leaders to teach them how to "brand" their churches to appeal to the most people. Most church leaders these days are therefore obsessed with opinion polls, public relations, salesmanship, merchandizing, and customer satisfaction. They

have been taught and encouraged to think that way by virtually every popular program of the past two decades.

In 1988 (seventeen years ago now), George Barna wrote a book titled *Marketing the Church*. It was published by NavPress—at the time a major mainstream evangelical publisher (a lot less mainstream these days). In that book, George Barna wrote, “The *audience*, not the message, is sovereign.” That was the basic idea. And it’s a notion that thousands of pastors and church leaders have uncritically imbibed—and it has been parroted in virtually every major book on church leadership up through and including *The Purpose-Driven Church*. The audience is sovereign. Their “felt needs” should shape the preacher’s message. Opinion polls and listener response become barometers that tell the preacher what to preach. That’s what Barna was calling for back in 1988. He wrote,

If [we are] going to stop people in the midst of hectic schedules and cause them to think about what we’re saying, *our message has to be adapted to the needs of the audience*. When we produce advertising that is based on the take-it-or-leave-it proposition, rather than on a sensitivity and response to people’s needs, people will invariably reject our message.

Compare that with the words of the apostle Paul, who (in [2 Timothy 4:2-5](#)) said, “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” What was Paul’s point? Do you think he would have agreed with Barna, who said we must adapt our message to the preferences of the audience, or risk having them reject the message?

No, Paul told Timothy: “But you . . . fulfill your ministry.” “Preach the word! . . . in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

*Time* magazine list of 25 influential evangelicals. That article by itself would have been enough to convince me the evangelical movement is in serious trouble. The list included people like T. D. Jakes, who denies the Trinity; former Lutheran-turned-Catholic priest Richard John Neuhaus; Joyce Meyer, the jet-setting charismatic prosperity-gospel preacherette; and Brian McLaren, the postmodern pastor who denies the authority of Scripture and wants to see the church make a radical break with just about everything that's rooted in historic Christianity. Thirty years ago, not one of those people would have even been included in a list of "evangelicals."

## **I. Our Boldness**

<sup>1</sup> For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. <sup>2</sup> But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

## **II. Our Purity**

<sup>3</sup> For our exhortation *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

## **III. Our Trustworthiness**

<sup>4</sup> But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

## **IV. Our Motivation**

<sup>5</sup> For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God *is* witness.

Many today believe that the effectiveness of preaching or evangelisms depends on you, or your cleverness, your ability to speak well or a great orator. We are so seduced by the popular movie star mentality that we believe the man makes the message.

There's a story in the biography of George Whitefield about a man named Thorpe, who was a bitter opponent of everything that is holy. He and a group of his friends—all of them young, rebellious thugs—conspired together to mock and oppose George Whitefield's evangelistic ministry while Whitefield was preaching in Bristol, England.

George Whitefield had severely crossed eyes, if you have ever seen a realistic likeness of him. And these guys used to refer to him as "Dr. Squintum." They called their little gang "The Hell-Fire Club," and they disrupted meetings, mocked Whitefield on the streets and in public places, and generally tried to make his ministry a reproach in their community. Whitefield's preaching had already made a deep and lasting impact in Bristol, and these young ruffians hated him for it. So this guy Thorpe got one of Whitefield's published sermons and took it to the local pub, where the "Hell-Fire Club" was gathered to drink together while they make a burlesque of Whitefield.

Thorpe was apparently pretty good at doing impressions, and he had all Whitefield's mannerisms and gestures down pat. So he stood in the center of this pub and crossed his eyes and began to deliver a derisive rendition of Whitefield's sermon. But in the middle of the sermon, the Word of God pierced his heart, and he suddenly stopped and sat down, trembling and broken-hearted. Right then and there, he confessed the truth of the gospel and gave his heart to Christ. His aim was to taunt and ridicule, but he accidentally converted himself! Or rather, the power of the Word of God penetrated his soul and cut him to the heart. He became a

preacher himself and quite an effective evangelist, because he knew so well the power of the Word of God to penetrate hardened hearts.

**Paul was not different,** According to Tradition, he was not necessarily pleasant to look at, short, large nose, and problems with his eyes. Even not a great speaker. Apollas was better they say.

Yet Paul said

## **I COR 2**

**2** And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. **3** I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. **4** And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

## **Jesus was the same.**

Scripture says there was nothing that would draw us to him as a man.

Yet the Bible says

## **MATT 7:28**

**28** And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, **29** for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

I believe we have to go back to the Word of God. I am concerned deeply that the medium is becoming the message in the church and that there is no message anymore. There's a new book out, fascinating book, comparing modern well-known preachers with the great preachers of the American Awakening, George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards. The difference is shocking. When Whitfield and Edwards preached, they preached theology. It was profound, it was deep, it was biblical and the message was the issue and the man was measured on the basis of how he squared with the Word of God. Today, the medium of communication has substituted for the message. And nobody seems to care what the message was, all they care about is...did we enjoy him?...frightening.

### **Flattering**

(**kolakeia** from **kolax** = a fawner) refers to cajolery which is an attempt to persuade by use of insincere speech or exaggerated praise. **Kolakeia** was a well-known secular Greek term for a practice despised as much as "boldness" was valued, and which is occasionally connected with financial gain. Flattery was a well-known, much despised practice in Paul's day.

**Kolakeia** contains the idea of deception for selfish ends. It is flattery not merely for the sake of giving pleasure to others but for the sake of self interest. It is deception by "slick" eloquence (sounds like many politicians we know doesn't it?) with the idea of winning over the listener's heart in order to exploit not edify.

**Hiebert** writes that...

Flattery does not simply mean complimentary words intended to tickle the ears of the hearers pleasurably. It is rather the smooth-tongued discourse of the orator aimed at making a favorable impression that would gain influence over others for selfish advantage...Paul denies



that he and his fellow workers had used the preaching of the gospel as a foil for securing selfish advantage.

**Flattery** is like soft soap...90 percent lye.

Only two groups of people fall for **flattery**—men and women.

A man's body is remarkably sensitive. Pat him on the back and his head swells.

We do not hate **flattery**, any one of us – we all like it. —C. H. Spurgeon

There is nothing reliable in what they say. Their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; They **flatter** with their tongue. ([Psalm 5:9](#))

They speak falsehood to one another; With **flattering** lips and with a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all **flattering** lips, The tongue that speaks great things ([Psalm 12:2-3](#))

A man who flatters his neighbor Is spreading a net for his steps. ([Proverbs 29:5](#))

### **John MacArthur**

*Armed with a "big business" mentality, many in the seeker-sensitive movement have replaced Bible-based sermons with anecdote-filled talks. After all, that's the stuff that sells. In light of this growing evangelical trend, John MacArthur examines what happens when preachers put the seeker before the Savior and abandon God's Word for ear-tickling entertainment.*

Everyone who knows anything about my ministry knows I am committed to expository preaching. It is my unshakable conviction that the ministry of God's Word should always be the heart and the focus of the church's ministry (1 Tim. 4:2). And proper biblical preaching should be systematic, expositional, theological, and God-centered.

Such preaching is in short supply these days. There are plenty of gifted communicators in the modern evangelical movement, but today's sermons tend to be short, shallow, topical homilies that massage people's egos and focus on fairly insipid subjects like human relationships, "successful" living, emotional issues, and other practical but worldly--and not definitively *biblical*--themes. Like the ubiquitous Plexiglas lecterns from which these messages are delivered, such preaching is lightweight and without substance, cheap and synthetic, leaving little more than an ephemeral impression on the minds of the hearers.

I recently hosted a discussion at the Expositors' Institute, a small-group colloquium on preaching hosted by the Shepherds' Fellowship. In preparation for that seminar, I took a yellow legal pad and began listing the negative effects of the superficial brand of preaching that is so rife in modern evangelicalism.

I initially thought I might be able to name about ten, but quickly my list had sixty-one entries. I've distilled them to fifteen by combining and eliminating all but the most crucial ones. Here they are, roughly in the order they occurred to me. This is what is wrong with superficial, marginally biblical preaching:

**1. It usurps the authority of God over the soul.** Whether a preacher boldly proclaims the Word of God or not is ultimately a question of authority. Who has the right to speak to the church? The preacher, or God? Whenever *anything* is substituted for the preaching of the Word, God's authority is usurped. What a prideful thing to do! In fact, it is hard to conceive of anything more insolent that could be done by a man who is called by God to preach.

**2. It removes the lordship of Christ from His church.** Who is the Head of the church? Is Christ really the dominant teaching authority in the church? If so, then why are there so many churches where His Word is not being faithfully proclaimed? When we look at contemporary ministry, we see programs and methods that are the fruit of human invention; the offspring of opinion polls and neighborhood surveys; and other pragmatic artifices. Church-growth experts have in essence wrested control of the church's agenda from her true Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Puritan forefathers resisted the imposition of government-imposed liturgies for precisely this reason: they saw it as a direct attack on the headship of Christ over His own church. Modern preachers who neglect the Word of God have yielded the ground those men fought and sometimes died for. When Jesus Christ is exalted among His people, His power is manifest in the church. When the church is commandeered by compromisers who want to appease the culture, the gospel is minimized, true power is lost, artificial energy must be manufactured, and superficiality takes the place of truth.

**3. It hinders the work of the Holy Spirit.** What is the instrument the Spirit uses to do His work? The Word of God. He uses the Word as the instrument of regeneration (1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18). He also uses it as the means of sanctification (John 17:17). In fact, it is the *only* tool He uses (Eph. 6:17). So when preachers neglect God's Word, they undermine the work of the Holy Spirit, producing shallow conversions and spiritually lame Christians--if not utterly spurious ones.

**4. It demonstrates appalling pride and a lack of submission.** In the modern approach to "ministry," the Word of God is deliberately downplayed, the reproach of Christ is quietly repudiated, the offense of the gospel is carefully eliminated, and "worship" is purposely tailored to fit the preferences of unbelievers. That is nothing but a *refusal* to submit to the biblical mandate for the church. The effrontery of ministers who pursue such a course is, to me, frightening.

**5. It severs the preacher personally from the regular sanctifying grace of Scripture.** The greatest personal benefit that I get from preaching is the work that the Spirit of God does on my own soul as I study and prepare for two expository messages each Lord's day. Week by week, the duty of careful exposition keeps my own heart focused and fixed on the Scriptures, and the Word of God nourishes me while I prepare to feed my flock. So I am personally blessed and spiritually strengthened through the enterprise. If for no other reason, I would never abandon biblical preaching. The enemy of our souls is after preachers in particular,

and the sanctifying grace of the Word of God is critical to our protection.

**6. It clouds the true depth and transcendence of our message and therefore cripples both corporate and personal worship.**

What passes for preaching in some churches today is literally no more profound than what preachers in our fathers' generation were teaching in the five-minute children's sermon they gave before dismissing the kids. That's no exaggeration. It is *often* that simplistic, if not utterly inane. There is nothing deep about it. Such an approach makes it impossible for true worship to take place, because worship is a transcendent experience. Worship should take us above the mundane and simplistic. So the only way true worship can occur is if we first come to grips with the depth of spiritual truth. Our people can only rise high in worship in the same proportion to which we have taken them deep into the profound truths of the Word. There is no way they can have lofty thoughts of God unless we have plunged them into the depths of God's self-revelation. But preaching today is neither profound nor transcendent. It doesn't go down and it doesn't go up. It merely aims to entertain.

By the way, true worship is not something that can be stimulated artificially. A bigger, louder band and more sentimental music might do more to stir people's emotions. But that is not genuine worship. True worship is a response from the heart to God's *truth* ([John 4:23](#)). You can actually worship *without* music if you have seen the glories and the depth of what the Bible teaches.

**7. It prevents the preacher from fully developing the mind of Christ.** Pastors are supposed to be undershepherds of Christ. Too many modern preachers are so bent on understanding the culture that they develop the mind of the culture and not the mind of Christ. They start to think like the world, and not like the Savior. Frankly, the nuances of worldly culture are virtually irrelevant to me. I want to know the mind of Christ, and bring that to bear on the culture, no matter what culture I may be ministering to. If I'm going to stand up in a pulpit and be a representative of Jesus Christ, I want to know how *He* thinks--and that must be my

message to His people, too. The only way to know and proclaim the mind of Christ is by being faithful to study and preach His Word. What happens to preachers who obsess about cultural "relevancy," is that they become worldly, not godly.

**8. It depreciates by example the spiritual duty and priority of personal Bible study.** Is personal Bible study important? Of course. But what example does the preacher set when he neglects the Bible in his own preaching? Why would people think they need to study the Bible if the preacher doesn't do serious study himself in the preparation of his sermons? There is now a movement among some of the gurus of "seeker-sensitive" ministry to trim, as much as possible, all explicit references to the Bible from the sermon--and above all, don't ever ask your people to turn to a specific Bible passage--because that kind of thing makes "seekers" uncomfortable. (Some "seeker-sensitive" churches actively discourage their people from bringing Bibles to church lest the sight of so many Bibles intimidate the "seekers.") As if it were dangerous to give your people the impression that the Bible might be important!

**9. It prevents the preacher from being the voice of God on every issue of his time.** **Jeremiah 8:9** says, "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord; so what wisdom do they have?" When I speak, I want to be *God's* messenger. I'm not interested in exegeting what some psychologist, or business guru, or college professor has to say about an issue. My people don't need my opinion; they need to hear what *God* has to say. If we preach as Scripture commands us, there should be no ambiguity about whose message is coming from the pulpit.

**10. It breeds a congregation that is as weak and indifferent to the glory of God as their pastor is.** "Seeker-sensitive" preaching fosters people who are consumed with their own well-being. When you tell people that the church's primary ministry is to fix for them whatever is wrong in this life--to meet their needs, to help them cope with their worldly disappointments, and so on--the message you are sending is that their mundane problems are

more important than the glory of God and the majesty of Christ. Again, that sabotages true worship.

**11. It robs people of their only true source of help.** People who sit under superficial preaching become dependent on the cleverness and the creativity of the speaker. When preachers punctuate their sermons with laser lights and smoke, video clips and live drama, the message they send is that there isn't a prayer the people in the pew could ever extract such profound material on their own. Such gimmicks create a kind of dispensing mechanism that people can't use to serve themselves. So they become spiritual couch potatoes, who just come in to be entertained, and whatever superficial spiritual content they get from the preacher's weekly performance is *all* they will get. They have no particular interest in the Bible, because the sermons they hear don't cultivate that. They are wowed by the preacher's creativity, manipulated by the music, and that becomes their whole perspective on spirituality.

**12. It encourages people to become indifferent to the Word of God and divine authority.** Predictably, in a church where the preaching of Scripture is neglected, it becomes impossible to get people to submit to the authority of Scripture. The preacher who always aims at meeting "felt needs" and strokes the conceit of worldly people has no platform from which to confront the man who wants to divorce his wife without cause. The man will say, "You don't understand what I *feel*. I came here because you promised to meet my felt needs. And I'm telling you, I don't feel like I want to live with this woman any more." You can't inject biblical authority into that. You certainly wouldn't have an easy time pursuing church discipline. That is the monster superficial preaching creates. But if you are going to try to deal with sin and apply any kind of authoritative principle to keep the church pure, you *must* be preaching the Word.

**13. It lies to people about what they really need.** In **Jeremiah 8:11**, God condemns the prophets who treated people's wounds superficially. That verse applies powerfully to the plastic preachers that populate so many prominent evangelical pulpits

today. They omit the hard truths about sin and judgment. They tone down the offensive parts of Christ's message. They lie to people about what they really need, promising them "fulfillment" and earthly well-being--when what people really need is an exalted vision of Christ and a true understanding of the splendor of God's holiness.

**14. It strips the pulpit of power.** "The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (**Heb. 4:12**). Everything else is impotent, giving merely an illusion of power. Human strategy is not more important than Scripture. The showman's ability to lure people in should not impress us more than the Bible's ability to transform lives.

**15. It puts the responsibility on the preacher to change people with his cleverness.** Preachers who pursue the modern approach to ministry must think they have the power to change people. That, too, is a frightening expression of pride. We preachers can't save people, and we can't sanctify them. We can't change people with our insights, our cleverness, by entertaining them, or by appealing to their human whims and wishes and ambitions. There's only One who can change sinners. That's God, and He does it by His Spirit through the Word.

So preach the Word, even though it is currently out of fashion to do so (**2 Tim. 4:2**). That is the only way your ministry can ever truly be fruitful. Moreover, it assures that you *will* be fruitful in ministry, because God's Word never returns to Him void; it always accomplishes that for which He sends it, and prospers in what He sends it to do (**Isa. 55:11**).

**Pretext for greed** - They did not use a "false front" nor "put on a mask to cover up greed". The KJV rendering of **a cloak of covetousness** paints a vivid picture. Paul declares that they did not preach among the Thessalonians in order to shake out whatever financial gain they could from them, trying all the while to hide this motive. He emphasizes that he never misused his apostolic office in order to disguise, conceal or to hide avaricious designs. Instead, he reminded them that the missionaries had worked with their own hands while among the Thessalonians so as not to be a burden on any of them ([1Th 2:9-note](#)).

### **Cloak**

**Pretext** (4392) (**prophasis** from **prophaíno** = to cause to shine before, to appear before, be apparent <> **pró** = before, + **phaíno** = to appear, to shine before. Vincent gives the origin as **pro** = before, in front of + **phemi** = to say, affirm) is that which is alleged as the cause, an allegation, plea. In other words it denotes something put forward for appearance to conceal what lies behind it.

There are 7 uses of **prophasis** in the NT...

**Matthew 23:14** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, even while for a **pretense** you make long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation.

**Mark 12:40** who (referring to the Scribes) devour widows' houses, and **for appearance's sake** offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation. (**Comment:** The hypocritical scribes looked good outwardly but this was only a sham and a cover for their internal greed and selfishness)



**Luke 20:47** who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation. (**Comment:** Exactly how they would **devour widows' houses** is not clear but could refer to foreclosing on mortgages, to excessive charges for services rendered, to eating with widows as a forced hospitality, or to insisting that widows make generous contributions to the religious causes advocated by the scribes.)

**John 15:22** "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have **no excuse** for their sin.

**Acts 27:30** And as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship, and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the **pretense** of intending to lay out anchors from the bow,

**Philippians 1:18** (note) What then? Only that in every way, whether in **pretense** or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.

**Calvin** rightly observes that...

Where greed and ambition hold sway, innumerable corruptions follow, and the whole man turns to vanity. These are the two sources from which stems the corruption of the whole of the ministry.

**Adam Clarke** warns...

Hear this, ye that preach the Gospel! Can ye call God to witness that in preaching it ye have no end in view by your ministry but his glory in the salvation of souls? Or do ye enter into the priesthood for a morsel of bread, or for what is ominously and impiously called a living, a

benefice?...Is God witness that, in all these things, ye have no cloak of covetousness? . . . But woe to that man who enters into the labour for the sake of the hire! he knows not Christ; and how can he preach him?"

## V. Our Glory

<sup>6</sup> Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Paul is not saying he never received honor from men or that he had no right to receive it, but he does deny that he required such a reaction from those to whom he preached the gospel. In short, not only were they not motivated by money, neither were they motivated by a desire for praise from men. As noted in the last two verses of this chapter, Paul's focus was not on present glory but future glory of the converts in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming. ([1Th 2:19](#), [20](#)-notes)

**Hiebert** rightly notes that...

There is the constant possibility that the preacher may use his preaching ministry as a means of building up public esteem for himself rather than conveying God's message to men. (Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996)

**Glory** (1391) (**doxa** from **dokeo** = to think or have an opinion, especially a favorable one) is the condition of being bright or shining can refer to the greatness or splendor of man (as in this verse) which is based on human opinion which is shifty, uncertain and often based on error. On the other hand, there is a glory of God which is absolutely true and changeless.

We are reminded of **Nebuchadnezzar's** desire for glory in Daniel 4...

The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the **glory** of my majesty?' While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you" ([Dan 4:30-31](#))

The **Psalmist** gives good advice...

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Thy name give glory because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth. ([Ps 115:1](#))

## **when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.**

**Bruce** goes on to comment that this passage refers to the right which preachers of the gospel had, according to Paul, to be maintained by their converts and others to whose spiritual welfare they ministered a right which Paul chose not to exercise (cf. [2Thes 3:7, 8, 9](#); [1Cor 9:3-18](#); [2Cor 11:7, 8, 9, 10, 11](#)). This right (as Paul points out in [1Cor 9:14](#)) was conferred by Jesus on those whom he sent out on a preaching and healing mission in his name in the course of his Galilean ministry ([Mk 6:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13](#); [Mt 10:5-15](#); [Lk 9:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6](#); [10:1-12](#)): the laborer, he said to them, deserves his pay ([Lk 10:7](#)) or his food [Mt 10:10](#)). Paul took the Lord's

instructions to mean that his servants were entitled to their maintenance but not compelled to require it (Bruce, F F: 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated. 1982 or Logos)

The **Disciple's Study Bible** has an interesting comment noting that...

Paul outlined his method of evangelism and gave us an example to follow:

he ministered despite hardship and persecution;

he ministered with pure motives;

he ministered the true gospel of Christ;

he ministered for God's glory;

he ministered selflessly;

he ministered in humility;

he ministered with care and sacrificial love;

and he ministered long and laboriously.