



“OUT OF SIGHT, BUT NOT OUT OF MIND”

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

The Pastor's Role

“...at a crossroads...the Pastor's job description: CEO, entertainer, fundraiser, master of ceremonies, psychologist...none of these is in harmony with the biblical model of spiritual model of leadership...primary function of a Pastor-Elder is summed up in one word: EDIFICATION...the spiritual maturity of believers under his care.”

EDIFICATION

"The process by which believers are built up, that is, progressively advanced in knowledge and holiness."

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

This is the heartbeat of ministry
and the center of God-pleasing,
Christ-exalting, sanctifying
relationships among Christians.



False Charges

Without sacrificial love, one becomes a liability to ministry.

Paul accused of greed, deceit, and abandoning the Thessalonians.

Answering His Critics

“Paul, why did you leave us?”

“I was forced out, and I am in anguish about it, and I tried many times to come back, but was supernaturally hindered by Satan – under God’s sovereignty.” **ACTS 17:1-10**

Paul's Love for Them

This is no "ordinary love."

Emotional, intense, agonizing language.

Sound repudiation of accusations.

"having been taken away"

Very rare Greek word = "bereft" = "orphan"

Used of being deprived of children (James 1:27) or of companions (John 14:18).

"to be torn away from" in the harsh sense of a parent/child torn away by death.

Separation Anxiety

From “nursing mother” (2:7) and
“caring father” (2:11) to orphans!

Paul was a “discipleless Apostle!”

Paul’s premature separation from
them elicited strong parental
emotions – every minister’s goal!

All Torn Up Inside!

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, 6-7

Being forcedly separated from his spiritual children was a severe blow.

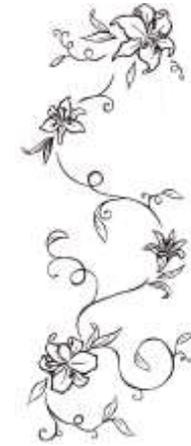
Agony of separation was unbearably painful – he sends Timothy back!

A Minister's Concern

"...strengthen, encourage, faith..."

"Not on health, wealth, self-esteem, or ease of life, but the spiritual quality of life. Their faith was of supreme importance to him; he mentions it five times in 3:1-10."

“Your Faith” in 3:2



1. Foundation of doctrine – Jude 3

2. True belief demonstrated in living out faith by obeying God in all of life's various circumstances – Hebrews 11:6.



Biblical Relationships

Paul's longing to be with them was not born from the sentiment of friendship or mere socialization but from his sense of responsibility for their *spiritual welfare*.

Biblical Relationships

The focus of God-pleasing, Christ-exalting, edifying relationships is caring about the spiritual welfare of brothers and sisters in Christ; “doing sanctification together.”

Biblical Relationships

Must move beyond sentimental
friendship and socialization to
spiritual welfare:

Understanding: Church and church,
Sanctification, and Pride/Humility.

“CATCHPHRASE”

There are many worldly ideas, philosophies, “watchwords,” and “catchphrases” about relationships – which do not have their origin in Scripture – that are harmful to biblical, sanctifying relationships.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-10

My spiritual growth, my sanctification, obedience to Christ and Scripture, can be a great source of comfort, strength, and encouragement to others.

“Saving Face” in 2:17

Loaded with intensity and emotion.

Compelling/dominant/controlling
desire – *“to come into intimate,
personal communication with”*

Like Moses with God! Exodus 33:17-23

“all the more eager”

More than merely “trying.”

Implies speed, eagerness,
seriousness, without delay, not
listless – is this OUR attitude
about fellowship/relationships?

Understanding of Enemy

There was a supernatural obstacle
under God's sovereignty.

God allows Satan to oppose the
Kingdom of God in a variety of
ways.

“hindered”

A military term: as an army seeks to disrupt the advance of an opposing army by digging a trench or breaking up the road.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

Satan is not omnipresent, and against believers he can do nothing outside God's overruling providence.

Paul's plans were thwarted only because it accorded with God's plans regarding Paul's work.

Be of Good Cheer!

When evil appears, do not despair, for God is sovereignly allowing it within His will, to accomplish His plans.

Christ's Return

The Apostle Paul always lived and taught others to live in the light of Jesus Christ's return.

Romans 13:12; Philippians 3:20; 2 Timothy 2:12; 4:8, 18

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

The future glory coming for believers at Christ's return is powerful motivation for ministering.

Joy at Christ's Coming

A very surprising statement: ***YOU*** are our glory and joy (not the Lord Jesus Christ). A crucial element of Paul's joy in the presence of Christ is that he would see all the believers he had loved and ministered to.

Luke 16:9

“A great part of heaven’s bliss for the redeemed will be the joyful presence of those whom they have been used to reach.”

"at His coming"

"parousia" = "rapture"

2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23

*A time of indescribable joy – with
Christ AND with other believers!*

How Do I Love Thee?

1. Great desire & effort to see them;
2. Supernatural opposition to stop him;
3. They are central to his eternal joy.
4. They were his “glory” = honor bestowed on him by God for ministry.