

# “Out of Sight, but Not Out of Mind”

## 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

### I. Answering the Critics

*“Conflict between people persists in spite of all human effort to mitigate it. Some reports estimate that ninety percent of the people who fail in their life’s vocation do so because they cannot get along properly with other people. Ultimately, job failure usually has little connection with ability or even performance. Instead, such failure often stems from an inability to be unselfish and to understand and care about the concerns of others. People may be well trained and highly skilled in a technical field, but they are a liability in the workplace if they are self-centered. Likewise, the most academically well-prepared pastor (or any ministry worker) can be a liability in the church if he (or she) does not seek to sacrificially love and serve his people.”* **Commentary on 1 Thessalonians, Dr. John MacArthur**

#### A. Food for Thought

1. Why is teamwork so important in church ministry?
2. What makes church ministry teamwork difficult?
3. Why is it important to respect and honor church leaders?
4. How is pride the enemy of the ministry?
5. How is humility the friend of the ministry?

- B. *“Pride is a master’s mindset, the mindset of self, rather than the mindset of a servant; it is a focus on self and the service of self, a pursuit of self-recognition and self-exaltation, and a desire to control and use all things for self.”*  
**From Pride to Humility, a booklet by Stuart Scott, 32 pages.**

#### A Few Examples of Sinful, Destructive Pride:

1. A lack of gratitude; 2 Chronicles 32:25;
2. Anger; outbursts or withdrawing when expectations are not met;
3. Inflated view of your importance, gifts, abilities; 1 Corinthians 4:7;
4. Focus on lack of gifts and abilities; 1 Corinthians 12:14-25;
5. Talking too much; Proverbs 10:19;
6. Being devastated or angered by criticism; Proverbs 13:1;
7. Voicing preferences and opinions when not asked; Philippians 2:1-4;
8. Not having close relationships; Proverbs 18:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25;
9. Being defensive, blame-shifting, minimizing your sins; Proverbs 12:1;
10. A lack of a prayer life; Luke 18:10-14.

- C. *“Humility is a servant’s mindset, the mindset of Christ; a focus on God and others; a pursuit of the recognition and the exaltation of God and Christ, and desire to glorify and please God and Christ in all things and by all things God has given.”* **Pride and Humility, a booklet by Stuart Scott, 32 pages.**

A Few Examples of Biblical, Edifying Humility:

1. Recognizing and trusting God’s character; Psalm 119:66;
2. Seeing yourself as having no right to question or judge an Almighty, Perfect God; Psalm 145:17; Romans 9:19-23;
3. A great deal of biblical praying; 1 Thessalonians 5:17;
4. Being overwhelmed with God’s undeserved grace and goodness;
5. Being thankful and grateful to God and others; 1 Thessalonians 5:18;
6. Being a good listener; James 1:19; Philippians 2:3-4;
7. Talking about others only if it is good or for their good; Proverbs 11:13;
8. Being quick to admit your wrong, and being thankful for criticism or reproof; Proverbs 9:8; 27:5-6; 29:23;
9. Thinking about your own sin more often than another’s; Matt. 7:3-4;
10. Being open and honest about who you really are and the areas in which you need growth; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 3:12-14.

## II. True or False? The Importance of Ministry Integrity

False teachers spread many lies about the Apostle Paul among the Thessalonian believers: he lacked integrity, he was greedy, he was a deceitful flatterer, he was power hungry, and he willfully and callously deserted them because he didn’t really care about them.

### A. Three Elements of Paul’s Caring Relationship Ministry

1. Paul’s \_\_\_\_\_ for them 1 Thessalonians in 2:17-18a.
2. Paul’s understanding of his \_\_\_\_\_ in 1 Thessalonians 2:18b.
3. Paul’s anticipation of Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.

- B. How important to you are your church family relationships? How do you demonstrate that importance? How biblical is your love for your church family? How concerned are you for the spiritual welfare of your church relationships? How can you show your concern for the spiritual welfare of your church family as a priority in relationships? How do you personally need to spiritually grow in Christlikeness in order to aid others in their spiritual walk with God? What worldly, secular “watchwords” and “catchphrases,” that are not biblical in origin, do people often use when discussing or describing relationships? How can this type of thinking actually be harmful to sanctifying relationships?