

# 1 THESSALONIANS

Lesson 2 w/Answers: Being An Effective Witness

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

In this lesson, we can observe much about what it means to be an effective witness for Christ through the examples of Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Thessalonica.

While having a prepared testimony can be part of witnessing, what is demonstrated in this lesson is that witnessing is a lot more about living than just sharing a testimony. It is developing relationships, having the right motives, meeting people's needs, and of course being equipped as a disciple so that you can share the gospel with others.

In addition to the questions below, I have prepared a little test to demonstrate that you know more than you think when it comes to sharing the good news. Have fun with it, as well as with this lesson's study.

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## ***Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and answer the following:***

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1. This chapter can be broken down into two main topics: (a) questions about Paul's motives in spreading the gospel, and (b) the actions he and his group used to witness to others. Can you determine when the passage stops addressing his motives and begins to illustrate his actions?
  - a. ANSWER: In the first six verses of Chapter 2, Paul's team has their motives questioned; while in verses 7-12, Paul's methods and the team's actions are illustrated.
2. Read Acts 17: 1-15. This is the record of Paul's missionary team's visit to Thessalonica. Do you think that by reading this it will help you better understand the letter he has written to them? This indicates to us that we should use all of God's Word when we study, as it will add a great deal of understanding to our efforts.
  - a. ANSWER: Acts 17:1-15 adds context to our study and illuminates how challenging it was for Paul and the team to preach the Gospel when the Jews of the city were opposed to any such activity.
3. Now look at 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6. In the following verses, the motives of Paul's team are in question on several fronts. Beside each verse, list the thing that they are being accused of. You may want to look back to Acts 17: 1-15 for comparison as well.
  - a. Verse 2:1
    - i. ANSWER: The Jews in Thessalonica claimed that they accomplished nothing but trouble; the opposite was true, as Paul notes in verse one. Paul's conduct is clearly being questioned.
  - b. Verse 2:2
    - i. ANSWER: The Jews there also claimed that they were only there for fame and fortune—they didn't care about the people of Thessalonica, only themselves. Again, this was not true, as Paul points out. Their work actually involved great danger; and, in spite of the awful treatment they received and the strong opposition to their message, God empowered them to continue on.
  - c. Verse 2:3 (in this verse they are accused of three things)
    - i. ANSWER: They were accused of coming to Thessalonica to deceive everyone. Paul points out they weren't there by mistake, nor with an evil desire to do harm, and nor did they come to deceive.
  - d. Verse 2:4
    - i. ANSWER: They were accused of doing all that they did for gain, to please people, and for personal satisfaction. Paul strongly denies all of these accusations, pointing out they were there to please God and not man.
  - e. Verse 2:5
    - i. ANSWER: Paul continues to refute the claim they were greedy and only came for gain—simply doing everything to gain wealth and influence. Paul tells them that he and his fellow missionaries never asked anything from them, except that they accept the Gospel.
  - f. Verse 2:6
    - i. ANSWER: Paul's final comment addresses the claim that he and his team were looking for recognition from people. Nothing could be further from the truth.

4. In the following verses, Paul and his group witness by "doing." What is it that they "do" in each of the following verses?
  - a. Verse 2:7
    - i. ANSWER: The missionaries' approach was "gentle." They didn't just storm into Thessalonica and force the Gospel on everyone they met.
  - b. Verse 2:8
    - i. ANSWER: They openly shared with everyone, witnessed to them through their own lives, and lived among them as ordinary people.
  - c. Verse 2:9
    - i. ANSWER: Furthermore, they did secular work to support themselves, so as not to "...burden any of you..." as they preached the Gospel to them.
  - d. Verse 2:10
    - i. ANSWER: They lived righteously and blamelessly among them—their conduct was extremely important to them as a tool in their witness.
  - e. Verse 2:11
    - i. ANSWER: They acted as a father would act when raising his own children, patiently leading and teaching them.
  - f. Verse 2:12 (in this verse they do three things)
    - i. ANSWER: They encouraged everyone to live a life "...worthy of God."
5. Can you see something in common between verse 7 and verse 11? What does this tell us about our witness?
  - a. ANSWER: These verses demonstrate that our witness is to be one of patience and loving kindness to all—never forcing or driving the gospel into people's lives.
6. Consider all that you have read in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and Acts 17:1-15. It will tell us many things about Paul and his team of witnesses—how they approached spreading the gospel (in the synagogue, first to the Jews, then in Gentile homes), their motives, their character (worked secular jobs to support their ministry, high moral ethics, etc.), their ability to develop long lasting relationships, and their understanding of God's word and Christ as the Messiah. It also shows us something else about our witness. Consider this: was Paul a one-day and gone preacher? Did he and his team immediately leave any village or city where the Jews rejected them? Did Paul and his group leave as soon as they faced tough times? What does this tell us about commitment, persistence, the importance of time in building lasting relationships, and our approach to witnessing?
  - a. ANSWER: One thing is clear about Paul and his approach to witnessing and preaching the gospel: He was in it for the long haul. For example, his ministry in Ephesus took two years. Paul never went into a city for just a moment's time, proclaimed the gospel in the square, and then left when they rejected him. He reasoned with people, and he was patient and persistent. Even on Mars Hill in Athens, when surrounded by the scholars and philosophers of the day and all of the idols, Paul did not turn his back on them. He patiently and openly told them about Jesus. This is the model that we should follow, i.e., being enduring, patient, and always hopeful as we try to reach the lost of this world for Jesus.

Now, here is the little test that I warned you about. Have fun with it! TEST: Being An Effective Witness

May God richly bless you as study this lesson this week.

In Christ,

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