

I Thessalonians

Chapter 2:1-12

¹For ***you yourselves know***, brothers and sisters, ***that our reception among you was not in vain***, ²***but*** after we had already suffered and been ***treated abusively*** in Philippi, as you know, we had the ***boldness*** in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much ***opposition***.

You > (Precept Austin) You is emphatic in the Greek

Know > (Strong's) *oida*

Wuest > know positively

You yourselves know > (Swindoll) These words serve as mementos of the past, not to obsess over it but rather to let the past motivate them. "You yourselves know" (2:1) "After we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know" (2:2) "We never came with flattering speech, as you know" (2:5) "For you recall, brethren" (2:9) "You are witnesses" (2:10) "Just as you know" (2:11) What was it he wanted them to remember? Above all, he wanted them to know that his coming to them "*was not in vain*" (2:1).

Vincent adds to the list above with the following > 1Th 1:5, 8; 3:3, 4, 12; 4:1, 2, 6, 11; 5:1, 11.

That our reception among you was not in vain > (Wuest) (There is an indication in the Wuest Translation that the Greek grammar is in the perfect tense. Look at the words added to the end of the sentence.) "*our entrance which was into your midst, that it has not proved futile, the evidence of its success being still in existence.*"

Was not in vain > (Precept Austin) *Was not* - is more literally "had not come to be" or "that it has not become empty". Literally it reads "that it did not become vain".

But > (Precept Austin) *alla* > is a strong adversative (expressing opposition or antithesis)

Treat abusively > (Strong's) to run riot, to outrage, insult

Precept Austin > It conveys the idea of treating someone contemptuously in an insolent and arrogant way.

Barnes > The shame of the treatment consisted in the fact that it was wholly undeserved; that it was contrary to the laws; and that it was accompanied with circumstances designed to make their punishment as ignominious as possible.

Gilbrant > In classical Greek (the Greek word) means “to run riot,” especially “in the use of superior strength or power, or in sensual indulgence”

Boldness > (Strong’s) to be frank in utterance, or confident in spirit and demeanor

Gilbrant > "refers to fearless and frank speaking with the freedom to speak openly even in the face of opposition. A full citizen (though not a slave) in the Greek city-states had the right to express any opinion freely in the public assembly.”

Opposition > (Strong’s) *agon* > a gathering, contest, struggle. Usage > an (athletic) contest; hence, a struggle (in the soul).

Walvoord > The word translated “conflict” is *agoni*, from which comes the word agony. The Greek word *agoni* was used of the intense struggle an athlete puts forth to win first place in a race or a contest.

³ For our exhortation does not come from **error** or **impurity** or by way of **deceit**; ⁴ but just as we have been **approved** by God to be **entrusted** with the gospel, so we speak, not intending to please people, but to please God, who **examines** our hearts.

Error > (Strong’s) *plane* > a wandering

Helps Word Studies > deviant behavior; a *departure* from what God says is true; an error (deception) which results in *wandering* (roaming into sin).

Snap quiz > What English word starts with the letters “plan__” and has the meaning of “wandering”. (I’ll give you a hint ... what do you know about astronomy?)

Impurity > (Strong’s) *akathersia* > *uncleaness*

Lightfoot > "This disclaimer, startling as it may seem, was not unneeded amidst the impurities consecrated by the religions of the day" (Lightfoot). The ecstatic initiations in some of the popular religions were grossly sensual.

Deceit > (Strong’s) a bait, craft, deceit

Precept Austin > This is more literally *never in deceit*

Wiersbe > The word translated “**guile**” (deceit) carries the idea of “baiting a hook.” In other words, Paul did not trap people into being saved ... Spiritual witnessing and “Christian salesmanship” are different. Salvation does not lie at the end of a clever argument or a subtle presentation. (Always remember > WHO saves the individual?)

Approved ... examines > (Strong’s) to test, by implication > to approve

Robertson > Perfect (*something that happened in the past with the results remaining until today*) passive (*the work was done from outside the person*) indicative (*statement of fact*) ... here the tense for completed state means tested and proved and so approved by God.

Entrusted > (Strong's) *pisteuó* > to believe, entrust

Utley > This term comes from the same root (*pisteuō*) as "faith," "believe," or "trust." The basic idea is to entrust something to another (cf. **1 Cor. 9:17**; **Gal. 2:7**; 1 Tim. 1:11; Titus 1:3).

1 Cor. 9:17 > ¹⁷ *For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a commission nonetheless.*

Gal. 2:7 > ⁷ *But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised*

⁵ *For we never came with **flattering** speech, as you know, nor with a **pretext** for greed— God is our witness—* ⁶ *nor did we seek honor from people, either from you or from others, though we could have asserted our authority **as apostles of Christ**.*

Flattering > (Precept Austin) (*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

Lightfoot > *Kolakeia*, a word which occurs here only in the New Testament, is defined both by Theophrastus ... and Aristotle ... to involve the idea of selfish motives. It is flattery not merely for the sake of giving pleasure to others but for the sake of self-interest"

Danish proverb > Flatterers look like friends just as wolves resemble dogs. Treachery lurks in honeyed words

Here are a few more humorous (but true) comments:

- 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

Pretext > (Precept Austin) Our English word *pretext* is from the Latin, *praetextum* (*prae* = before + *texere* = weave) which described something woven in front of, with a view to concealment or deception or to screen or extend in front.

(The KJV uses the words *cloke of covetousness* to describe this sin)

Precept Austin > There are 7 uses of (the Greek word for *pretext*) in the NT... (here are a few of them)

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.* (Both Mark and Luke record this same illustration)

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 > *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.*

As apostles of Christ > (Uteley) This includes Silas and Timothy. This illustrates the wider use of the term. In 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11, "apostles" are mentioned as an ongoing spiritual gift in the church. Some examples are:

1. Barnabas (cf. **Acts 14:4,14**) > ⁴ *But the people of the city were divided; and some*
2. *sided with the Jews, while others, with the apostles.*
3. Andronicus and Junias (cf. Rom. 16:6-7)
4. Apollos (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6)
5. James the Just (cf. Gal. 1:19)

⁷ *But we **proved** to be **gentle** among you. As a **nursing** mother **tenderly** cares for her own children, ⁸ in the same way we had **a fond affection** for you and were delighted **to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives**, because you had become **very dear** to us.*

Proved > (The Greek word used here surprised me. I was expecting it to be related to *proving* or *assaying* but it turns out to be a word meaning *to come into existence*. That changes the whole thought!) Here is **Precept Austin** > And so literally "we *became* gentle in your midst".

Gentle > (Precept Austin) placid, gentle, mild, easy, compliant (like a nursing mother). In fact (the Greek word) was frequently used by Greek writers as characterizing a nurse with trying children or a teacher with refractory scholars, or of parents toward their children.

Nursing > (Strong's) the source word is a word which means *nourisher*

Tenderly > (Strong's) to warm, to cherish

Utley > The verb literally means "to warm" and was commonly used of mother birds "warming" their young (cf. **Eph. 5:29** > ²⁹ *for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,*)

A fond affection > (Strong's) to desire earnestly

Barnes > The word here rendered "being affectionately desirous" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means to "long after, to have a strong affection for." The sense here is, that Paul was so strongly attached to them that he would have been willing to lay down his life for them. (see the rest of this verse)

To share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives > (MacArthur)

Besides imparting the complete gospel, Paul, Silas, and Timothy shared also their own lives. Literally, they gave up their souls—their real inner beings—for the sake of the Thessalonians. There was nothing superficial or partial about their sacrificial service. A woman who fulfills the biblical role for motherhood does the same thing when she, at great cost to herself, unselfishly and generously sets aside her life for the benefit of her beloved children.

A single mother from Michigan is being celebrated for her bravery after running into her burning home to rescue her four children. Chelsea firefighters Lt. Derek Klink and Captain Scott Basar told Detroit's NBC affiliate WDIV that Mikala Vish repeatedly re-entered the house early Tuesday morning to save her kids, ages 12, 6, 4, and 9 months. Lt. Klink called it "the most heroic thing" he's ever see, per the outlet. "Sometimes, people call us heroes. And in this instance, in no way were we the hero," the lieutenant continued. "Mikala deserves all the credit." Capt. Basar told Michigan Live that Vish "is an absolute hero for how she saved all her Vish suffered second and third-degree burns to over 60% of her body.

Very dear > (Strong's) *agapétos*

Here is a wonderful comment from **Martin** > "A gospel messenger who stands detached from his audience has not yet been touched by the very gospel he proclaims."

⁹ *For you recall, brothers and sisters, our **labor** and **hardship**: it was by working night and day so as not to be a **burden** to any of you, that we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.*

Labor > (Strong's) laborious toil

Precept Austin > (The Greek word) conveys the idea of arduous, wearying toil involving sweat and fatigue and emphasizes the weariness which follows on the straining of all of one's powers to the utmost.

Hardship > (Precept Austin) toil, painfulness, travail, afflicting and wearisome labor. Hardship, struggle, strenuous toil. It refers to hard and difficult labor involving suffering and implying an unusual exertion of energy and effort.

Utley > Paul, being a Jew, respected manual labor. He often encouraged it, especially in this Thessalonian correspondence because some in the fellowship had quit their jobs to wait for the Second Coming (cf. **2 Thess. 3:6-15** ... specifically verse 10 > ¹⁰ *For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either*

Burden > (This is a different Greek word than we saw in our study of I and II Corinthians.) (Precept Austin) to weigh down, to place a weight upon someone, to put a burden on or to be burdensome to. To press too heavily on or be too severe with. To burden heavily, referring to material resources.

¹⁰ *You are witnesses, and so is God, of **how devoutly** and **rightly** and **blamelessly** we **behaved** toward you believers; ¹¹ just as you know how we were **exhorting** and **encouraging** and **imploring** each one of you as a father would his own children,*

How devoutly and rightly and blamelessly > (Heibert) Three adverbs are used to summarize the conduct. Adverbs rather than adjectives are employed because the emphasis is not on the character of the workers but on the manner of their conduct. "How" before the adverbs points to the degree of manner. There is no claim to perfection but rather to an eminent degree of attainment in the areas specified.

Behaved > (Yet another time! The same surprising word we saw earlier > a word meaning to *come into existence*) (Precept Austin) Literally - how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly to you who believe *we became*

These next three words have a host of meaning behind them. Let's explore! We'll break them down using their source words before relaying their meanings. Try to see them through the filter Paul uses > *as a father would his own children*.

Exhorting > (Strong's) *parakaleo**

Encouraging > (Strong's) *paramutheomai***

Imploring > (Strong's) *marturomai****

The definitions are on the next page

* The Greek word literally means to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon

** The Greek word literally means to speak to someone coming close to his or her side and speak to them in a friendly way.

*** The Greek word, in its original sense, meant to summon a witness and thus conveys the idea of testifying in affirmation or exhortation. The idea of implore is to beg earnestly or even desperately.

¹² *so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

Walk > (Stedman) I like that figure because a walk, of course, merely consists of two simple steps, repeated over and over again. It is not a complicated thing. In the same way, the Christian life is a matter of taking two steps, one step after another. Then you are beginning to walk. (Ray Stedman then goes on to tell us what those two steps look like > *Put off the old man ... put on the new ... repeat*)

Calls > (Strong's) bid, call forth, name, invite

Into His own kingdom and glory > (Vincent) God's kingdom is here conceived as present - the economy of divine grace to which the readers are called as Christians.

Barnes > A child "walks worthy of a parent" when he lives in such way as to reflect honor on that parent for the method in which he has trained him