1Thess 26

God expects a cheerful giver and a generous attitude.

This will be one of those challenging lessons for me to teach and for some Bels to hear. Many will get upset or turned off but I have to go where God the HS leads me.

This lesson is as important as any other in recent months.

Open back up in 1Thessalonians chapter two where we left off;

1Thes 2:3 For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit;

The reason the Apostle Paul clarifies his intentions is a reminder that this region was flooded with counterfeits, liars and charlatans.

Thessalonica was a thriving city and it was filled with a blend of Greek and Roman influences.

/[1Th 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/4/s_1113004) 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**.\

[1Th 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/5/s_1113005) For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed – God is our witness—

When BD is being presented with the power of God the HS the main focus is on the accuracy of the word, not finances, rituals or popularity.

In fact, all the bells and whistles that many consider interesting or necessary for learning BD are nothing more than distractions and feathers, which tickle the emotions.

[1Th 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/6/s_1113006) nor did we seek honor from people, either from you or from others, though we could have asserted our authority as apostles of Christ.

[1Th 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/7/s_1113007) But we proved to be gentle among you. As a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children,

The Apostle Paul is stating that when God appoints a leader in any realm, they have the authority to discipline or admonish within the framework of Biblical leadership.

Yet Paul is saying I am making a choice to operate very gently as a nursing mother handles her child.

[1Th 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/8/s_1113008) 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.

Let us look closer at some satanic distraction in a large thriving city like Thessalonica. It will give you a view to how powerful it is for a group of Bels to stay focused on the gospel in that type of environment.

/The city of Thessalonica sat on the Egnatian Way, this highway went east to west through Macedonia. Thessalonica was also an important port and a melting pot of cultures from all over the world. There were numerous religions and professional mediums or teachers in realms of magic, religion and philosophy. The worship of the gods of the Olympian pantheon, especially Apollo, Athena, and Hercules were extremely popular.\

Intellects of the highest order in the arena of philosophy, math, science and politics were abundant in the city. Many of them were idolized as the voice of reason and superior knowledge.

/Greek mystery or dark arts of religion, celebrating Dionysus and the sex and pharmakeia cult (alcohol & intoxicants) were popular. Shrines to many Egyptian gods: Isis, Serapis, Anubis were visible and worshipped. Also present were the Roman cults that deified the political heroes of Rome. There were also the Jewish people and in the minority were God-fearing Gentiles.\

Think about what we have today in the year of our LORD 2022…everybody has a spiritual worship system. Everybody has a philosophy and has cornered the market on what they call their own truth.

Celebrities and sports stars are worshipped like gods, we have huge distractions from big tech like computers, cell phones and social media.

Greed and the worship of gender or beauty is all around us. Even the Christian church is divided into denominations who splinter off on doctrines and principles.

Just like in the days of the Apostle Paul in a place like Thessalonica. There were constant attacks on truth and many greedy teachers and spiritual advisors who played with the emotions of the crowd while lining their own pockets, just like today.

 REPEAT

This is why the Apostle Paul reminded these Greek Bels that he wasn’t part of the counterfeit, demonic system – he was representing the truth – BD!

/[1Th 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/5/s_1113005) For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed – God is our witness—

The original language tells us - nothing was concealed or cloaked so as to fool you for the sake of our gain.\

The original context states boldly - *GOD our witness!* There is no – *IS,* in the original context.

Jump over to 1Corinthians chapter nine.

Though the office of apostle or pastor and evangelist is a calling that GOD ordains to be a full-time position. A position, which is supposed to be supported by the people of GOD.

The Apostle Paul would sometimes not ask for any support at all, so as not to get lumped in with the local charlatans.

The truth of the matter is, if you are in the process of vetting a pastor-teacher or evangelist and you want to wait to support that man that is a wise move. If that man seems to suddenly be teaching false doctrine after you have supported them, you are also wise to hold off any further support.

But the Biblical standard is once you realize the man behind the pulpit is working hard to bring you the truth.

And you know he has the gift of church leadership or pastor-teacher, you are called by GOD to support that man with your time, talent and treasure.

 REPEAT

The Bels at Corinth were falling in and out of truth because they loved the cosmic system so much. They ended up with many issues in the congregation.

One of the problems was they had wealth and prestige and they were the worst givers out of all the Apostle Paul’s churches. He did the most to keep convincing and teaching them.

Even when the rumors about Paul being a false apostle came across Corinth.

This was actually the point in Paul’s ministry where he had to quit working as a tent maker and just focus on being an apostle.

He had burned the candle at both ends working in ministry and as a tent maker and he was wearing himself out.

He would even refuse to ask for support early on so as not to cause problems with the Bels at Corinth.

1Co 9:2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

A handful of the church leaders remained stubborn and critical about the Apostle Paul. In doing so it caused others in Corinth to withhold financial and physical support from the ministry.

/[1Co 9:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/3/s_1071003) My defense to **those who examine me** (*anakrinō*)is this: 4Do we not have a right to eat and drink?

The Apostle Paul now makes a strong stance. Because of the arrogance of a few men who put Paul under fake investigations in his absence.\

AN-AH-KRINO, is a legal term for an investigation or a courtroom interrogation.

It is written in a Greek present tense; they kept on trying to find something wrong with him.

What they really enjoyed doing is having guest speakers and different teachers entertain them. They would toss a few coins at a new teacher or a guest speaker but never really support anyone, especially the Apostle Paul.

Many people play games like that, they never make a commitment or take a stand behind a good teacher. Remember it is GOD who looks at your heart - HE sees all the games people play.

[1Co 9:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/5/s_1071005) Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

Notice he brings up Peter and the other apostles – because they seem to be getting high regard and respect even from Bels at Corinth who were not under the authority of the other apostles.

 Paul was their ordained leader.

Many of the other church leaders and apostles were married and sometimes travelled with family members and God’s people supported them.

[1Co 9:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/6/s_1071006) Or do only Barnabas and I have no right to refrain from working?

This is dripping with righteous indignation and divine sarcasm.

/[1Co 9:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/7/s_1071007) Who at any time **serves as a soldier at his own expense**? Who plants a vineyard and **does not eat its fruit**? Or who tends a flock and does not **consume some of the milk of the flock**?

There is a simplistic divine law of work and effort done in the right way, should bring forth reward and benefit. God does recognize a merit-based program within our Christian walk.\

The right thing done in the right way does produce winners and benefit inside the plan of God.

Filled with the HS guided by BD.

[1Co 9:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/8/s_1071008) I am not just asserting these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does the Law not say these things as well?

The fact is the word of GOD has always called for compensation for a day’s labor or merit-based rewards in the natural realm.

/[1Co 9:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/9/s_1071009) For it is written in the Law of Moses: “**YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE IT IS THRESHING.”** God is not concerned about oxen, is He?

(Deu 25:4) this was a legal standing with a dual meaning related to cruel treatment and fair or just results.\

In ancient times, grain would be broken away from its husk by having an ox walk on it repeatedly. It would be cruel to force the ox to walk on all the grain, yet to muzzle him so he couldn’t eat of it.

It also related to a fair amount of reward or even punishment when it is due.

/1Tim 5:18 For the Scripture says, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE IT IS THRESHING,” and “**The laborer is worthy of his wages.**”\

[1Co 9:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/10/s_1071010) Or is He speaking entirely for our sake? Yes, it was written for our sake, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *in the crops.*

/[1Co 9:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/11/s_1071011) **If we sowed spiritual things** in you, is it too much if **we reap material things**from you?

**IF** is a 1st class condition – the Apostle Paul had gone above and beyond teaching truth to the church at Corinth.\

[1Co 9:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/12/s_1071012) If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

The Apostle Paul never entered a church or new group of Bels and demanded support and especially with the Bels at Corinth. He always waited to establish his ministry and allow the word to sink in so that grace giving would develop.

[1Co 9:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/13/s_1071013) Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat *the food* of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?

The Levitical priesthood were supported by the nation of Israel.

They received food and livestock and support for their services because it was a full-time job.

/[1Co 9:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/14/s_1071014) So also **the Lord directed** those who proclaim the gospel to **get their living from the gospel**.

This is a part of the calling for all Bels to support and promote the teaching of truth.\

[1Co 9:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/15/s_1071015) But I have used none of these things. And I have not written these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than *that.* No one shall make my boast an empty one!

The Apostle Paul is making a strong statement with this whole speech. He is saying I did not ask anything from anyone here at Corinth – though I had every right to be supported I never took advantage of that in the past.

[1Co 9:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1co/9/16/s_1071016) For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast *about,* for I am under compulsion; for woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.

The Apostle Paul is saying my job…my calling, my whole life, my personal sense of destiny is preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostles were going to establish the early church, evangelize and complete the NT no matter what, that was their calling.

Yet had it not been for the grace giving and support of positive Bels they would have failed. REPEAT

/Grace giving is the protocol for the CA, not tithing. Tithing is not spiritual giving in the Old Testament, tithing is a form of taxation. Spiritual giving is limited to Bels only and tithing was a ten per cent income tax under the Mosaic Law, Codex number three, which deals with the laws of divine establishment. All people (Bel or Unbel) living in the nation of Israel had to pay ten percent to establish and uphold the nation.\

Spiritual giving is in relation to your pastor-teacher or church and supporting the word of GOD going forth into a lost and dying world.

The Apostle Paul makes a very important statement related to giving or supporting a ministry in the CA;

/1Cor 16:1 **Now concerning the collection for the saints**, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you are to do as well. 2 On the first day of every week, **each of you is to put aside and save as he may prosper**, so that no collections *need to* be made when I come.\

The Apostle Paul is saying be prepared when I arrive so that asking for an offering is not an issue.

Truth be told, as a Bel you should have a certain amount weekly or monthly already figured in your budget to help support the word of GOD.

The reality is that many Christians hide behind grace - instead of living in grace.

/2Cor 9:7 Each one *must do* just **as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly** or under compulsion, **for God loves a cheerful giver**.

Exo 35:5 Take from among you **a contribution to the LORD; whoever is of a willing heart** is to bring it as the LORD’S contribution: gold, silver, and bronze,\

There is a definitive call in the word of GOD to support the teaching of truth and the men who stand behind the pulpit.

/1Tim 5:17 The elders who rule well are **to be considered worthy of double honor,** especially those **who work hard at preaching and teaching**. 18For the Scripture says, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,” and “**The laborer is worthy of his wages**.”\

The word of GOD is what should dictate your attitude, not guilt, shame or any form of manipulation.

/Gal 6:6 The one who is taught the word is **to share all good things with the one who teaches him**.

Luk 10:7 “**Stay in that house**, eating and drinking **what they provide**; for **the laborer is deserving of his wages**. Do not move from house to house. 8 “Whatever city you enter and they receive you, **eat what is served to you**;\

The Apostle Paul would enter a city like Corinth or Thessalonica and he was trying to display grace and let the new Bels grow and learn about grace.

Unfortunately, there are many scam artist, false teachers and charlatans and we all have to be on our guard concerning the counterfeits.