

1 Thessalonians 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

Analysis

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others—*zētountes ex anthrōpōn doxan* (ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν, 'seeking glory from people') describes the fundamental temptation in ministry: using service for self-promotion. Paul didn't seek doxa (glory/honor/reputation) from the Thessalonians ('neither of you') or other churches ('nor yet of others'). This comprehensive denial covers all potential human glory sources. Ministry performed for human recognition corrupts motives, distorts methods, and produces pride rather than Christ-exalting service.

When we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ—*en barei einai* (ἐν βάρει εῖναι, 'to be in weight/burden') means asserting authority or demanding financial support. As apostoloi Christou (ἀπόστολοι Χριστοῦ, 'apostles of Christ'), Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had legitimate authority to expect support (1 Cor 9:4-14). Yet they voluntarily relinquished this right to remove any obstacle to the gospel (1 Cor 9:12). True spiritual authority serves rather than demands, gives rather than takes, and seeks God's glory, not human applause.

Historical Context

Ancient convention expected communities to support resident teachers. Philosophers received stipends; religious leaders lived from temple revenues. Paul had apostolic authority to demand support yet chose voluntary poverty to eliminate any suggestion of mercenary motives. This self-denial contrasted sharply with

traveling sophists who demanded high fees and arrogantly asserted authority. Paul's humility validated his apostolic claims more powerfully than asserting rights would have. The Thessalonians witnessed authority exercised through servant-leadership, not domineering control.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What evidence reveals whether you seek glory from people or from God alone in your Christian service?
2. How does voluntarily relinquishing legitimate rights for gospel advancement differ from either demanding rights or resenting restrictions?
3. In what ways does contemporary church leadership demonstrate (or fail to demonstrate) Paul's pattern of servant-authority?

Interlinear Text

οὗτε ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν οὔτε ἀπ' ὑμῶν
Nor sought of men we glory Nor of you
G3777 G2212 G1537 G444 G1391 G3777 G575 G5216

οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἴναι ὡς
Nor of others when we might burdensome G922 have been as
G3777 G575 G243 G1410 G1722 G1511 G5613

Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι
of Christ the apostles
G5547 G652

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 1:10 (References Christ): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

John 5:41 (Parallel theme): I receive not honour from men.

John 5:44 (Parallel theme): How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

1 Thessalonians 2:9 (Parallel theme): For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

John 7:18 (Glory): He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

1 Timothy 5:17 (Parallel theme): Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Galatians 5:26 (Glory): Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
