

## Get to Work!

### 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10

#### 2 Thessalonians 3:6–10 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; <sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, <sup>9</sup> not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

#### **Introduction:**

I'm sure you have heard the phrase "There is no such thing as a free lunch". I grant you that if you got a free lunch, somebody paid for it.

Yet today, there is a large population of people who believe that they are entitled to a free lunch just because they exist. It is their right!

More and more are believing that they are owed a living and a home and a high paying job, whether you have a skill or not. And sadly, to our own detriment, more and more are learning, that the less they do, the more money will be given to them freely.

And if you live outside the Biblical ethics and have a fatherless home and multiple children outside of marriage, the more money you can get.

In the last year, it has reached epidemic proportions of businesses having hard times finding any workers at all. Many have found out that if I don't work, I can stay home and make more money.

Checks are sent in the mail, or directly deposited into your bank account from the good ole USA.

There are reasons for this that go way beyond the last couple of years of Covid.

There has been a declining work ethic for sometime here in America. What America was known for regarding industry and hard working people, and quality product, is rapidly disappearing.

Some have attributed this to a lack of education, or poverty, and some have rightly attributed this to the dismantling and disintegration of the family and absent fathers.

But all of these are symptoms of the bigger problem.

The main source of this declining work ethic in America is directly related to the absence of God and the Christian ethic in our culture.

The more we see the removal of God and His Word and principles from our Country the more lazy, apathetic, socialist and marxist our land becomes.

We are on a path to utter destruction and we are headed there lying on our couches.

## One Article

there is an.....unwillingness to sacrifice short term benefits for the long term good of society. Today's students grow up expecting instant gratification, material possessions (oftentimes instilled by parents who want their kids to have it better than they did), and a feeling of entitlement. We have a problem with unemployment in this country that may take years to abate. Some have said the unemployed would rather collect 99 weeks of unemployment pay than work for what may be, in some cases, only a marginal amount of extra pay. What happened to the good feeling that work provides simply because we accomplish a goal, provide for our families, and become contributing members of society? All too

often laziness has overtaken hard work. Albert Einstein observed that “An idle man does not know what it is to enjoy rest.”

<https://www.workplaceethicsadvice.com/2012/03/causes-of-declining-work-ethic-in-america>.

Erik Hurst and other researchers at the University of Chicago, Princeton University, and the University of Rochester have published a study showing that:

- A whopping 22% of men between the ages of 21 and 30 without a college degree are not working, versus 9.5% of this cohort that was unemployed in 2000. Using the common vernacular, these men are known as slackers.
- On average, this group spends 12 hours per week on video games, and it's not unusual for some gamers to spend more than 30 hours per week in their virtual world.
- Most live with parents or relatives, and amazingly, are content with their lives.
- I recently spoke with an hourly-paid Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) who helps to care for my mom in a 24/7 nursing center. She plans to get a nursing degree while working. She told me that she is married to an unambitious guy who works an off-shift in an hourly job in the call center of a bank and gets home at 11:00 PM.

When I asked her if his coming home late at night awakens her, she sighed and said, “No, he plays video games in another room until 4:00 in the morning, which is the time that I have to get up for work.” She went on to say in exasperation, “What’s a gal going to do? Most guys nowadays are like this.”

- **Drugs**

In his Wall Street Journal column, columnist Holman Jenkins recently quoted a railroad executive who bemoaned the difficulty his company has in filling highly-paid non-managerial jobs. Although the jobs pay a six-figure salary and have rich benefits and high job security, half of prospective recruits will walk out of a recruiting orientation when they find that the jobs require a drug test and might necessitate a relocation to a locale like Bismarck, N.D.

Building contractors and other businesses have made similar remarks about the difficulty in finding workers who are drug-free and have a good work ethic. I encountered the same problem when I was in manufacturing and hired hundreds of workers while trying to maintain a safe, drug-free work environment.

Approximately 45,000 Americans are dying annually from drug overdoses. Opioids account for six out of

ten of the deaths, which is a quadrupling of such deaths since 1999. Death rates from overdoses are now higher in rural areas than urban areas.

## **Welfare**

The January, 2017, issue of Reason magazine has an excellent article titled, “Stuck.” The author writes about the Appalachian coalmining town where he was born, a town that used to be relatively prosperous but is now mired in rampant drug abuse, broken families, and welfare dependency. He asks an important question: Why don’t the inhabitants leave? Quick answer: Welfare has become a trap that they can’t escape. If they move out of the county or state to find work, they lose their welfare payments and benefits.

The founders of America did not agree with socialist principles, and they laid the framework for a country with unparalleled prosperity.

Part of the way they did this was by stressing smaller government. In his First Inaugural Address, President Thomas Jefferson [said](#), “a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and

improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.” <https://americanvision.org/posts/america-s-work-ethic-is-in-trouble/>

Henry David Thoreau said that most men lead lives of quiet desperation. He said this prior to the advent of the modern social-welfare state. Today, many men lead lives of constant stimulation by means of drugs and video games, or lead lives of indebtedness from wasting time in college, or lead lives of getting free rides on the backs of wage slaves.

<https://libertarianinstitute.org/articles/connecting-dots-declining-work-ethic/>

Today, about 110 million Americans live in households that receive some sort of means-tested government payment. (The number goes up to 160 million when Social Security is included.) The total cost of this munificence is nearly \$3 trillion per year. This is equivalent to the annual income of about 66 million American workers. In other words, 66 million are wage slaves for 110 million of their fellow Americans.

It doesn't make sense for many Americans to work in full-time jobs, especially for those who don't want much out of life, preferring a lot of free time to play

video games or whatever. They can have indoor plumbing, central heat and air-conditioning, more calories than they need, a smartphone, a big-screen TV, tattoos and body piercings, emergency medical care, and subsidized rides on public transit. They might even have enough disposable money to buy a car and some pot, especially if they feign a disability or otherwise game the system, or work off the books without paying income and FICA taxes.

Late in his life, Adam Smith, a Scottish economist and philosopher. Often regarded as the founder of modern economics. ....he advocated minimal state interference in economic matters ..... His works include Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776).

...observed, “that government institutions can never tame and regulate a society whose citizens are not schooled in a common set of virtues.”

I would add, not just any set of virtues, but the virtues and ethics found in the Word of God. The ones that are Given to us by the only true God and Living God.

If fact, do you realize that our work week was given to us by God. The reason we have work is God. The



reason we have a 7 day week is God. The Reason we rest one day a week is God.

Genesis 2:1–3 (NKJV)

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Exodus 20:9–11 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the Lord your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For *in* six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Work is not a part of the curse. Work was ordained by God for man do do before the fall.

## Genesis 2:15 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

After the fall, work continued but was harder

## Genesis 3:17–19 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’:

“Cursed *is* the ground for your sake;

In toil you shall eat *of* it

All the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,

And you shall eat the herb of the field.

<sup>19</sup> In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread

Till you return to the ground,

For out of it you were taken;

For dust you *are*,

And to dust you shall return.”

There are verses throughout the Bible that reference Work and the need for it and commandment of it.

## Proverbs 10:4–5 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> He who has a slack hand becomes poor,  
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

<sup>5</sup> He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son;

He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame.

Proverbs 12:24 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> The hand of the diligent will rule,  
But the lazy *man* will be put to forced labor.

Proverbs 13:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing;  
But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

Proverbs 14:23 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> In all labor there is profit,  
But idle chatter *leads* only to poverty.

Proverbs 19:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> Laziness casts *one* into a deep sleep,  
And an idle person will suffer hunger.

Proverbs 21:25 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup> The desire of the lazy *man* kills him,  
For his hands refuse to labor.

Proverbs 24:30–34 (NKJV)

- <sup>30</sup> I went by the field of the lazy *man*,  
And by the vineyard of the man devoid of  
understanding;
- <sup>31</sup> And there it was, all overgrown with thorns;  
Its surface was covered with nettles;  
Its stone wall was broken down.
- <sup>32</sup> When I saw *it*, I considered *it* well;  
I looked on *it and* received instruction:
- <sup>33</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber,  
A little folding of the hands to rest;
- <sup>34</sup> So shall your poverty come *like* a prowler,  
And your need like an armed man.

#### Ephesians 4:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

#### Colossians 3:22–23 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

<sup>23</sup> And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

## 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that you may lack nothing.*

## 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

## 1 Timothy 5:8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

When we want to look at how a thoroughly Biblical world view can affect your work ethic, then we need not look any further than the Puritans. It is this Puritan, Protestant work ethic that built this country.

One such Puritan is Richard Baxter, Suffering from poor health all his life, Richard Baxter preached, he said, "as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men." Living daily in the shadow of eternity gave the Puritans a deep

appreciation for living every moment on this earth to the fullest for God. "Promise not long life to yourselves," Baxter advised, "but live as those that are always uncertain of another day."

For the Puritans, to "redeem the time" (as Baxter put it) meant to order one's daily life in accordance with godly principles and for maximum effectiveness. One of the Puritans' favorite epithets was well-ordered. Their opponents nicknamed them the disciplinarians. The Puritans aspired to be worldly saints—Christians with earth as their sphere of activity and with heaven as their ultimate hope. Baxter exhorted his readers, "Write upon the doors of thy shop and chamber, ... This is the time on which my endless life dependeth."

a man's work was not something which was separate from or annexed or spiritual life – his religion. Neither was religion something which occupied Sunday and yet which had no bearing upon work. All of one's life was an integrated life before God. Neither saying prayers on Sunday nor building a wall on Monday were more holy or spiritual than the other. Painting a barn for pay was a religious duty to give glory to God by being of service to men. William Tyndale said that if we look externally

“there is a difference betwixt washing of dishes and preaching the Word of God; but as touching to please God, none at all.” <https://memoirandremains.com/2012/02/04/the-puritan-work-ethic/>

A Christian at work was a *Christian* who happens to be making shoes at that moment to the glory of God. A Christian soldier was a man being of service to his countrymen by fighting in a war – and thus was giving glory to God in being a soldier. A butcher was no less godly in his work and was no less engaged in the worship of God than a pastor on Sunday morning delivering a sermon.

### **Part One: A Christian man works to glorify God by serving men.**

William Perkins explains that all things were created to give God glory. Men were created to give peculiar service onto God. However, after the Fall, men seemed to be unable to glorify God. Yet God was able to secure glory from men despite their sin. There are four basic elements of what men must be before God:

1. Men must acknowledge God as sovereign and be willing to serve God as such.

2. Since men were created to be sociable, men must be of service to others.
3. To be of good to others, men must belong to some place – in some calling in which they can be of service to others. Even Adam –before the Fall – was called to a particular work.
4. A man should use his given calling in a holy manner, pursuing his calling in “faith and obedience.”

**A. There is no secular/sacred distinction**

There is an idea which gained great development during the Middle Ages and which still has some weight among Christians today: Religious tasks are more holy than secular tasks. Even to make the statement is to support the idea. The concept of sacred/secular does not properly derive from the Bible. When God creates Adam and puts Adam in the Garden of Eden God gives Adam the task of taking care of the Garden. The words which are used to describe Adam’s work are the same verbs which are used to describe Levites working in the Temple.

The sacred/secular distinction was an idea which developed among the religious Jews who did not rightly love their Lord. We can see some of this attitude in the



interactions between Jesus and the religious groups such as Pharisees and Scribes and Priests. This concept gained even more development in the years which followed. There are prayers recorded by the Jews in their religious writings of the next few centuries which speak of how much better it was to be a “religious” worker than a secular – worldly – worker.

This idea gained great development over the next hundreds of years. As Reformation progressed, this idea of sacred/secular came under scrutiny and then was eventually rejected as unbiblical by the Puritans.

## **B. Godliness as our primary concern**

1. The doctrine of work is an element of our religious life. Indeed, George Swinock the Puritan pastor in his massive book *A Christian Man's Calling* refers to all our life as religious and our religion as our primary concern. We moderns tend to dislike the word “religion,” perhaps because we don't want someone telling us what to do. But Swinock thinks that a regulated life, a religious life is a good and necessary thing.

2. Since a rightly religious life accords with true reason, the Christian will be able to live rightly in the midst of the world – no matter what problems arise. The Christian will not be trapped by the

snarers of the world: “Like the moon at the full, being fixed in heaven, they can keep their course, though dogs bark at them here on earth” (4).

3. If we see our creation and end rightly, we will not be snared by this world. This is how Swinock puts it:

How greedily do men grasp the smoke of earthly vanities, which will wring tears from their eyes, and then vanish into nothing!

Who can sufficiently bemoan it, that man, who is capable of and created for so high an honor and so heavenly an exercise, as to serve his Maker here and to enjoy him hereafter, should all his time, like a hog, be digging and rooting in the earth and not once look up to heaven in earnest, till the knife is put to his throat that he cometh to die....

### **C. How to see the whole of life**

1. Our work here has a very peculiar quality when seen through an eternal lens. On one hand, all the work which I perform in this world is bound to perish. God will destroy the world and the direct physical results of all my work. Yet, I am called upon to perform this work to the glory of God knowing that it will come to nothing.

Therefore, we need to see our work as not an end in itself, but as a means to the only end of this life: To glorify God and to enjoy him forever. Everything is an occasion for godliness or sin. Every moment is of crucial importance: there are no unimportant moments. Thus, work – which occupies the majority of our waking hours (or should) is of fundamental importance.

## **Part Two: A Christian man has a particular calling**

John Cotton, Christian Calling

**Doctrine:** *A true believing Christian, a justified person, he lives in his vocation by his faith.*

Richard Baxter wrote:

Choose that employment or calling in which you may be most serviceable to God. Choose not that in which you may be most rich or honorable in the world; but that in which you may do the most good, and best escape sinning. <https://memoirandremains.com/2012/02/04/the-puritan-work-ethic/>

Medieval Catholicism taught that spiritual perfection is to be found in celibacy, poverty, and the monastic

withdrawal from the world, where higher spiritual life is found. But the reformers emphasized the spiritual dimension of family life, productive labor, and cultural engagement. “Vocation” is simply the Latin word for “calling.” According to Luther, God calls each of us to various tasks and relationships. We have vocations in the family (marriage, parenthood), in the workplace (as master, servant, exercising our different talents in the way we make a living), and in the culture (as rulers, subjects, and citizens). We also have a vocation in the church (pastors, elders, organists, congregants), but the spiritual life is not to be lived out mainly in church and in church activities. Rather, when we come to church, we find the preaching of forgiveness for the sins we have committed in our vocations. Then, through Word and sacrament, our faith is strengthened. Our faith then bears fruit when we are sent back to our vocations in our families, our work, and our culture.

Luther stressed that vocation is not first about what we do. Rather, it is about what God does through us. God gives us this day our daily bread through the vocation of farmers, millers, bakers, and — we would add — the factory workers, truck drivers, grocery store employees, and the hands that

prepared our meal. God creates and cares for new life by means of the vocations of mother and father, husband and wife. He protects us by means of police officers, judges, the military, and other **Romans 13** vocations of those who “bear the sword.” God brings healing not primarily through miracles but through the vocation of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and the other medical vocations. God teaches through teachers, conveys His Word through preachers, gives the blessings of technology through engineers, and creates beauty through artists. God works through all the people who do things for us, day by day. And He also works through us, in whatever tasks, offices, and relationships He has called us to do.

The doctrine of vocation charges our everyday lives and our mundane activities with spiritual significance, and it is indeed a powerful motivator to perform them with excellence. But there is another dimension to vocation, one that is often left out. Yes, we fulfill our callings to the glory of God. But how, exactly, do we glorify God? That is to say, how does God command us to glorify Him?

The medieval Catholics also spoke much of glorifying God. The Jesuits had as their motto: “to

the greater glory of God.” The Inquisition burned Protestants at the stake for God’s glory.

Luther stressed that our vocations are not works that we perform “for” God. The monastics talked that way, as if the Lord of the universe needed or was impressed by our actions. “God does not need our good works,” Luther said. “But our neighbor does.” The monks insisted they were saved by their good works, but Luther denied that their self-chosen mystical exercises, performed in isolation from other people, could even be called good works. “Who are you helping?” he asked. Good works are those that help our neighbor. They are performed primarily in our callings.

Our relationship to God is based wholly on His works, not our own; on His grace; on our redemption in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He, in turn, calls us to love and serve our neighbors. And yet, we learn from Christ that “as you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” ([Matt. 25:40](#)). So it turns out that when we love and serve our neighbor, we are serving Christ after all.

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/protestant-work-ethic>

## **Lesson:**

In this text, Paul gives some of the strongest words in all of the Bible of the necessity and responsibility to work.

Based on this text and the previous we have read from Proverbs, it is no small sin to be a lazy person. God does not look favorably on laziness or the life of the sluggard.

Paul writes,

**6** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

Later in verse 10,

**10** For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

Then verse 14,  
2 Thessalonians 3:14–15 (NKJV)

**14** And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. <sup>15</sup> Yet do not

count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Wow, this is amazing. Very Strong words. Very stern and sobering. Unrelenting and inexcusable

Avoid that brother who is lazy and offer him no food. Let him go hungry.

Severe punishment from the Body of Christ for the lazy brother.

What was going on here.

Commentaries offer a number of possible scenarios as to why laziness and an unwillingness to work broke out among the church.

### Some believe

1. It came from the past and the Greek mythology. The Greek gods, used work as a means of punishment and so the new Christians would have nothing to do with the past beliefs of the Greek gods.

2. Some believe it was the Jewish influence of the Sacred verses the secular, that the Pharisees taught. So they thought, that it was better to sit and study the Word and pray all the time.



3. Others, believe it had to do with their eschatology. That they were looking for the imminent return of Jesus Christ and that there was no real need to give your attention to work just sit around and wait.

It may have been one of those or it may have been an influence of all three of them. But what is very clear is that there was a problem with the people at the church not willing to work but to become busy bodies with idle time.

So Paul address is this very directly and with no leniency whatsoever. This is not to be tolerated, it is not acceptable, it is against the order of society and the word of God, it should be very obvious to all of them. And we can determine the the obvious nature of the commandment because of the serious response to the sin. They should have known that they need to be working. They should have known how serious it is to be lazy and a sluggard. As Paul will go on to say, there was no example given to them of laziness in his ministry. There definitely is nothing that he taught that is referred to here in this text as the tradition that would've anyway communicated that you can kick back and be lazy. Paul is essentially saying get to work and don't

waste your life that God has given you to be a steward of.

### Matthew 25:14–30 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> “For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. <sup>15</sup> And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. <sup>16</sup> Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. <sup>17</sup> And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

<sup>20</sup> “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ <sup>21</sup> His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ <sup>22</sup> He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ <sup>23</sup> His lord

said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

<sup>24</sup> “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours*.’

<sup>26</sup> “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. <sup>27</sup> So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

<sup>29</sup> ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Apparently, they had disregarded the earlier instruction that the apostle Paul had given to them so that by the time he writes the second letter he had found out that some of them were not doing what he told them to.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

1 Thessalonians 4:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

This passage contains six incentives to motivate those sinning to repent and get to work:

—Fellowship, Followship, Food, Factions, Fallout, Family

## 1. Fellowship

Paul writes,

**6** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

Paul here issued a stern **command** regarding them.

We command P.A Ind

**παραγγέλλω**: to announce what must be done—‘to order, to command.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 425). United Bible Societies.

The Greek verb translated **we command** is in the emphatic position in the sentence; Paul was not offering a suggestion, but issuing an order. This **command** was not based on his, Silas’s, and Timothy’s authority; it was issued **in the name of**

**our Lord Jesus Christ** and carried the full weight of His authority. Therefore it was to be obeyed instantly and unquestioningly.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 304). Moody Press.

**6** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

withdraw Pres Mid Inf

**to avoid** v. — to stay clear from; keep away from; keep out of the way of someone or something.

**στέλλω** mid. aor. 3 sg. ἐστείλατο LXX; pf. ptc. fem. pl. ἐσταλμένα 3 Macc 1:19 (Hom. et al. in the sense ‘make ready, send’, etc.; ins, pap, LXX, Philo; Jos., Ant. 2, 43) in our lit., as well as in LXX, only mid.

① **to keep one’s distance, keep away, stand aloof** ἀπό τινος (Polyb. 8, 22, 4; cp. Mal 2:5) *from someone* **2 Th 3:6**.

② **to shun someth., avoid, try to avoid**

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 942). University of Chicago Press.

When Paul ordered the Thessalonians to **keep away from every brother** who refused to work he was commanding them to shun them. And there were to be no exceptions. As previously noted, there is no valid excuse for anyone who is able to work and has the opportunity to do so to be idle. The verb translated **keep away** is a form of the verb *stellō* which, when used in the middle voice, means, “to avoid,” “shun,” or “pull back from.” Paul commanded the rest of the congregation to separate from and ostracize **every idle brother**.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 304). Moody Press.

In the context of Matthew 18, this is the third step in the process of church discipline. Step one is to confront the sinning believer privately; step two is to confront him again with two or three witnesses present; step three is to tell the offense to the congregation and cut the offender off from the normal life of the church. For those who persist in sinning after the first three steps, step four is to remove them from the fellowship altogether (treat

them as unbelievers; Matt. 18:17). Since a disciplined sinner was still to be regarded as a **brother** (cf. 3:15), this disfellowshipping stopped short of the complete and final (barring repentance) excommunication of step four.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 304). Moody Press.

## 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. <sup>15</sup> Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

That the indolent believers faced church discipline shows the seriousness with which God views failing to work. Since true believers cherish the fellowship of other believers, being cut off from it should be painful enough to effect a change in their behavior. The drastic step of church discipline was also necessary to protect the church's reputation with outsiders. The world must also know that God does not tolerate indolence and laziness

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 305). Moody Press.



This is not unique... Paul has commanded this on other occasions, for sin.

### Romans 16:17 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

### 1 Corinthians 5:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

### 1 Timothy 6:3–5 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup> he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, <sup>5</sup> useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that

godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself.

**6** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

walk. P.A Pt.

περιπατέω ① to go here and there in walking, *go about, walk around*

② to conduct one's life, ***comport oneself, behave, live*** as habit of conduct; fig. ③ of 'walk of life',

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 803). University of Chicago Press.

disorderly—- NAS unruly, ESV idle

**88.247 ἄτακτος, ον; ἀτάκτως:** (derivatives of ἀτακτέω ‘to do nothing,’ 88.246) pertaining to refusing to work—‘idle, lazy, lazily.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 768). United Bible Societies.

***átaktos (atáktōs), ataktéō.***

1. *átaktos* means “disordered,” “disorderly,” “undisciplined,” “unbridled,” “without law or order.” *ataktéō* means “to set oneself outside the order,” “to evade obligations,” “to act without discipline, or irresponsibly.”

2. In the NT the adjective occurs in 1 Th. 5:14, the adverb in 2 Th. 3:6, 11, and the verb in 2 Th. 3:7. In 2 Th. 3:7 the reference is not just to laziness but to irresponsibility. Those who will not earn their living are outside the civil order, which embraces believers too. They are also outside the requirements of Christian teaching (v. 6). An undisciplined secular life stands in contradiction with the Christian profession. 1 Th. 5:4 is to the same effect.

Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume](#) (p. 1160). W.B. Eerdmans.

the specific manner in which the irresponsible behavior manifests itself is described in the context: **freeloading, sponging.** — On contractual obligations in the Rom. world s Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 148). University of Chicago Press.

In a military sense, *ataktōs* (**unruly**) refers to “being out of rank,” “out of line,” or “out of order.” It was also used in extrabiblical Greek writings to refer to apprentices being truant from work (William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, rev. ed. [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster, 1975], 217–18) MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 304). Moody Press.

Paul described the **unruly** in verse 11 (the only other time the word appears in the New Testament) as “doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.” MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#)

**6** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

Such idle, lazy, out-of-line behavior was definitely **not according to the tradition which** the Thessalonians

had **received**. As noted in the discussion of 2:15 in chapter 24 of this volume, **tradition** (lit., “something handed down”) refers to divine revelation given through the apostles. The concept of an extrabiblical body of tradition equal in authority to Scripture is foreign to the New Testament (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16–17). The inspired **tradition** they had **received** from Paul, both orally (3:10) and in writing (1 Thess. 4:11–12), forbade idleness. Therefore, those who refused to work were guilty of rejecting God’s Word.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (pp. 304–305). Moody Press.

In fifty-seven years, Charles Spurgeon accomplished three lifetimes of work. Every week he preached four to ten times, read six meaty books, revised sermons for publication, lectured, edited a monthly magazine. In his spare time, he wrote about 150 books.

Spurgeon shepherded the largest Protestant megachurch in the world (he knew all 6,000 members by name), directed a theological college, ran an orphanage, and oversaw sixty-six Christian charities.

"I wish it could be said of us that we wasted neither an hour of our time, nor an hour of other people's time."

Spurgeon was also a father and husband. He never sacrificed his family on the altar of ministry.

In the middle of the week on Wednesday he would take a needed break and spend it with his wife Susannah and his children

on Saturday

Breakfast, then work with secretary on revising/editing books for publication

Resolve with secretary any outstanding projects for the week

Afternoon, entertain guests in garden if weather is favorable

6:00 pm, dismiss guests after dinner

"Now, dear friends, I must bid you good-bye and turn you out of this study; you know what a number of chickens I have to scratch for, and I want to give them a good meal tomorrow."

10:00pm-12:00am, Prepare tomorrow's sermon:

- Select Scripture text

- Ask wife to read the Scripture text aloud

- Mentally divide sermon into natural breaking

points as she reads

Scribble divisions onto a half sheet of paper in purple ink

David Livingstone, the missionary to Africa, once asked Spurgeon, “How can you accomplish so much in one day?”

“You forget, Mr. Livingstone,” Spurgeon replied, “there are two of us working.”