

Home Group Helps

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

Living in the Light of His Return: Now, About Work . . .

⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we *kept* working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; ⁹ not because we do not have the right *to this*, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. 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. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. ¹³ But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. ¹⁵ Yet do not regard him as an enemy,

I. The Problem of Work (v.6) – ⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

II. Paul's Example of Work (v.7-9) – ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we *kept* working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; ⁹ not because we do not have the right *to this*, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.

III. The Principle of Work (v.10-13) – 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. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. ¹³ But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

IV. The Penitence Necessary for Those Who Will Not Work (v.6b, 14-15) – ^{6b} that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life . . . ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. ¹⁵ Yet do not regard him as an enemy,

1. Launching Question(s):

- What are some negative perceptions that you have heard regarding work in our culture?

2. Observation Question(s):

- How does the creation account in Gen. 1:27-31 help us to understand that God intends for work to be a good and necessary thing?
- How does the account of The Fall in Gen. 3:17-19 inform us about why work is now difficult, even though it is still good?

3. Interpretation Question(s):

- In vs. 6, Paul commands us to practice church discipline by “keep(ing) away from every brother who leads an unruly life” and in vs. 14 to “not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.” The word “unruly” might be better interpreted “disruptive-idle.”
- Why would Paul command us to avoid and shame the “disruptive unruly?”
- In vs. 15, he softens his point by saying, “*Yet* do not regard him as an enemy.”
- How does this statement give us some insight into the purposes of church discipline?

4. Reflection Question(s):

- In vs. 10, Paul provided a very straightforward command, “if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.”
- What are some implications of this command upon our view of Christian charity?
- What are some implications for the broader culture regarding social welfare, socialism/communism, homelessness, etc.?
- Paul’s command for these “disruptive unruly” folk is for them to repent and to “work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.”
- Explain the common-sense nature of this solution.
- How might this command restore *shalom* (peace, harmony, tranquility, etc.) to the individual?
- How might obedience to this command restore *shalom* in the church?
- How might it restore *shalom* in the culture at large?

5. Application Question(s):

- How might you be more charitable in your giving, but more discerning in your charity this coming week?

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