

Edgemont Bible Church
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2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

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Intro: Work in many cases is viewed as a necessary evil, a way to pay debt and fund a certain lifestyle. Even today, the push for a college education is so that one can get a good or cushy job instead of manual labor. Work viewed apart from God appears to have little value. Solomon in Ecclesiastes asks:

Ec 1:3 What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun?

Ec 2:22 For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun?

Ec 3:9 What profit has the worker from that in which he labors?

Ec 5:16 And this also is a severe evil-Just exactly as he came, so shall he go. And what profit has he who has labored for the wind?

Seeing work from a human perspective, Solomon says:

Ec 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.

Ec 2:18 Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

Ec 4:4 ¶ Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

Ec 4:8 There is one alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labors, Nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks, "For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?" This also is vanity and a grave misfortune.

Ec 5:15-16 As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a severe evil-Just exactly as he came, so shall he go. And what profit has he who has labored for the wind?

Ec 6:7 All the labor of man is for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied.

Only when looked at from God's perspective does work have value:

Ec 2:24 Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.

Ec 3:13 and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor-it is the gift of God.

Ec 5:19-20 As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor-this is the gift of God. For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.

For us, as Christians, there is no such thing as a secular job, all work is a spiritual opportunity to give glory to God - 1 Co 10:31. We need reminding of several Biblical truths as we consider work.

First, God exalted work when He commanded it - Ge 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden *to tend and keep it*; Ex 20:9 *Six days you shall labor* and do all your work, **Second**, the Godhead set the example to follow in the work of creation - Gen 1:1; Preservation - Heb 1:3; Providence - 1 Chr 29:11; Judgment - Acts 17:31; redemption - Gal 4:4-5; 3:13; Building the Church - Mt 16:18; intercession - Ro 8:26,34; Preparing a place in the Father's house - Jo 14:1-3; Convicting sinners - Jo 16:8; regenerating them - Tit 3:5; and indwelling them - 2 Tim 1:14. **Third**, work is a feature of the creation mandate - Ps 104:14 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the service of man, That he may bring forth food from the earth. **Fourth** - It is a gift from god providing development of skill and productivity, contribution to society, value, meaning, and fulfillment in life, prevents idleness which is debilitating and destructive. It also allows man to show the image of God in his creativity, and providing for needs of all in his care. **Fifth** - work can be elevated above the mundane when done to the Glory of God.

This is the third time that Paul has had to deal with this subject, this passage; 2 Th 3:10 - when he was there; and 1 Th 4:11-12; 5:14. We don't know the motive of those involved, but we do know they are now at the point of unrepentant behavior.

VII. Work: A Noble Christian Duty

A. Dis-fellowship - vs 6

1. But we command you, brethren,
 - a. in the emphatic position
 - b. in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - i. the full authority of Christ behind the command
 - ii. To be obey instantly and without question
2. that you withdraw from every brother
 - a. **stello** - abstain from associating with, avoid, withdraw self.
 - b. loving does not allow him to continue in sin, but to separate from him
3. who walks - way of life
 - a. disorderly
 - i. **ataktos** - out of rank or order, disorderly.
 - ii. vs 11- not working at all, but are busybodies
 - b. not according to the tradition which he received from us.
 - i. tradition - refers to divine revelation given through the apostles
 - ii. Disobedience is against the Lord and faces Church discipline
 - step 1 - confront the sinning believer
 - step 2 - confront him again with 2 or 3 witnesses
 - step 3a - tell it to the church
 - due to lack of repentance - Mt 18:17a where they exclude him from normal life in the church, but still treated as a brother
 - step 3b - If he continues in unrepentance,
 - treat as heathen or tax collector - Mt 18:17c
 - deliver to Satan - 1 Co 5:5

B. Example - vs 7-9

1. how you ought to follow us,
 - a. **mimeomai** - to imitate:--follow.
 - b. as they followed Christ - 1 Co 11:1 they were models of
 - i. gospel preaching - 1 Th 1:6; ii. enduring suffering - 2:2;
 - iii. honesty and integrity - 2:3-5; iv. humility - 2:6;
 - v. gentleness - 2:7; vi. affection - 2:8; vii. self-sacrifice - 2:8;
 - viii. holiness - 2:10; ix. Prayer - 3:10
2. For you yourselves know
 - a. firsthand knowledge - 1 Th 2:1; 3:3; 5:2; Acts 20:18,34
 - b. for we were not disorderly among you;
 - i. **atakto** - verb form of word used in vs 6
 - ii. Sharp contrast to the lazy or idle members of the church
 - c. nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge
 - i. meaning food, sustenance
 - ii. Stayed at Jason's house - Acts 17:7
 - d. but worked - **ergazomai** - to toil (as a task, occupation), effect, be engaged in or with, commit, do, labor for, minister about, trade (by), work.
 - i. with labor - **kopos** - a cut, toil (as reducing the strength), pains:--labor, + trouble, weariness.
 - ii. and toil ,
 - **mochthos** - toil, sadness:--painfulness, travail.
 - night and day
 - iii. that we might not be a burden to any of you,
 - **epibareo** - to be heavy upon, to be expensive to; to be severe towards:--be chargeable to, overcharge.
 - Reminded them of this in 1 Th 2:9
3. not because we do not have authority,
 - a. Paul did accept gifts from other churches - 2Co 11:8-9; Phil 4:16
 - b. but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.
 - c. taught that elders should get paid - 1 Tim 5:17
 - d. most extensive passage on this point - **1 Co 9:3-14**

C. Survival - vs 10

1. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this:
 - a. not new information
 - b. spoke when he was there and in first epistle
2. If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.
 - a. not talking about those that are unable
 - i. the church and individuals have responsibility for these people
 - ii. Mt 6:2-3; Gal 2:10; 1 Tim 5:4; Heb 13:16; Jas 2:15-16; 1 Jo 3:17
 - b. the results of welfare culture are obvious in the African-American community

D. Harmony - vs 11-13

1. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner,
 - a. not working at all,
 - b. but are busybodies.
 - c. word play - **ergazomai** /not busy; - **periergazomai** /but busybodies
2. Now those who are such
 - a. we command and exhort
 - b. through our Lord Jesus Christ
 - i. similar to being in Christ
 - ii. have unity with one another and with Christ
 - iii. keep that unity intact by
 - d. that they work
 - i. in quietness - **hesuchia** - stillness, desistance from bustle or language:--quietness, silence. Opposite of being a busybody
 - ii. and eat their own bread. - providing for oneself
3. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.
 - a. when people abuse charity, it is easy to stop giving
 - b. Still have responsibility to help those that can't help themselves

E. Shame - vs 14

1. Since this is the 3rd time Paul deals with this subject
 - a. and if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle,
 - b. they are being sinfully obstinate
2. note that person - **semeioo** - mark out for serious attention
 - a. and do not keep company with him,
 - i. **sunanamignumi** - to mix up together, associate with:--(have, keep) company (with).
 - ii. To withdraw fellowship from
 - probably denied communion
 - definitely love feasts
 - b. that he may be ashamed
 - i. **entrepo** - to invert, to turn in on oneself, to confound:--regard, (give) reference, shame.
 - ii. The hope is that the lack of fellowship would cause the erring one to consider why he finds himself out of fellowship and change their behavior

F. Love - vs 15

1. Yet do not count him as an enemy, hasn't reached final stage of church discipline where he would be considered as a heathen or tax collector
2. but admonish him as a brother
 - a. Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
 - b. love and humility is always the motive behind discipline
 - c. restoration is always the goal