



2 THESSALONIANS

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18 – Work As Worship – Part 2

November 10, 2024

1. Thessalonica — A Hard-Working Church With A Lazy Problem

2. Idleness In America

- In 2021, after the pandemic, 36% of men ages 18 to 24 were living in their parent's basements. That is more than 1 in every 3.
- In 2021, 37% of able-bodied Americans—who are neither students nor retired nor caring for children at home—voluntarily dropped out of the workforce and chose a life of idleness and dependency.
- Food stamps are at a record high, with 42.1 million people, or 12.6% of the American population, receiving them.
- There are 11.3 million open jobs in America that businesses can not find employees to fill.

3. Review Of Last Week

- Work was in the world before sin was in the world. Sin didn't create work, it made it painful and difficult.
- While the Bible has a positive view of all work, for the first 1,600 years of the church history, religious work was elevated over ordinary work.
- Ephesians 6 reminds us we do our best at work, even if our paycheck isn't the best. We work as if we are serving Jesus. We have an audience of one. Jesus promises to reward us for our work, even if our earthly boss doesn't.

4. What are the consequences of avoiding work?

A. Those who refuse to work are in danger of being disfellowshipped.

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (ESV)

B. Those who refuse to work provide a bad example that others will follow.

For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 2 Thessalonians 3:7–8 (ESV)

...nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it,... 2 Thessalonians 3:8 (ESV)

...but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 2 Thessalonians 3:8 (ESV)

It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 2 Thessalonians 3:9 (ESV)

If Paul was a pastor without pay, should all pastors be without pay?

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 1 Timothy 5:17 (ESV)

Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Galatians 6:6 (ESV)

Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?
1 Corinthians 9:6–7 (ESV)

For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope

and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

1 Corinthians 9:9–11 (ESV)

In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:14 (ESV)

C. Those who refuse to work should go hungry.

For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (ESV)

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV)

D. Those who refuse to work destroy harmony in the church.

For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 2 Thessalonians 3:11 (ESV)

Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. 2 Thessalonians 3:12 (ESV)

E. Those who refuse to work make others grow weary of doing good.

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. 2 Thessalonians 3:13 (ESV)

Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse. Proverbs 28:27 (ESV)

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed. Proverbs 19:17 (ESV)

He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed,

because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:12–14 (ESV)

F. Those who persist in not working should experience shame.

If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. 2 Thessalonians 3:14 (ESV)

G. Don't give up on Christians who refuse to repent.

Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. 2 Thessalonians 3:15 (ESV)

5. Conclusion

- Since Jesus doesn't give up on me when I persist in sin, don't give up on a brother or sister in Christ if they persist in sin.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. 2 Thessalonians 3:16–18 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. Why do you think so many Americans are idle instead of pursuing work? What can be done about it?
2. **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:7-8.** What does this teach us about the positive or negative example we set with our lives? How can the way we work set a positive example for Jesus?
3. **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:10.** Paul says those unwilling to work should not eat. This is a hard teaching. When should it be applied? What exceptions should there be? If you were a deacon carrying out benevolence in the church, how would this change how you help people in need?
4. **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:11.** How can idleness in the church affect the unity and harmony of the church?
5. **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:13.** Paul reminds us not to grow weary in doing good. Have those who ask for money but are not in genuine need hardened your heart toward everyone? How do God's promises to those who are kind to the poor soften your heart? **Read Proverbs 28:27, 19:17, and Luke 14:12-14.**
6. **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:14.** Paul sounds harsh when he tells the Thessalonians to shame and avoid those who persist in avoiding work and ignoring his corrections. When and how should Christians shame those who are rebellious today? How do we shame someone as a brother, not an enemy?