

2 Thessalonians Chapter 3 Continued

Verses 10-12: Paul expounds his simple and straightforward work ethic: If a person will not work, he should not eat! The Thessalonians' diversion encouraged their meddling ways, demonstrating that "idle hands are the Devil's workshop."

2 Thessalonians 3:10 "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

As we said in the last lesson, these Thessalonians were sitting around doing nothing expecting the soon coming of the Lord. From this Scripture above, we can assume that they expected to be fed by the church, while they waited for the return of the Lord.

Many times, in our lifetime, people have decided on a date that the Lord was coming back. Many of them had stopped productive lives and just stayed at the church until the day came. Just as it was in the days of these Thessalonians, the day came and went by without the return of the Lord.

I am not criticizing these people, because I would have to point to myself first. I believe the coming of the Lord is very near. This however, does not stop me from writing the Bible studies. I will work until Jesus comes, or until I am physically unable to work. Each person must fulfill the task that God has for him to do.

We are all part of a great big puzzle. For the puzzle to be completed, we must take our place in the framework of God's plan. It is not fair to the ones who are working to feed those able bodied who are unwilling to work.

Verses 11-12: "We hear": Word had come that, in spite of Paul teaching them to work and writing to them about it (1 Thess. 4:11), some were still not willing to work (1 Tim. 5:13). These were commanded to settle down and begin an ordered life of work.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies."

God gave work to mankind to help man not to hurt him. Life would not be worth living, if there were not something constructive for us to do with our time. If you stay real busy, there is no time to talk about others, or to create a problem. The following Scripture lets us know what will happen, if we are not busy.

1 Timothy 5:13 "And withal they learn [to be] idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Too much idle time gives a person plenty of time to get into trouble.

2 Thessalonians 3:12 "Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

God is not pleased with those who sit around and do nothing. It is not fair to expect someone else to work and feed you the bread that they have earned. Even worse than that, is what it does to the idle person. They lose their self-esteem.

I have always said, it is better to give someone an opportunity, than it is to give them a hand-out. The person receiving the charity loses his self-respect. The following Scripture says it the best.

1 Thessalonians 4:11 "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;"

There is no sweeter meal than the meal you earned by the sweat of your own brow. I really believe that everyone needs to be needed. We all need to do our share of the work to feel good about ourselves. Paul's word to those who are not working is to go back to work.

2 Thessalonians 3:13 "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing."

“Be not weary”: The hard working believers were tired of having to support the lazy, and were ready to stop all help to those in need, giving up all charity. Paul reminded them that the truly needy still required help and that the Thessalonians must not be negligent toward them.

Let us look at some related Scriptures on this.

Romans 2:7 "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:"

1 Corinthians 15:58 " Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

We know that God set the world up with 6 days of work and one day of rest per week. Work for the night is coming when man's work is done.

The parable about the talents is about working for God. God is not pleased when we do not use the talent He has given us for Him. The greatest reward that any of us can have when we get to heaven is to hear the Lord say, well done, thy good and faithful servant.

Verses 14-15: This instruction falls short of excommunication. Paul intends his readers to shame the brother, who is not an enemy, into obedience.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

“Have no company with him”: This means to “mix it up” in the sense of social interaction. Blatantly disobedient Christians were to be disfellowshipped (verse 6), to produce shame and, hopefully, repentance if they refused to obey the Word of God. (See Matthew 18:15; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Gal. 6:1), for additional details on how to deal with those engaged in unrepentant and repeated sin.

Those who do not follow the teachings that Paul has brought to them are rebellious. They do not accept instruction.

These are people who proclaim Christianity, but do not recognize Paul's authority in the church. They are classed as troublemakers and are to be treated as if they are not one of the group, until they change their ways. The other Christians are not to fellowship with him. This seems cruel, but it might bring him to his senses.

2 Thessalonians 3:15 "Yet count [him] not as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother."

“Enemy ... brother”: The purpose of this disfellowship discipline is not final rejection. While an unrepentant pattern of sin is to be dealt with decisively, it is to be continually kept in mind that the one with whom one deals is a brother in the Lord. So all further warnings to him about his sin are done with a brotherly attitude. For instruction on the manner of church discipline (see Matthew 18:15-20).

This means that they should tell him of his error and give him a chance to change. It is not that he has turned his back on God, but that he has rebelled against the teaching of Paul.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord [be] with you all."

The Lord of Peace and the God of Peace are the same. This is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only peace that any of us have is the peace that we have within.

Paul knew this characteristic of God would be most meaningful to reflect upon considering the intense spiritual battle that raged all around the Thessalonians (1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 5:23). Paul's other benedictions to this church (in verse 5, 2:16-17; 1 Thess. 3:11-13; 5:23).

This peace is in our life, when the Lord Jesus Christ takes up residence in us and brings the peace that passes understanding. In this world, there is no peace, except the peace that Jesus brings us. He will never leave us or forsake us. He is our Peace.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Faith and fear are opposites. Peace is like faith. If Jesus is Peace, and if Jesus lives in us, then we have peace in our life.

2 Thessalonians 3:17 "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write."

“Salutation of Paul”: Paul’s seal in his own handwriting indicates the authenticity of this letter. This was necessary, since apparently, some forged documents claiming to be from his pen were circulating (2:2). Paul makes clear how they can identify his genuine writings.

Paul often wrote through a secretary (Rom. 16:22). When that was the case, as most likely with this letter, Paul added an identifying signature (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18), so that readers could be sure he was truly the author.

We know by the verse above that Paul, himself, wrote this letter to the Thessalonians. We have spoken before about an epistle being a special letter of instruction that Paul had written. Paul sometimes had someone else to write the letters that he dictated. It seems in this particular letter, that was not the case.

2 Thessalonians 3:18 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen."

This is a typical closing of Paul's letter. Even though he used this very much, it was not just automatic. Paul really did desire that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ would be with them. Notice, that Paul did not exclude those who thought the Lord would be back now. He blessed them all.

2 Thessalonians Chapter 3 Continued Questions

1. If any would not _____, neither should he _____.
2. Why is this Scripture so important to these people?
3. Why is it wrong to pick out a day, and sit down and do nothing waiting for that day?
4. We must all _____ the job that God has for us to do.
5. They are not working at all, but are _____.
6. God made us to work while we are on this earth, who does that benefit the most?
7. In verse 12, Paul sends this message with what authority?
8. What did he instruct them to do in verse 12?
9. Who does it hurt the worst when someone is idle?
10. Be not weary in _____ _____.

11. Which of the parables teach us that God expects us to work?
12. Verse 14 tells us to have _____ _____ with someone who will not work.
13. What could you call this type person?
14. What does "admonish him as a brother" mean?
15. Who is the same as the Lord of Peace?
16. How do we know that Paul personally wrote this letter?
17. What benediction did Paul write at the end of this letter?