

June 25, 2017

“Avoid the Idle and Disruptive”

Focal Passage: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18 (NASB)

Cross References: Genesis 1:27-28; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 9:3-14; 15:58; Galatians 6:1-5, 9-10; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12; 5:14

Lesson Idea: We are to avoid people who are idle and disruptive and be people who work well.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

June 18 Psalms 26-31	June 19 Psalms 32-35
June 20 Psalms 36-39	June 21 Psalms 40-45
June 22 Psalms 46-50	June 23 Psalms 51-57
June 24 Psalms 58-65	June 25 Psalms 66-69

Background: In the conclusion of this letter, Paul addressed people in the church who had become idle and told them to get to work.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

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, but admonish him as a brother.

16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!

17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

DISCUSSION:

- v 6. What command does Paul give to his brethren, the Thessalonians, and by whose authority? Why should we keep away from those who lead unruly lives? (for other types of people Paul said to avoid see Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13)
- Why is the apostolic tradition foundational for our faith, but other traditions are not?

NOTE: from David Guzik, *2 Thessalonians*:

But we command you: The strength of this statement is plain. It was not only a command, but it was also made in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly: Paul defined the disorderly as those who did not walk according to the tradition (the pattern of teaching and living) Paul and the apostles gave to them.

Churches should never withdraw from someone because they fail to conform to man's traditions or teachings. The only standard to uphold is apostolic tradition and teaching.

“The present tense of the verb walks denotes that it is a deliberate course of action. Their disorderly conduct is not an occasional lapse but a persistent practice.” (Hiebert)

Withdraw from every brother: Paul had already told the Thessalonians to warn the unruly (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Apparently, the problem still remained in some measure, so he told them to now discipline the unruly ones in question.

The purpose in withdrawing from these disobedient was not so much punishment, but more so simply to deny these disobedient ones the aid and comfort of the fellowship of the body of Christ until they repented. It put them out of the church into the “domain” of Satan (the world), in hope that they might miss the fellowship of the church so much they would repent of their disobedience.

Paul echoed the same idea in 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The purpose was to bring about repentance and salvation in the disobedient ones, not to condemn or damn them.

In an indirect way, Paul showed that his vision for the church was that it should be such a place of love and comfort that it would be a significant deprivation to be put out of it. Churches today should also fit that description.

- v 7. What example did Paul and his companions set for the Thessalonians? Why is an “undisciplined life” also an ungodly life?
- v 8-9. Why did Paul and his companions work night and day to pay their own way? What right did he say they had but did not use? What example were they trying to set? (see 1 Corinthians 9:3-14)
- v 10. What other command did Paul give about those who refused to work?
- v 11. How does laziness and idleness demonstrate an undisciplined life? Why do people who are not busy with their work frequently become “busybodies?” Why is that destructive for both them and the other people in their lives?
- v 12. What does God’s Word command and exhort people to do? What is the manner of work that is recommended and why? (see Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12)

Time for reflection: Take a moment to reflect on the culture we live in today...

- How does Paul’s instructions about work contrast with the “American dream” of getting rich quick and not having to work anymore?
- How do these instructions compare to the original instructions God gave man in the beginning, as found in Genesis 1:26-28...
²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- v 13. Why should we not “grow weary of doing good?” (see 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9-10)

NOTE: from Guzik:

Do not grow weary in doing good: This was a proper encouragement for those who were working as they should. Few things are more wearying than seeing others take advantage of Christian generosity. But we should never let the manipulations of some discourage us from doing good to the truly needy.

The older King James Version has this, *be not weary in well doing*. There is plenty of *well-wishing* in the world, *well-resolving*, *well-suggesting*, and *well-criticizing* are also found in plenty. Many people are good at *well-talking*, but there is not enough of simple *well doing*.

- v 14-15. How does Paul say to treat those who would not obey their instruction? Why? How should we treat people who reject instruction?
- v 15. How do you “admonish” someone as a brother? (see Galatians 6:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:14)

NOTE: from Guzik:

Note that person and do not keep company with him: To *withdraw* means to note that person, and to not keep company with him, with the purpose of causing him to be ashamed. Yet, the purpose is not to make him an enemy of the church, but through the severity of the withdrawal from fellowship, to warn and admonish him as an erring brother.

- v 16. What did Paul’s benediction express concerning His desires for the Thessalonians? Why is that a good model to pray for each other?

NOTE: from Guzik:

Now may the Lord of peace: Paul’s blessing of peace (*always in every way*) was appropriate for this church experiencing both persecution and tribulation. It is the presence of the Lord of peace that will grant them this peace.

- v 17. Why was it important that Paul put his “distinguishing mark” on this letter? (see 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3)
- v 18. What does it mean to you to know that “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” is with you?

APPLICATION:

- ✓ How well are you doing the work the Lord has given you?

Lesson by Bro Stan