

WHY WORK?

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

I. Work Is An Imperative To God's People (4:11)

1. Work is commanded in the Scriptures (v. 11)

(1) Work is part of God's design (v. 11)

Ills: The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15)

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground. (Genesis 3:19a)

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. (Genesis 20:9-10)

(2) Work is part of man's delight (v. 11)

Ills: The wages of the righteous bring them life, but the income of the wicked brings them punishment. (Proverbs 10:16)

All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. (Proverbs 14:23)

The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep. (Ecclesiastes 5:12)

Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work – this is a gift of God. (Ecclesiastes 5:19-20)

2. Work is commanded by the Savior (v. 11)

(1) Jesus commands work with His words

Ills: Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working." (John 5:17)

"As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work." (John 9:4)

(2) Jesus commands work with His works

Ills: "Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business." (Luke 2:49)

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work." (John 4:34)

Then they asked Him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent." (John 6:28-29)

"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." (John 17:4)

Jesus is the creator of the universe. He was a carpenter by trade. His hands were busy for good and the Kingdom of God.

II. Work Is An Indication Of God's Person (4:12a)

1. A lazy life does not represent God (v. 12a)

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Ills: The Bible speaks of sloth, being slothful which means idleness, laziness, indolence, shiftless, apathy, or indifference.
Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! (Proverbs 6:6)
How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? (Proverbs 6:9)
A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing. (Proverbs 20:4)
The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth. (Proverbs 26:15)
If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks. (Ecclesiastes 10:18)
Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. (Romans 12:11)
We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. (Hebrews 6:12)

Appl: The Christ follower should be the best employee of all. We go the second mile, we do the unexpected, we do more than what is required. Living the Christian life can add to the joy of work.

2. A labor of love does reveal God (v. 12a)

Ills: Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. (Psalm 128:1-2)
He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. (Ephesians 4:28)
"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)
Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. (1 Thessalonians 2:9)

Appl: A good example is Peter Milne who established a church in the Hebrides.

III. Work Is An Independence For God's Praise (4:12b)

1. We must not be dependent on another generation (v. 12b)

Ills: Children should not always be dependent on their parents.

A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

Note 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10.

Ills: Parents should not be dependent on their children.

Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. (2 Corinthians 12:14)

2. We must not be dependent on the government (v. 12b)

Ills: We must stop making a national debt that our children and grandchildren can never repay. The government has its own purpose as found in Romans 13:1-7. We are to take care of our own family. "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8)

Abraham Lincoln, many years ago, had this very valuable advice.