

Work in the Fallen World: Problem of Idleness

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

I. The root of the problem

II. The expression of the problem

A. Non-religious expression

"The authorities built COVID into a 12-month monster, so people naturally sought respite in distractions from the monster. The pandemic accelerated a transition evident for years away from the basic concept of daily work and toward an emerging idea that life is less about work and more about play. Life as a nonstop game."

(Daniel Henninger, May 12, 2021, The Wall Street Journal, "Is the American work ethic dying?")

B. Religious expression

III. The solution to the problem

A. Christ redeems us for the life of worship

Romans 12:1 "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

"If you want a life of easygoing self-indulgence, then do not whatever you do, become a Christian. But if you want a life of self-discovery, deeply satisfying to the nature God has given you; if you want a life of adventure in which you have the privilege of serving Him and other people; if you want a life in which to express something of the overwhelming gratitude you are beginning to feel for him who died for you, then I urge you to yield your life, without reservation and without delay, to your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." (John Stott, Basic Christianity, 124)

Christ redeems us for the life of worship, by giving us new vision for work as worship

Romans 12:1 "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Colossians 3:23 “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,”

1 Corinthians 10:31 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

“The Church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the Church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables. Church by all means, and decent forms of amusement, certainly—but what use is all that if in the very center of his life and occupation he is insulting God with bad carpentry? No crooked table legs or ill-fitting drawers ever came out of the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. Nor, if they did, could anyone believe that they were made by the same hand that made Heaven and earth.”
(Dorothy Sayers, Why Work?)

Ephesians 2:8–10 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

2 Thessalonians 3:13 “As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.”

1 Timothy 5:9–10 “Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.”

Ephesians 6:5–8 “Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.”

B. Church helps us to live the life of worship

Titus 2:9–10 “Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”