

Paul finishes his second letter to the church in Thessalonica addressing a matter in the church that is often still a struggle in ministry today – People who take advantage of the generosity of others.

**Is it simply laziness?**

The Greek words *Ataktos* or *Atakteo* means disorderly, unruly, and undisciplined. Greek society used this word to describe those who would fail to show up to work.

**The natural order of ministry and Christian living according to Paul:**

There are about 19 proverbs about laziness. And a common warning found in these proverbs is how laziness will lead to poverty and hunger.

Proverbs 10:4

Poor is he who works with a negligent hand,  
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

A little folding of the hands to rest” —

Your poverty will come in like a vagabond  
And your need like an armed man.

Proverbs 20:4

The sluggard does not plow after the autumn,  
So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.

Proverbs 19:15

Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless go hungry.

Proverbs 6:9-11

How long will you lie down, O sluggard?  
When will you arise from your sleep?

Proverbs 20:13

Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake  
and you will have food to spare.

“A little sleep, a little slumber,

**If Idleness was so frowned upon, how did it become an issue Paul had to address in Thessalonica?**

**What is a busybody?**

The Greek word used here is *Periergos*, which means a meddling or prying person. Someone who is busy meddling in other peoples’ affairs.

Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. **1 Timothy 5:13-16**

Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down. As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife. The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts. Like a coating of silver dross on earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart. **Proverbs 26:20-23**

Starting a quarrel is like opening a floodgate, so stop before a dispute breaks out. **Proverbs 17:14**

**What command does Paul give in how the Thessalonians are to react towards the idlers and busybodies?**

## An overview of church discipline:

*Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently.*  
**Galatians 6:1**

*“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”* **Matthew 18:15-17**

## Paul is following proper church discipline.

*Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all of God’s family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: **You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*** **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

*And we urge you, brothers and sisters, **warn those who are idle and disruptive**, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.* **1 Thessalonians 5:14**

*I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. **Do not even eat with such people.** What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. **“Expel the wicked person from among you.”*** **1 Corinthians 5:9-13**

## The purpose of ex-communication.

### Paul’s command to the idlers and busybodies.

*Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat.*

*Thessalonians 3:12*

## What do we do when we feel disillusioned and disheartened due to idlers and busybodies?