

Discipline Matters
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Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

2 Thessalonians: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th edition Paragraph Topic: Warning against Idleness;
Benediction

Central Idea of Message: Christians are to be disciplined workers earning their own keep, not undisciplined freeloaders or busybodies.

Introduction: Christians are not to be loafers or busybodies interfering in the lives of others. In fact, the Bible says to withdraw from the unruly. The following are Paul's concluding remarks to the Thessalonian Christians with particular reference to work, idleness, and discipline. Discipline matters.

I. Commandments to Work (vv. 6-15)

A. Keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life (v. 6)

- 1. The disorderly were those taking advantage of the church members' charitable spirit**
 - a) Paul believed in and promoted Christian charity
 - b) Paul spared no words in condemning the slothfulness of the able-bodied
 - c) Nowhere in Scripture is there a passage supporting charity for the able-bodied whose profession is begging (cf. Halley 523)
 - d) Some had given up work with the expectation that the Lord's return would be immediate
 - e) What does this say about mendicant orders?
- 2. A command from Paul and his companions given in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: authoritatively**
- 3. Any Christian leading an unruly life, meaning inconsistent with the traditions taught by Paul and his companions, should be shunned**
 - a) Avoidance is designed to protect us from participating with them in their lifestyle

- b) Avoidance is designed to stir their consciences so as to bring them back into step with the biblical lifestyle
- B. **Follow the disciplined example of committed Christians (v. 7)**
 - 1. **Why is it that many Christians frequently choose worldly Christians after whom to pattern themselves?**
 - 2. **The Bible here teaches Christians to pattern their lives after the most disciplined believers, not the least disciplined believers**
- C. **Earn your keep (v. 8)**
 - 1. Stop mooching off of others
 - 2. Pay your own way like Paul and his companions: bivocational preachers
 - 3. Some work more than one job to make ends meet
 - a) Night and day
 - b) Husband and wife both working
 - c) Youth can work to help dad and mom
 - 4. **Get yourself a job so you will not be a burden to anyone**
 - a) Do not rely on welfare
 - b) Do not rely on family or friends
- D. **Become a proper model for others (v. 9)**
 - 1. Paul and his companions had a right to expect the financial support of others
 - 2. Paul and his companions chose, instead, to work
 - a) Rather than be a burden to others
 - b) In order to set an appropriate example
- E. **Practice what you preach (v. 10)**
 - 1. **Paul had taught that if anyone capable of working did not do so but, instead, mooched off of others, that one should not eat**
 - 2. These will not work, not cannot
 - 3. Paul taught this and lived this
 - 4. **Paul and his companions did not stand around at busy intersections with cardboard signs soliciting money in order to eat!**
- F. **Word about busybodies and undisciplined living spreads rapidly (v. 11)**
 - 1. Paul had heard the news and was no doubt appalled
 - 2. Undisciplined: work, quit, work, quit, sleep late, get fired, be late, get canned
 - 3. Doing no work at all: idle

4. Bouncing around from house to house bumming food, clothing, and shelter and flapping his trap all the while
5. Busybodies are those who use their time to stir up trouble
6. Idleness fosters busybodies
7. An idle mind is the devil's workshop
8. **Dead-beat Christians are a sin against God!**
- G. **Pay your own way (v. 12)!**
 1. Get a job
 2. Pay for your own food
- H. **Never grow weary of doing good (v. 13)**
- I. **Disassociate from the freeloaders and unruly to shame them into behavioral conformity (v. 14)**
 1. Shunning is not to be punitive but corrective
 2. Constructive peer pressure is encouraged
- J. **Do not regard the undisciplined as enemies but admonish them as brothers and sisters (v. 15)**
 1. Tell them the truth, even if it might result in them disliking you
 2. Tough love in action
 3. By disassociating from him

II. Conclusion (vv. 16-18)

- A. **A prayer that the Lord of peace will continually grant peace in every circumstance (v. 16)**
 1. This peace is not disturbed by outward circumstances
 2. This is peace from the Lord: peace with God, with yourself, and with others
- B. **A protection against forgery and a seal of authenticity (v. 17)**
 1. The letter was dictated by Paul to an amanuensis, probably Silas or Timothy
 2. **Paul penned the closing benediction in handwriting familiar to his readers**
 3. The Thessalonian epistles were probably Paul's first writings, thus, he was describing from the outset what would authenticate his letters: his signature and his penmanship
- C. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all: even the trouble-makers (v. 18)**

Conclusion: Discipline does matter. How disciplined are you?