

Warning Against Idleness

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

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In Genesis 1 & 2, God reveals Himself as a Worker. He neither slumber nor sleep (Ps 121:4), and Jesus declared that both He and His Father are working (John 5:17). Just as God had placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to work, He has also placed us in different places and vocations to work. We are all God's fellow workers, created to work for the creation, preservation, and redemption of this world.

Thessalonica was one of the major cities that Paul had visited and planted a Church in during his missionary journey. In his first letter to the church, he exhorts them to mind their own business and work with their own hands, that they may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. This alluded to the presence of idlers and busybodies in the church. Paul also urged the church to rebuke the idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, and help and be patient with the weak (1 Thess. 4:11-12; 5:14). However, the same problem persisted and thus, Paul wrote a second letter to the church.

3 Parts (2 Thess. 3:6-15)

1. Why Work?

Paul used strong language against the idle Christians, urging people to keep away from them. This was not to isolate or kick them out of the church, but rather to allow the idlers to become aware of their actions and be ashamed of themselves, hoping that they would repent and return. Similarly, the Bible warns against consuming the bread of idleness. Paul calls for the Christians to imitate him to work and not idle (v. 7). *"The Christian never retires from Christ's service. It is only the address of the workplace that changes."* -

gotquestions.org. We are coworkers of God, being created by God to work. We are created by God to work; our life's work of walking with God and serving Him will never change. We work because God is a worker.

2. Warning against Idleness

The difference between the act of resting and idleness lies with the end goal - one seeks to rest as commanded by God, the other seeks to rest as an end goal. By doing nothing, we are going against what God had designed us for. Idleness often leads one to busibodiness, and Peter warns against it, lest you suffer like a thief or evildoer (1 Peter 4:15). It was the sin of idleness that led to David's downfall (2 Sam.11:1). We need to guard the pockets of free-time we have (Prov. 16:7). A Christian life is not about giving out of abundance when we can bless others materially or serve others when we have spare time. At times, it calls for obedience and sacrifice.

3. How should we respond?

Paul instructed the church not to treat idlers as enemies but to reach out to them as brothers (v. 15). Paul also urged the church not to grow weary in doing good (v. 13). As we do good, we display the fruits of the spirit. We serve our Master, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Behind all the good is the motivation to do good. The reason we do good is because of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason we labour to the best of our ability, for the glory of God the Father. Jesus laboured tirelessly for our soul, even to the point of death. Let Christ's impending return lead us away from idleness and lead us to rest in the finished work of Christ.