

II Thessalonians 3: 10-12

Undisciplined Life
Discussion

HHBC





A Thematic-structured Outline from I Thessalonians 1: 3a:

constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

FIRST THESSALONIANS:

I. Opening:

[1:1-10]

II. Work of Faith:

(2:1-3:10)

III. Labor of Love:

(3:11 – 4:12)

IV. Steadfastness of Hope:

(4:13 – 5:11)

V. Closing:

(5:12-28)

SECOND THESSALONIANS:

I. Opening:

[1:1-2]

II. Work of Faith:

(1:3-12)

III. Steadfastness of Hope:

(2:1-17)

IV. Labor of Love:

(3:1-16)

V. Closing:

(3:17-18)

DR. JOHN SWEIGART



II Thessalonians chapter 3: 6-9: from last week to set the context -

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ***you keep away from*** every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.



II Thessalonians chapter 3: 10-12: this week's verses -

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.



II Thessalonians 3:10

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

First Class Conditional: IF no work; THEN no eat:

- *For even when we were with you, this we kept on charging you, that if, as is actually the case, anyone does not desire to work for his livelihood, let him not be eating.* (Wuest translation)
1. Note Wuest's translation with the Greek tense, voice and mood subtleties added: Paul kept on telling them in person; an ongoing order/command which is our word from last week: **parangellō** (Verb: imperfect; active; imperative)
 - a) Verse 10 stresses the chronic issue of men in Thessalonica taking themselves off the job/labor market and relying on other believers' sense of charity
 - b) The nature of the charity was food and drink; as the word 'eat' clearly says; and the Greek = the English nature of the word.
 2. "**NOT WILLING**" = not have a resolve, purpose or determination or even desire to work for their daily sustenance. Is the thrust of **ou thelō**
 3. Why Were the 'Out of Order' 'Out of Rank' / 'unruly' ones from Verse 6 in last week's verse unwilling or not desiring to work?



II Thessalonians 3:10

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

Why the Willingness to not Work?:

- Their misinterpretation of the '*imminent*' Rapture from 1st Thessalonians to mean: **soon**
- The false teaching that they were living in the Day of the Lord. Paul must have given them an indication that the Tribulation Period had a beginning and end and was 7 years, the shortness of it is clear in Daniel
- Therefore: the unruly, work-shirking, idle ones were the first iteration of what we call today modern day 'Date Setters' for the Day of the Lord event
- Today's equivalent: would be to cash out your IRA; sell your car; have a garage sale and wait on the rooftop for the Lord to come
- REVIEW of Verses 6-10 context: the ones who were unruly by not working were: (1). Paul instructs the ordered, working believers to stand aloof/withdraw from the unruly ones; (2). Paul points to his, Timothy and Silas's personal example of hard-working industry and keeping ones head down in their business; (3). Then the unruly/ataktos ones are rebuked by Paul personally
- PUTTING A POSSIBLE THEORY FORWARD: could it be that the unruly work-shirkers were the ones riling up the assembly that the Day of the Lord was here and not some outside false teachers? (II Thes 2:2: '*that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed.. That the Day has come...'*')



II Thessalonians 3:11

11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

Minding One's Own Business:

1. The idea behind Verse 11: The unruly/ undisciplined = **ataktōs** = (out of ranks; inordinate; irregular) ones from 3:6- in their idleness- has idle have time on their hands- and are thus free in their leisure time to scrutinize other brothers' lives
 - a) Some parallel Maxims: *'idle hands are the devil's tools'* (Chaucer); *'In Works of Labour or of Skill I would be busy too: For Satan finds some mischief still for idle Hands to do.'* (Isaac Watts); *'If the Devil finds a Man idle, he'll set him at Work'* (J. Kelly); *The devil tempts all other men, but that idle men tempt the devil* (Turkish proverb, Colton; Lacon)
2. There are Exemptions from Paul's Model of Hard Work: Those in ill-health; the Aged; Those who are sick; Disabled; Those who spent their bodies in a lifetime of labor and are now broken physically; Widows; (I Tim 5:5-11)
3. God's Own Example: *God is Himself a worker. After all, He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.* (Gen. 2:2) *As such, He designed a working vocation as a necessary part of life even before the fall and He expects each of us to be involved in some form of vocation that we might support ourselves, find a sense of significance and destiny in our labor, and be a productive member of society.* (J. Hampton Keathley, III)



II Thessalonians 3:11

11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

God's Model for Work, contin.:

3. God's Example for Work, contin.

- a) Work was assigned to Man before the Fall:
- b) Adam to cultivate and keep the Garden (Gen. 2:15)
- c) Men were called by God that were working other jobs: Moses was tending Jethro's flock (Exo. 3); Joshua was Moses's servant (Exo. 33:11); Gideon was threshing wheat when called (Jdg. 6:11); David was far out tending Jesse's sheep (I Sam. 16); Peter & Andrew were called by Jesus while fishing; and James and John were in a boat mending their father's nets (Mat. 4:18-21)

ADAPTED FROM 'II THESSALONIANS' J. HAMPTON KEATHLEY, III, 1998

4. Wuest's Translation of Verse 11: ***For we hear that certain ones are ordering their behavior in an insubordinate manner among you, not working for a living, but are busying themselves about everybody else's business.***

5. "BUSYBODIES" = ***periergazomai***: ***peri*** = (about; concerning; around; near) + ***ergazomai*** (work; labor; trade; producing; doing business)



II Thessalonians 3:12

12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ ***to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.***

Yet Another ‘Command in the Name of the Lord Jesus’

1. The First ‘Command’ ***parangellō***, by the Authority of Christ Jesus was in Verse 6: to “keep away” from the unruly/undisciplined ones
 - a) Note: Paul’s command by the name of Jesus in Vs. 6 directed to: the greater assembly of believers correctly working and being industrious
 - b) Verse 12: is directed to the offending parties themselves
 - c) Wuest’s Translation with emphasis: ***Now, these we command and exhort, we beg of them, please, in the Lord Jesus Christ, that in quietness they be working for their living and be eating their own bread.***



II Thessalonians 3:12

12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ *to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.*

FINAL Observations:

- The unruly, shirkers of work in Verses 6-12 are not spoken of as wicked men (compared to the unreasonable and wicked unbelievers in 3:2) that Paul asked for prayers of deliverance from. But, there is a window of opportunity here for reconciliation and repentance. (William Kelly)
- The transgression is not as bad as the young man in I Cor. 5:1-13 who was involved with his step-mother
- Note: Paul commands in 1st Corinthians that the man be removed from the assembly: ‘removed from your midst’; and he quotes Deuteronomy 13, 17, 22’s *‘thus you shall purge the evil from among you’*
- In Thessalonica: Paul commands the assembly to remove themselves from the man (men) who are shirking honest work
- The man in Corinth was asked to be restored to the fellowship (II Cor. 2:6-11)
- Therefore, the *ataktōs* (out of ranks) men from Thessalonica could all the more be restored
- Finally: this issue of working for self-support is the Major Theme #2 that Paul addresses to the Thessalonians, behind the Rapture in 1st Thes. and the Day of the Lord in 2nd Thes. The work issue is addressed in I Thes 4:11, 5:14; II Thes 3: 6-12



SUPPLEMENT: 2 Thes. 3: 6-9: Wuest

Translation expanded

Now, we command you, brethren, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother [Christian] who order his behavior in an insubordinate manner [having an insufficient inclination to disciplined work], and who does not order his behavior according to the teaching which you received and which was delivered by us for you to pass on to others. For you yourselves know perfectly well how it is a necessity in the nature of the case for you to emulate us, that we did not act in an insubordinate manner among you, neither did we eat bread at the hand of anyone gratis. But we engaged in manual labor for our livelihood in weariness and hardship night and day, in order that we might not be a burden to any one of you; not because we do not have a right [to be financially supported in our work by you] but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern for you to emulate.



SUPPLEMENT: 2 Thes. 3:10-12: WUEST

translation expanded

For even when we were with you, this we kept on charging you, that if, as is actually the case, anyone does not desire to work for his livelihood, let him not be eating. For we hear that certain ones are ordering their behavior in an insubordinate manner among you, not working for a living, but are busying themselves about everybody else's business. Now, these we command and exhort, we beg of them, please, in the Lord Jesus Christ, that in quietness they be working for their living and be eating their own bread.