

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18
III. 2:1-3:15 Main Teaching
B. 3:1-15 How should we work?
“Bees or Woodpeckers?”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 6 Commanded by the Word

III.) Vs. 7-10 Imitation by example

IV.) Vs. 11-15 Encouragement from the church

V.) Vs. 16-18 Provision of the Lord

I.) Intro.

An article that first appeared in June 3rd 1995 said that NASA delayed it's next week's launching of the space shuttle Discovery for two to three months out of safety concerns that arose when woodpeckers punched dozens of holes in the foam insulation of a fuel tank as the spacecraft as it sat on a launch pad at Florida's Kennedy Space Center. “*The little birds got the better of the big bird in this case,*” NASA spokesman Bruce Buckingham said. The space industry experts estimated the launch delay could cost as much as \$1 million to repair. This is a great illustration of Paul's closing remarks about a little problem of some who had too much time on their hands and begin to poke their beaks into people's business instead of working for the kingdom of God. Church problems left un-dealt with can be like physical problem left unintended, they just get worse. The longer they stay that way the more potential they have to infect other parts of the body. In chapter 4 of 1st Thessalonians Paul warned folks to “*mind their own business*” he told the leaders of the church to warn the unruly but apparently these folks hadn't repented and the Church was providing them the provisions and opportunity to continue their spread of trouble. These folks “woodpeckers” were lazy, a source of false

teaching and were spreading gossip about other in the church. Paul's antidote was that they need to get to work. To assist them in this Paul gives four motives to encourage the busy bodies to get busy!

II.) Vs. 6 Commanded by the Word

Vs. 6 **Commanded by the word**: Paul's words may seem a bit shocking to us when looking at the needs of the down trodden as we are conditioned to provide for those that lack. But instead Paul says that the body of Christ is to "*withdraw from them*". This command was not by Paul's authority but rather by Jesus Christ. Paul clarifies that this is aimed at the professing believer who is walking disorderly not according to tradition which they had been taught. God's plan for mankind was to work before the fall and sin turned work to toil but didn't change God's original design. God seems to have always called people to service who were already at work as the Bible is full of their testimonies. All Rabbis were required to have a trade and as a pastor for the first 9 years of ministry I worked as a goldsmith in my own business until I could no longer do both. Jesus said in Luke 19:13b "*Do business till I come*". There are those that like to quote Genesis 3:17-19 as saying that work is a part of the curse as it says, "*Cursed is the ground for your sakes; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life...In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.*" But that only speaks of man's condition towards work after the fall. Prior to the fall we are told in chapter 2 verse 15 the "*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.*" God gave man an endless cupboard of resources on which to live on and six days in which to labor and the seventh as a day of rest. It is also important for us to realize that we are created in the image of God and as such we see that God is a worker! We as His creation reach our

greatest potential and fulfillment by exercising our given abilities and resources in work. Satan has developed a campaign aimed towards humanity to discredit work making it a four letter word coming up with slogans that say, “*The worst day _____ is better than the best day of working!*” The key to fulfillment on the job is to see every routine the way that Paul wrote of it in Colossians 3:17, “*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*”

III.) Vs. 7-10 Imitation by example

Vs. 7-10 **Imitation by example**: Paul also points these believers to his practice while among them for those 4 weeks. It is amazing to recognize the productivity of the early Church and specifically Paul whom God used to write 1/3 of the New Testament. Paul had the right biblically to be supported in the ministry but he laid down his rights to be an example to young Christians. He didn’t just point to the authority of the Word he pointed to his example of obedience to it. Later on as the Church became established he received love offerings to help in new works. It is always appropriate for a leader to say, “*Imitate me as I imitate Christ*” and never “*Do as I say, not as I do!*” It is unfortunate to witness God’s servants today living in such a way that makes them the “*rich and famous*”. It is important that we read this sentence carefully as Paul doesn’t say “*cannot work*” but “*will not work*”. People who cannot work often need the help of the body of Christ and Paul is not writing about them but there are those who say they cannot work but the truth is they can work but choose to not work. Paul goes beyond saying not to give them money to not to give them food. The reason for Paul drastic action is to prevent those who will not work from becoming a leprosy upon the church as they have abundance of time, provisions and instead of using it for good serve themselves as busybodies who concern

themselves with others by stirring up trouble. One old guide observed that people are like mules: When they are at work pulling and packing they cannot kick but when they are kicking they cannot work! There are two types of people in the church those who notice a need and say to leadership and everyone then can, “*They need to do something about that!*” Then there are those who see a need and come to the leadership and say, “*I’d like to do something about that!*”

IV.) Vs. 11-15 Encouragement from the church

Vs. 11-15 **Encouragement from the Church**: Paul was a direct man and here he comes right to the point: “*If you can work then get to work and earn your own living!*” His was concerned that the idleness of some would affect the whole thus he wrote, “*Do not grow weary in doing good.*” Jewish Rabbis taught, “*He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief.*” The Church has a responsibility to encourage folks not to be idle and instead to with quietness...get to work! A lack of work leads a person to having too much time on their hands which leads them into trouble. **Some in Thessalonica had confused being busy working with being “busybodies”!** The word busybody literally means “*to be working around*” goofing off not accomplishing anything. Having warned those that were idle Paul says that the next step is to take action as he tells the church how to handle those who “**will not work**” by giving them **four guidelines**:

1. Vs. 13 “*Do not grow weary in doing good*”: In the context of those who will not work those that do work are exhorted to not give up of those who will not work. *Keep working at those who will not work so that they will learn to be productive!*
2. Vs. 14a “*Note that person and do not keep company with him*”: *Though we aren’t to give up on them we aren’t to go along with them either.* This is going involve what

most folks seek to avoid, “confrontation”! When you see a person who will not work take note of it and if you see it again take aside and lovingly confront them on this.

We have found that to get the body of Christ involved in service that we need to:

- Offer introductory opportunities
 - Invite people to work alongside us
 - Leadership needs to be seen doing the little things
 - Continue to verbally remind the Church that they are the Church
 - Encourage new opportunities that are along their interests and talents
3. Vs. 14b “*That he may be ashamed*”: Apply some good old fashion “positive peer pressure”. This can be difficult in the normal church body when less than 10% are doing all the work. But here at Calvary Chapel we have over 80% involved in week ministry in some capacity. So when the 20% that aren’t involved view the 80% that are having fun and fellowshiping they feel left out and want to join in!
4. Vs. 15 “*Do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*”: Don’t get too carried away to the point where the person isn’t encouraged feeling like a 2nd class citizen. Balance is always a difficult thing to maintain and the idea is to help them get to work not help them out the door!

God has designed us to work and we generally feel better when are working, as we have a sense of satisfaction that we have accomplished something. I personally believe that a lot of addictive behaviors can be attributed to idleness and not being busy. Many of these addictive pursuits fill the mind with temporary satisfaction supplanting natural endorphins that a person would get from work.

V.) Vs. 16-18 Provision of the Lord

Vs. 16-18 **Provision of the Lord**: Paul closes this letter with a wonderful promise: “*That the Lord of peace will give you peace always and in every way.*” The final motivation

was for the body to realize that the Lord was more than able to provide what was lacking in their life. He grants us **His peace**, **His presence**, and **His grace** that will enable us to live as He has called us too. No matter what our problem is we can experience His peace through it! Adversity often carries anxiety which is usually for more troubling than the problem, so Paul reminds them that they can skip the anxiety and go right to peace. In Matthew 8 the disciples go into the boat with Jesus to cross over the Sea of Galilee and as Jesus fell asleep in the bow a severe wind came up and the boys believed that the boat was going to sink and woke Jesus up. He must have given them the look as He said. *“I told you we were going over not going under and rebuked the wind and the waves as calm was established.”* Paul took up the pen and the parchment to close this letter by writing *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”* Paul was real and the fact that he would take the time to write of about the power of the gospel to transform even while suffering from the world for its proclamation spoke to the truth that Paul was convinced of the value of the truth. Here was a man at work, at peace admonishing those to *“stay the course!”*