

God's Command to the Working Man

II Thessalonians 3:6-15

Intro:

1. These people misunderstood Paul's teaching about the Lord's Second Coming.
2. They thought He was definitely returning any day.
3. So - some quit their jobs & became parasites on the church.
4. How should the church handle this situation?

I. What Working People in the Church Should Not Do

A. **ILL: Al & Willie.**

B. **v6 & 14** - You should not associate with the idle person.

1. **Idle** (ἀτάκτως) = lazy, idle, refusing to work, disorderly, sloppy, insubordinate, AWOL, doesn't fit in.
2. He didn't want to work, so he begs, leeching on others.
3. **v11** - Since he is idle, he meddles in other people's business.

C. **v15** - On the other hand, you are to treat him as a brother & warn him.

1. Treat him as a relative who is taken advantage of you because of his relationship to you.
2. What do you do with a relative who leeches?
 - a. You love him but probably don't want much to do with him.
 - b. So you warn him to straighten up.

D. **v13** - But - never let instances like this discourage you from being charitable!

1. You are taught to love your brother in the Lord. **I Thess 5:15 - Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.**
2. You are taught to help those truly in need. **Eph 4:28 - He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.**
3. So, what do you do when it's obvious you have become a victim?
 - a. Don't let these folks discourage your charity - just don't include them in it!
 - b. God isn't against welfare - He's just against lazy people!

II. What Working People in the Church Should Do

A. **v7-9** - Follow the example the Apostle Paul gave you. What did he do?

1. **v7** - He was not idle.
2. **v8** - He paid for the food he ate so he wouldn't be a burden to anyone.
 - a. If anyone had the authority to be provided for without charge, it would have been him!
I Cor 9:14 - In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.
 - b. Paul worked in the construction business making tents to be self supporting.
 - c. **ILL: Don Augustine working in a mortuary so he could be a missionary.**
3. **v9** - Paul did a good job at what he did in order to be a good testimony to others.
4. Whatever you do for a living, do it well! Doing a sloppy job is a poor witness.

B. **v12** - Work quietly without boasting.

1. If you make an honest wage you have nothing to boast about - God gave you the strength!
2. If you use part of your wages for charity you have nothing to boast about - God owns everything!

C. v14 - Obey God's word!

1. Everyone who is a Christian needs to obey, those who are idle & those who must deal with idle people.
 - a. v6, 10 & 12 - **Command** (παραγγέλλω) = give instructions, to announce something which was told by somebody else.
 - b. v6 - **Teaching** (παράδοσις) = tradition, something passed down or announced through the "chain of command".
 - c. These instructions were not from Paul, but passed on from the Lord - This is God's word!
2. Although the apostle meant the instructions in our message today, we should consider the whole New Testament to be authoritative for our conduct.
3. God's word is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God! **II Tim 3:16-17 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

Are you obeying the word of God:
About working hard instead of relying on others?
About living a Christian life?
About becoming a Christian?

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