



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Study 12: EXHORTATION TO DILIGENCE IN RESPONSIBLE LIVING

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

The Church in Thessalonica was a saved, sanctified, submissive, spiritual, soulwinning, steadfast, scriptural, separated, sound and healthy Church. However, reports came to the Apostle that some members had begun to “**walk disorderly**”, not after the teaching received from the Apostle. These disorderly members were idle, “**working not at all**”, but became “**busybodies**”. The standing believers were instructed to withdraw from “**any man**” who did “**not obey our word by this Epistle**”. Christ’s command, through the Apostle was, and still is, “**Note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed**”.

These idle, disorderly busybodies turned the good doctrine of God’s Word into excuses for laziness and slothfulness. Their excuse was, since the Coming of Christ was imminent, why should they work or earn a living? Have they not been commanded to “**pray without ceasing**”? Why should they engage in secular employment? The Lord will come suddenly, at any moment, and many souls were not yet saved. Was it not better for them and all believers to stop working and fully devote themselves to preaching and witnessing? If preparation for heaven and readiness for the rapture is the most important commitment, how could they stoop to holding a job which will only feed the body? As some backsliders “**turn the grace of God into lasciviousness**” (Jude 1:4), so these idlers and busybodies turned “**the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine which is according to godliness**” to excuses for idleness and careless lifestyle (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

CHRIST’S COMMAND FOR ALL HIS DISCIPLES

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10; Matthew 18:17; Romans 16:17-19; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 John 1:9-11; Acts 20:32-35; Titus 2:7,8; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Proverbs 6:6-11; 20:4; 21:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:11,12.

“**Now we command you, brethren, IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**”. “**This we commanded you,**” “**Now we command and exhort BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**” (2 Thessalonians 3:6,10,12). The commands in this passage, in these Epistles, in the New Testament, in the Holy Bible, are “**not the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God**”, the commands of Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:13). “**He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit**” (1 Thessalonians 4:8).

We are commanded to withdraw from brethren who walk disorderly, from disobedient members who harden their hearts, from abominable backsliders who settle down in a sinning lifestyle and from incorrigible apostates who believe and preach false doctrine. Disorderly, disobedient, delinquent members and ministers are not to be encouraged in their sin, evil, error and falsehood. Those who walk “**not after the tradition** (teaching and practice) **which** (they) **received of us**” (2 Thessalonians 3:6) do not give a convincing evidence of genuine conversion and abiding sonship. The “**tradition**” referred to in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 is not the tradition of men, or the vain philosophy of men. We are to reject “**the tradition of men**”, “**the tradition of the elders**” (Mark 7:5-13) because those traditions “**make the word of God of none effect**”. “**Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and not after Christ**” (Colossians 2:8).

CLEAR CONDEMNATION OF THE DISORDERLY

2 Thessalonians 3:11-15; 1 Timothy 5:12-15; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Acts 15:24-29; 2 Timothy 3:5-9; Ephesians 4:28-32; Ecclesiastes 9:10; 2 Timothy 2:25,26; James 5:19,20; Jude 20-25.

The Apostle, Paul, taught by words and works, by precept and practice, by exhortation and example. He believed and preached that the Lord Jesus Christ could come any moment, even in his lifetime, yet that did not make him idle. He labored in the Word and also worked with his hands. He set a good example for the Thessalonians to follow. As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, he had a right to be supported by those

who were continually fed through his ministry (1 Corinthians 9:6-14; 1 Timothy 5:18). But he gave up this right in Thessalonica in order that he might be an example of noble independence and exemplary diligence. No one in Thessalonica could accuse him of planting himself in someone's home and eating the food which others' toil and labour had earned. He had the right and authority to instruct and command them. He said, if an able-bodied Christian refused to work, he should not eat. The kindness, generosity and compassion of believers should not encourage laziness. Those who refuse to work and expect others to meet all their financial needs should think logically and objectively. If others were as idle and averse to working as they are, would they have found anyone to pay their expenses? The Christian people are exhorted and expected to withdraw fellowship and finance from these busybodies. That will lead them to repentance, righteousness, and responsible living.

CROWNING CONCLUSION OF HIS DECLARATION

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18; Romans 16:17-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28; Hebrews 13:20-22; 2 Peter 1:2-4; 2 Timothy 4:16-18,22; Hebrews 13:5-9; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 5:5-11.

“Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace ALWAYS by all means”. What a peaceful benediction for persecuted believers! The declarations of the Apostle in these two Epistles cover their Christian experiences, his own Christlike examples, their own exemplary lives, their severe persecution, the abiding grace, love and power of God in the Church, the wholesome doctrine of Christ and the full revelation of the rapture, resurrection, the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist and the imminent Second Coming of Christ. The Epistles were written to exhort and encourage believers as well as set all things in order in the Church. Coming to the conclusion, the Apostle prayed for the Church and for all believers who will read, study, apply, believe, obey and teach the Epistles. ***“Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means”***. In their personal lives and varied experiences; in all their family challenges and community crises; in the Church and at the workplace; in their labours for the Lord and endeavours in the world; in their growing years, middle age and old age; in fellowship and in ministry; at crossroads and decision-making moments; always, at all times, in all places, in all situations, with all people, without people, in life, at death – peace. ***“The Lord be with you all”***. His peace and His presence abiding with us always, will see us through.

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