

2 Thessalonians 3

Paul Continues To Remind Them Of The Order He Had Given Them Deals With Idle Members Too Lazy To Work

2 Thess. 3:10 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.

1. "For even when we were with you" - Paul referred back to the time they had established the church there.
2. "we used to give you this order"
 - a. The fact he had given this order when he was with them strongly suggests, some not working, was not an entirely new problem.
 - b. There is no way of knowing how big a problem it might have been earlier, but evidently it had become a far more serious problem.
3. "if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either" - The words "not willing to work" are vital to a proper understanding and application of this commandment.
 - a. This sounds harsh to many ears then and now
 - 1) Some believe everyone should be fed regardless of what they do or do not do.
 - 2) They insist even the lazy must be supported.
 - b. Paul's teaching comes from God who loathes laziness among His people.
 - c. It made no difference who the lazy person might be.
 - 1) Lazy people were not to be supported.
 - 2) In context he was speaking of believers, but it is true of unbelievers.
 - 3) This does not help the person and brings reproach on the church and keeps the church from helping those who cannot help themselves.
 - 4) No body of believers has unlimited funds to help everyone.
 - 5) Money and goods given to the lazy limits the aid given those genuinely in need, and it also promotes laziness.
 - d. It was a given that this commandment did not apply to those who were unable to work because of age or health.

2 Thess. 3:11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

1. “For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life” - “we” See 2 Thess. 1:1.
 - a. Some were “walking,” that is living in idleness.
 - b. Paul did not give the source of his information, but was fully convinced it was true.
 - c. It may have come from a letter or messenger or both.
 - d. The words “among you” manifest he was speaking of brethren.
 - e. The word “undisciplined” comes from “ataktos” [ah **tahk** tohs] meaning “disorderly, undisciplined.”
2. “doing no work at all” - Here Paul defined the words “undisciplined life” in this context.
 - a. These believers were lazy to the point they refused to work and were living in idleness.
 - b. “at all” clearly revealed just how lazy these brethren were.
 - c. They were able to work, but refused to work!
3. “but acting like busybodies” - “periergazomai” [peh ree ehr **gah** zah mi] means “to work all around, bustle about (meddle), be a busybody.”
 - a. Not only did these believers not work, they used their time being “busybodies.”
 - 1) The deadbeats were perhaps too pious to work, but had plenty of time to piddle and meddle in the business of others.
 - 2) Paul had dealt some with this problem in his first epistle to them. (1 Thess. 4:11, 12).

1 Thess. 4:11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,

1 Thess.4:12 so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

- b. Christians must not be “busybodies.”
- c. They are not to gossip or meddle in the affairs of others. See 1 Pet. 4:15.
- d. Paul was not forbidding believers encouraging and restoring others, but had commanded it. (1 Thess. 2:11; 5:14; Gal. 6:1, 2).

2 Thess. 3:12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

1. “Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ” - Paul gave an apostolic command for these brethren to abandon their life of laziness.
2. “to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread” - “Bread” is used in the sense of “making a living.”
 - a. They were to work and “eat their own bread.” See “provide” 1 Tim. 5:8.

b. “in quiet fashion” was the exact opposite of the way the lazy busybodies were living. (2 Thess. 3:11).

2 Thess. 3:13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

1. “But as for you, brethren” - Paul now addressed the faithful brethren.
2. “do not grow weary of doing good” - They must not let lazy brethren discourage them from doing good to those in real need.
 - a. It is easy to become discouraged when others take advantage of us.
 - b. We must not let the lazy keep us from helping those in genuine need. (Gal. 6:10).

1) James insisted Christians must help those in need. (Jas. 1:27; 2:14-17).

Jas. 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Jas. 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

Jas. 2:15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

Jas. 2:16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?

Jas. 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

2) John also insisted Christians are not to love with the tongue only. (1 Jn. 3:17, 18).

1 Jn. 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

1 Jn. 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

c. Jesus stressed we must help believers who could not help themselves. (Matt. 25:31-46).

2 Thess. 3:14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

1. “If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter” - The instructions Paul had given had no exceptions, but applied to all.
 - a. He was not giving his opinion or the opinion of mere men.
 - b. What he wrote came from the Lord and was the commandment of the Lord. (Gal. 1:12; 1 Cor. 14:37).

Gal. 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 14:37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

2. “take special note of [mark] that person and do not associate with him”

a. They were to “take note of [mark] that person.”

1) The Greek word “note” is from “semeioo” [sah may **ah** oh] is found only here in the New Testament.

- 2) The details of how they were to “note” or “mark” the person was not specified by Paul.
 - 3) In some way the whole congregation was to be instructed not to associate with the person or persons.
 - 4) Those who refused to cooperate would be hindering the person from seeing his/her need to repent and would themselves be sinning.
- b. They were not to “associate with him.”
 - 1) This was not absolute meaning they could say nothing to the person.
 - 2) It means they were not to have close association with him.
 - 3) It is assumed fellowship was important to the disciplined person, and a withdrawal of fellowship would get his attention and bring about repentance.
3. “so that he will be put to shame” - The purpose of this disfellowship was to make the person ashamed of his sinful conduct and bring him to repentance.
 - a. It was not an act of hatred or retaliation.
 - b. Paul wanted the disciplined to be restored to fellowship and be saved. (1 Cor. 5:5).
 - c. This would not happen if the person was fed in his laziness and in his idleness became involved in sinful activity, such as, becoming a busybody.
 - d. This would not happen if they continued fellowship of the disciplined person and emboldened him in his sin.

2 Thess. 3:15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

1. “Yet do not regard him as an enemy” - They were not to treat the person “as an enemy.”
2. “but admonish him as a brother” - They were to tell him why he was being avoided.
 - a. The words “do not associate with him” did not mean they could not speak to the person as the words “admonish him as a brother” strongly set forth.
 - b. Though they were not to have fellowship with the person, they were to encourage the person to repent and let him know they missed his/her fellowship.
3. All of this was done that the person might repent and be saved. (1 Cor. 5:5).
4. It is difficult and unpleasant to correct erring members, but it is necessary at times.
 - a. A person’s salvation is more important than his feelings or our feelings.
 - b. A lack of discipline has led to many souls to be lost - the sinning person and those they influenced to follow their sin or sins.
5. Discipline does not work every time, but it does at times lead the disciplined person to repent.
6. Discipline is necessary to save the church from damage. (1 Cor. 5:6).

1 Cor. 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*?

Additional Note On Discipline

1. The church must, at times, discipline members when they refuse to repent despite the admonitions and encouragements for them to repent.
2. This is an act of love intended to save the person from condemnation and to keep the church from being corrupted from the evil influence of those refusing to repent.
3. A church that never disciplines members who refuse to repent may claim to be a loving church, but it is in reality a church that is willing to let members lose their souls rather than correct them.
4. Discipline is the last result, but it should not be delayed so long that those engaging in evil are pretty much past repentance.
5. It is possible for a Christian to reach the point of no return. (Heb. 6:4-6).
6. Faithful Christians seek to do everything possible to keep a brother or sister in Christ from reaching the point of no return and restore them to faithfulness.

Paul's Closing Remarks

2 Thess. 3:16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!

1. "Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance"
 - a. Jesus is "the Lord of Peace" who gives inner peace to those who follow Him.
 - b. He wanted the Lord to grant them "peace in every circumstance" even in difficult situations and times.
2. "The Lord be with you all!" - Paul desired the Lord constantly be with "all" of them.
 - a. He did not have a select group in mind, but every believer at Thessalonica.
 - b. This would include good and bad times.

2 Thess. 3:17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.

1. "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand"
 - a. Paul dictated his letters.
 - b. The reason is not known, but some have speculated it might be because of:
 - 1) Poor eyesight perhaps due to some disease or perhaps some other reason. See Gal. 4:15.
- Gal. 4:15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your **eyes** and given them to me.

- Some understand this to mean Paul’s eyesight was bad.
 - Others believe Paul’s language here has nothing to do with his eyesight, but speaks of the great affection these brethren had for Paul.
- 2) Poor handwriting - Inspiration did not necessarily give one good handwriting. Furthermore, not everyone was skillful writing on skins. The truth is we have no way of knowing anything about Paul’s handwriting.
 - 3) Arthritis , parkinson’s, etc - These conditions would definitely affect handwriting.
- c. His practice of dictating his letters may or may not have been associated with his “thorn in the flesh.” (2 Cor. 12:7).

2 Cor. 12:7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself!

1) No one knows today what it was.

2) It could have been eyesight, malaria or some other disease or disability.

d. It was his custom to write the closing words “with his own hand.” (Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; Phile. 19).

Rom. 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord. See Rom. 1:1. Tertius was the amanuensis.

1 Cor.16:21 The greeting is in my own hand--Paul.

Col. 4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

Phile. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well)

e. Paul made reference to his writings in Galatians 6:11.

Gal. 6:11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

1) Some believe Paul wrote this whole letter himself in larger than normal letters.

2) Some believe he is only referring to the closing part of this epistle to the Christians at Galatia.

3) The word “every” in 2 Thessalonians 3:17 strongly suggests Paul also dictated the Galatia letter and wrote the final words personally in larger than normal letters.

4) The reason for the larger letters is not revealed and will always be a mystery of no eternal significance.

2. “and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write”

a. Paul did not always mention this in every letter, but it was the way he wrote.

b. It was his practice to dictate his letters to an amanuensis.

2 Thess. 3:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

1. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"
 - a. He desired the favor, the blessings of Christ be on them.
 - b. Paul began and ended each epistle speaking of God's grace. (1 Thess. 1:1; 5:28 and 2 Thess. 1:1; 3:18).
2. "be with you all" - Again he wished God's blessings on "all" of them.
3. Paul ended this letter as he did the first epistle. (1 Thess. 5:28).

1 Thess. 5:28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
4. Here he added the word "all" manifesting even those he had corrected were included.
5. Paul had a love for all the brethren there, and wanted God's immense blessings be showered upon them.
6. The fact some needed correction did not diminish his love for them.

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