



II Thessalonians 3:6-13 New Revised Standard Version

⁶ Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother or sister living irresponsibly and not according to the tradition that they received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not irresponsible when we were with you, ⁸ and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day so that we might not burden any of you. ⁹ This was not because we do not have that right but in order to give you an example to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: anyone unwilling to work should not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some of you are living irresponsibly, mere busybodies, not doing any work. ¹² Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

Notes _____



“Now's not the time to put on the brakes!” Okay, so maybe the Apostle Paul didn't use those exact words, but that spirit is present in this week's Epistle Lesson. On more than one occasion between the two letters to the Thessalonians,

Paul felt led to admonish his readers to keep working and, in some cases, to start doing something. With much attention given in these letters to the return of Christ, it may have become easy for certain Christians to relax their efforts and become lethargic in their service to God's Kingdom.

Paul's initial instruction in this week's lection is to avoid those people who have become idle. While they may not have been troublemakers in the conventional sense, their lack of effort was not in line with the ongoing work of the Kingdom. One scholar notes, “(Paul's) conviction was that preparing for the end time did not mean to stop working.” Many people will speculate about signs and events associated with the return of Christ. Much ink has been spilled over the past 50 years related to the subject of the end, but we in all honestly have no idea when Christ will return.

Rather than being lost in the interpretation of the times, it is Paul's insistence that his readers/hearers ready themselves by being about the Father's work. Paul uses his own life as an example of someone who had worked hard while in their presence and whose work ethic was worthy of imitation. Why did Paul insist upon his readers' activity? The obvious answer would be that without it the Gospel would not go forward. A second thought might have been that idleness amongst the faithful would have set a poor example for the non-Christian world. That is to suggest their faith was valuable to them and worthy of sharing with others.

Being a part of Christ is a 24/7 responsibility. There are no sick days or times for vacation. Our witness goes with us wherever we go and the world is constantly watching. Although our times might seem challenging and we may question the relevance of our witness, we still have much to do.

- 1. We must stop assuming someone else will do the work.**
- 2. We must realize busyness & productivity are not the same.**
- 3. We must keep active for as long as time allows.**

Prayer Pebble: Lord, as long as I have breath and life, help me not to become weary in my service for you. Amen.