

II Thessalonians 3:6–18

II Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

THOUGH the Thessalonians were brethren, Paul and the other apostles with him maintained the spiritual right to command them concerning certain behaviors in the church. Gift ministries,¹ like those of apostles and prophets, are appointed by Christ. Because of this, any who are appointed to this office have been given divine authority by the Son of God to carry out God's will when led by the Spirit of God. It is thus both the right² and

responsibility for true ministers to come in God's name, hold forth His Word, and reveal His will to man.³ It is this spiritual responsibility that men of God have been charged with, and neither praise nor fear of man should be allowed to interfere with that which has been declared to be God's will for their lives. *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine* (II Tim. 4:2).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Tim. 4:2) *Preach the word*—The Word of God; the gospel. This was to be the main business of the life of Timothy, and Paul solemnly charges him in view of the certain coming of the Redeemer to judgment, to be faithful in the performance of it.

1 I Cor. 12:28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

Eph. 4:10–12 *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.*¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 2 Matt. 28:18–20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*¹⁹ *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*²⁰ *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

I Cor. 4:1 *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

II Cor. 3:6 *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

I Thess. 5:12 *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;*

I Tim. 2:7 *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

Heb. 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

Heb. 13:17 *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

I Pet. 5:1–2 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: ²Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;*

3 Rom. 10:14 *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

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Be instant—see the notes at Romans 12:12.⁴ The meaning here is, that he should be constant in this duty. Literally, “to stand by, or to stand fast by;” that is, he was to be pressing or urgent in the performance of this work. He was always to be at his post, and was to embrace every opportunity of making known the gospel. What Paul seems to have contemplated was not merely, that he should perform the duty at stated and regular times; but that he should press the matter as one who had the subject much at heart, and never lose an opportunity of making the gospel known.

In season—*ῥωπιάκῃ eukairos*. In good time; opportunely; compare Matthew 26:16; Luke 22:6; Mark 14:11.⁵ The sense is, when it could be conveniently done; when all things were favorable, and when there were no obstructions or hindrances. It may include the “stated and regular” seasons for public worship, but is not confined to them.

Out of season—*ῥωπιάκῃ akairōs*. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is the opposite of the former, and means that a minister is to seek opportunities to preach the gospel even at such periods as might be inconvenient to himself, or when there might be hindrances and embarrassments, or when there was no stated appoint-

ment for preaching. He is not to confine himself to the appointed times of worship, or to preach only when it will be perfectly convenient for himself, but he is to have such an interest and earnestness in the work, that it will lead him to do it in the face of embarrassments and discouragements, and whenever he can find an opportunity. A man who is greatly intent on an object will seek every opportunity to promote it. He will not confine himself to stated times and places, but will present it everywhere, and at all times. A man, therefore, who merely confines himself to the stated seasons of preaching the gospel, or who merely preaches when it is convenient to himself, should not consider that he has come up to the requirement of the rule laid down by the apostle. He should preach in his private conversation, and in the intervals of his public labors, at the side of the sick bed, and wherever there is a prospect of doing good to any one. If his heart is full of love to the Saviour and to souls, he cannot help doing this.

Because Christ has called certain men for ecclesiastical ministry⁶ and filled them with the necessary wisdom and spiritual power to be effective in it,⁷ then they are given both the permission and godly responsibility to speak for God, but only as the Holy Spirit prompts them.⁸ It is also

⁴ Rom. 12:12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

⁵ Matt. 26:16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

Luke 22:6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. Mark 14:11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

⁶ I Cor. 12:27-28 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. ²⁸ And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Eph. 4:10-12 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

⁷ Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

⁸ Exod. 4:15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

Exod. 6:29 That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee.

Deut. 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

I Kgs. 22:14 And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

Jer. 1:7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

worth noting that the punishment in the Old Testament for prophets who presumed to speak in God's name anything that God had not inspired was death.⁹ By this it is seen how important the Lord sought to protect His Word, that same engrafted and living Word that alone leads people to His salvation.¹⁰

The Greek word for *command* is #3853 *paraggellō*. HELPS Word-studies defines it as “properly, to charge, give a command that is fully authorized because it has gone through all the proper (necessary) channels. / God commands (3853 /*paraggellō*) believers to act as He authorizes them through the revelation of faith

(His inworked persuasions). Accordingly, 3853 (*paraggellō*) and faith (4102 /*πιστις*) are closely connected in the NT—see 1 Tim 1:2–4, 4:11,12, 5:7,8.¹¹ / 3853 (*paraggellō*) ‘originally meant to pass on or transmit; hence, used as a military term, of passing a watchword or command; and so generally to command.’”¹² No true servant of Jesus Christ would also give a command in Christ's name, without first being commanded by the Holy Spirit to do so.¹² To think otherwise is to know nothing of the strict subjection that the Lord Jesus demands from those spiritual ministries He has Himself placed in His church.¹³ True servants of Christ therefore consider Christ's will

Jer. 1:9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

Ezek. 2:7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.

Matt. 10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

Luke 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Luke 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁹ *Deut. 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*

¹⁰ *Ps. 107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Jas. 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

¹¹ *1 Tim. 1:2–4 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. ³As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*

1 Tim. 4:11–12 These things command and teach. ¹²Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

1 Tim. 5:7–8 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. ⁸But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

12 Rom. 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

Jas. 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

II Pet. 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

Jude 1:1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

¹³ *Rom. 13:1–5 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. ²Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. ³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to*

to be superior to their own, and the influence of the Spirit of the Lord¹⁴ greater than their own personal wishes and desires.¹⁵ Moreover, God gives no man true spiritual authority over another, unless the man is first willing to subject himself to Christ's lordship.¹⁶ In Christ's church, Christ is the Head,¹⁷ and as such, His Word and His Spirit are the supreme authority over His people. This ecclesiastical order encourages unity and harmony in the body of Christ and provides the means for the church's spiritual growth.¹⁸

The Greek root word for *withdraw* is #4724 *stello*. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines it as "to remove oneself withdraw oneself to depart, followed by ἀπό with the genitive of the person, to abstain from familiar contact with one." Paul commanded the Thessalonians to avoid fellowship with those who were disorderly, broke rank, and did not subject themselves to the gospel's directives.

The Greek word for *disorderly* is #814 *ataktós*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as "properly, disorderly ('breaking rank'); insubordinate to God's Word and hence fruitless (unproductive)—because lacking proper order (discipline)." In some cases, men—even those who claim to be

brethren—are insubordinate to apostolic instruction and refuse to yield to its authority over their lives. When this is the case, believers, who have themselves chosen to remain subject to the Lord, should avoid having any religious contact and/or fellowship with the disorderly. By this it is hoped that the offenders will recognize their sin and turn to God in repentance. Until this is done, all fellowship with the sinner should be broken. It is also hoped that with this strong collective response of the church, and its leadership, that those who have sinned against God might become ashamed of their sin and return to spiritual subjection. To *walk disorderly* does not mean to take a false step here and there. Rather, it means a consistent habit of breaking rank by not submitting to gospel instruction and the heavenly ministers whom Christ has set in His church. Practically, even a small amount of unaddressed sin, can do great damage to the entire body of Christ. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump* (Gal. 5:9).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Gal. 5:9) Leaven is that small portion of fermented dough which is introduced into the fresh lump of dough, and communicates lightness to the whole mass. It is employed figuratively in Scripture to denote the working of both good and bad influences, and

the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.
⁵Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

14 Luke 4:18 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*

15 Jer. 20:9 *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

16 Jer. 3:15 *And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

17 Eph. 1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*
Eph. 5:23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body*

Col. 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Col. 2:10 *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

18 Eph. 1:23 *Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Eph. 4:10 *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

is used both of persons and of principles or teaching—comp. Matthew 16:12; Luke 13:21.¹⁹ . . . But error, once admitted, is a virus which will gradually spread and poison the whole system of doctrine, or the whole spiritual life of the individual or of the Church.

(Bengel's Gnomon, Gal. 5:9) [*One wicked man destroys much good, Ecclesiastes 9:18.*²⁰ *The malice, cunning, or violence of a single person, often produces immense injury.*—V. g.]

II Thessalonians 3:7–9 *For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;*

⁸ Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and

travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

⁹ Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Though Paul had the power and authority to demand that the Thessalonians provide for his physical needs, he did not exercise this right.²¹ Instead, he set an example for how all Christians should labor. Using his own life as a pattern, the apostle sought to impart the idea that sincere followers of Jesus Christ should work to provide for others' needs, and thus not be carried and/or supported by them.²² *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).* It is paramount, if not

¹⁹ Matt. 16:12 *Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

Luke 13:21 *It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

²⁰ Eccl. 9:18 *Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.*

²¹ Acts 20:33–35 *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.*³⁴ *Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.*³⁵ *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

I Cor 4:11–12 *Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;*¹² *And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:*

I Cor. 9:12 *If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.*

I Cor. 9:15 *But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.*

I Cor. 9:18 *What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.*

II Cor. 11:7–9 *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?*⁸ *I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.*⁹ *And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

²² Matt. 5:42 *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.* Luke 6:38 *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

II Cor. 9:7–8 *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*⁸ *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

Gal. 6:10 *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

I Tim. 6:17–19 *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*¹⁸ *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;*¹⁹ *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

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critical, that those who call themselves Christians realize the importance of not only physical labor but also the work of the Lord.²³ Hence, no Christian assembly should endorse either physical or spiritual laziness,²⁴ which undoubtedly includes the sin of idleness.²⁵ The command to work²⁶ extends even unto evangelism.²⁷ Unfortunately, many have taken the title of “Christian” and yet have chosen to carry no weight whatsoever in advancing the gospel.²⁸ Ultimately, if a man refuses to labor for his own food, then you can be sure that no real effort will be exerted

to reach others with the Bread of Life. Hence, in all areas of both religion and life, believers should be industrious, willing to work, not only for their own welfare and enjoyment, but also to help others in true physical and spiritual need.²⁹

Jesus specifically instructed His disciples that because they had been given to freely, they should likewise freely give. It was this generosity of heart that practically revealed their connection to the Savior. *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the*

23 *Eccl. 3:22 Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?*

24 *Prov. 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.*

Prov. 14:23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

Prov. 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

25 *Prov. 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.*

Prov. 19:15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

Prov. 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Prov. 20:13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

Eccl. 10:18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

Ezek. 16:49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Rom. 12:11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

26 *Eph. 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

Deut. 5:13-14 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁴But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

I Cor. 4:12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: I Thess. 4:11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

Eccl. 5:18 Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.

27 *I Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Col. 3:23-24 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; ²⁴Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Heb. 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

28 *I Thess. 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.*

I Tim. 5:13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

29 *I Cor. 8:13-14 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: ¹⁴But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:*

Gal. 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

I Tim. 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give (Matt. 10:8).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Matt. 10:8) *Freely ye have received, freely give*—That is, they were not to sell their favors of healing, preaching, etc. They were not to make a money-making business of it, to bargain specifically to heal for so much, and to cast out devils for so much. This, however, neither then nor afterward precluded them from receiving a competent support. See Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9:8–14; 1 Timothy 5:18.³⁰

II Thessalonians 3:10 *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Thess. 3:10) The Thessalonians are not to be misled into a false charity: giving food in Christ's name to persons who are capable of working and able to get work, and are too indolent to do so. The support which is here forbidden to be given to these disorderly persons might come either direct from the private liberality of individuals, or from some collected church fund administered by the deacons.

The apostle's words are unambiguous, that *if any would not work* or would choose not to labor for his own needs, though physically able, should not eat. If this biblical

standard were applied today, much that is being done in Christian charity would have to be abandoned. It is thus common that good Christian energy is expended upon so many who take advantage of it, who have the ability to work but willfully choose to live at the expense of others. Though this is common, it should never be thought to be biblical, simply because it is neither the responsibility of the church, or its members, to share their abundance with those who have chosen not to work though able. Hence if any man will not work, and refuses to do what God commands him to do, then neither should he eat. This is especially true when what is eaten originates from another man's labor and not his own.

II Thessalonians 3:11 *For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 3:11) *But are busy-bodies*—Compare the 1 Timothy 5:13 note; 1 Peter 4:15 note.³¹ That is, they meddled with the affairs of others—a thing which they who have nothing of their own to busy themselves about will be very likely to do. The apostle had seen that there was a tendency to this when he was in Thessalonica, and hence he had commanded them to “do their own business;” 1 Thessalonians

³⁰ Luke 10:7 *And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.*

I Cor. 9:8–14 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? ⁹For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

¹⁰*Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? ¹²If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? ¹⁴Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

I Tim. 5:18 For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

³¹ *I Tim. 5:13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*

I Pet. 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

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4:11.³² . . . In times of affliction and want, we should be ready to lend our aid. At other times, we should feel that he can manage his own affairs as well as we can do it for him; or if he cannot, it is his business, not ours.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Thess. 3:11) *busy bodies*—In the Greek the similarity of sound marks the antithesis, “Doing none of their own business, yet overdoing in the business of others.” Busy about everyone’s business but their own. “Nature abhors a vacuum”; so if not doing one’s own business, one is apt to meddle with his neighbor’s business. Idleness is the parent of busybodies (1Ti 5:13). Contrast 1Th 4:11.

The Scripture is very clear about how saints are to conduct themselves in Christ’s church: by working with their own hands, going about their own business, and not becoming busybodies, by meddling in areas that in fact are none of their business. *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you* (I Thess. 4:11).

II Thessalonians 3:12 *Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*

It is sufficient, and should be considered as such, for Christians to be about their own business and prove their own work. It is this that leads to true godly contentment and genuine spiritual happiness.³³ *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another* (Gal. 6:4).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Gal. 6:4) *In himself alone*—Compare Proverbs 14:14;

“A good man shall be satisfied from himself.” The sentiment is, that he will find in himself a source of pure joy. He will not be dependent on the applause of others for happiness. In an approving conscience; in the evidence of the favor of God; in an honest effort to lead a pure and holy life, he will have happiness. The source of his joys will be within; and he will not be dependent, as the man of ambition, and the man who thinks of himself more highly than he ought, will, on the favors of a capricious multitude, and on the breath of popular applause.

And not in another—He will not be dependent on others for happiness. Here is the true secret of happiness.

II Thessalonians 3:13 *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.*

Hardly a more accurate representation of manifesting Jesus’ heart can be found than when His people do good in His name.³⁴ This pattern of walking about and doing good encapsulated the Savior’s entire earthly life—a pattern of generosity and true goodness that should be continued to be evidenced in all who now carry Christ’s name. *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him* (Acts 10:38).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 10:38) *Who went about doing good*—Whose main business it was to travel from place to place to do good. He did not go for applause, or wealth, or comfort, or ease, but to diffuse happiness as far as possible. This is the simple but sublime record of his life. It gives us a distinct portrait of his character, as he is distinguished from conquerors and kings, from false prophets and from the mass of people.

32 I Thess. 4:11 *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;*

33 I Cor. 3:13 *Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.*

34 Matt. 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

To do good, and continue to do it, should be the believer's ultimate purpose in this life. It is a heavenly charge that is revealed throughout Scripture,³⁵ that when there is an opportunity to do good, and the means to do it, then good should be done. For if it is not, then God considers this as sin. Hence, it is not simply those who do evil whom God considers sinners, but also those who refuse to do good, though humanly able to do so. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin* (Jas. 4:17). It is therefore not enough for men to abstain from doing evil, if they do not pursue doing good.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Jas. 4:17) *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*—That is, he is guilty of sin if he does not do it. Cotton Mather adopted it as a principle of action, "that the ability to do good in any case imposes an obligation to do it." ...

If he understands what his duty is; if he has the means of doing good to others; if by his name, his influence, his wealth, he can promote a good cause; if he can, consistently with other duties, relieve the distressed, the poor, the prisoner, the oppressed; if he can

send the gospel to other lands, or can wipe away the tear of the mourner; if he has talents by which he can lift a voice that shall be heard in favor of temperance, chastity, liberty, and religion, he is under obligations to do it: and if, by indolence, or avarice, or selfishness, or the dread of the loss of popularity, he does not do it, he is guilty of sin before God. No man can be released from the obligation to do good in this world to the extent of his ability; no one should desire to be.

II Thessalonians 3:14 *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

It is not wrong to *note* and mark³⁶ as offenders those who break spiritual rank and think themselves above gospel authority. Likewise, it is neither transgressive or unrighteous to refuse either fellowship or companionship with the proud of heart who openly refuse to obey the gospel.³⁷ If any, then, have willfully chosen to disobey God's will for their lives, then the Lord's command is that no fellowship should be entered into with them. This is the truth of God's Word, the Son of God's

35 Ps. 34:14 *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

Ps. 37:3 *Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

Gal. 6:10 *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

I Thess. 5:15 *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*

I Tim. 6:18 *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Titus 3:14* *And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.*

Heb. 13:16 *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

36 Rom. 16:17–18 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*¹⁸*For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

37 I Tim. 1:18–20 *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;*¹⁹*Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*²⁰*Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

II Tim. 2:16–18 *But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*¹⁷*And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;*¹⁸*Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*

II Tim. 4:10 *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

Tit. 1:10–13 *For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:*¹¹*Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.*¹²*One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.*¹³*This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;*

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will, and any who profess to follow the Savior should obey it.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, II Thess. 3:14) Note that man.—The reflexive voice of the verb implies mutual warning against him: “Agree to set a mark upon him, to make a marked man of him.” The notion is that of making him easily recognisable, so that no Christian should “have company” with him unawares. (Comp. Genesis 4:15.³⁸)

II Thessalonians 3:15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

If some who do not obey Christ's words are brethren, the scripture reveals here, that they should not be considered as enemies. This teaches us that God considers there to be a great difference between those weak in the faith³⁹ and those who publicly break rank and willingly reject apostolic authority.⁴⁰

II Thessalonians 3:16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

In this verse we have the apostle's wish and prayer for the Thessalonians, that the *Lord of peace*, Jesus Christ, would impart to them His own spiritual peace. Every true Christian knows the inward stabilizing force of the Christ Spirit within,⁴¹ and the peace of God produced by it. This spiritual peace, which has its source in God, surpasses all human understanding and is beyond what the mind of man can

comprehend. So great, then, is its effect on the soul that even believers cannot fully understand the supernatural means by which the Lord imparts quietness in the deepest parts of the soul. *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* (Phil. 4:7). Because God's peace has its source in the spiritual realm, then if a man has not the Spirit, it will prove impossible for him to truly experience this wonderful fruit of the Spirit.⁴² It is also peace that Jesus promised to impart to all who believed upon Him. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid* (John 14:27). The peace that Jesus imparts to His followers is unique, and can be felt only through becoming a child of God. Jesus also stated and revealed that it is *my peace* that He would give His followers. By this it is meant that true spiritual peace cannot be discovered or experienced anywhere else in the world, apart from sincere and genuine relationship with the Son of God. Because it is Christ's own possession, His peace imparts a serenity that is completely unknown to a sinful world totally separated from Him.

It was also Jesus' promise to those saved by Him that He would remain with them unto the end of the world.⁴³ What greater way also to comfort a new convert's heart than to learn that He whom the convert has been believed upon, will never leave

38 Gen. 4:15 *And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.*

39 Rom. 14:1–3 *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.*

40 II Tim. 4:14–15 *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.*

41 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

42 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

43 Matt. 28:20 *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

or forsake him,⁴⁴ that Jesus will remain with those saved unto even the end of the world.

II Thessalonians 3:17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

Paul's epistles were personal letters to communities of believers.⁴⁵ These epistles, thirteen or perhaps fourteen in number (if we include Hebrews), were later made an integral part of Christ's doctrine for the Christian church. What is true concerning Galatians is also true concerning all Paul's epistles. *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ* (Gal. 1:11–12). It was not the apostle's personal gospel that he preached to the Thessalonians, but only that divine Word of God, revealed to him, by the Son of God. Jesus Christ was the source of Paul's revelation, and there was nothing either of man or of himself contained in it. It was the *Word of the Lord*,⁴⁶ and as such, it was to be treated with the greatest respect and admiration. This is also how the Thessalonians received the gospel, fully regarding it as having its source in God, and not man.⁴⁷

(*Benson Commentary*, Gal. 1:11–12) *But I certify you, brethren*—He does not, till now, give them even this appellation; *that the gospel which was preached by me*—Among you; *is not after man*—Of mere human authority and invention; is not from man, not by man, nor suited to the taste of man; *for I neither received it of man*—From the authority or interposition of any man; *neither was I taught it*—By any writing or any human method of instruction; *but by revelation of Jesus Christ*—Who communicated to me by inspiration his gospel in all its parts, and sent me forth to publish it to the world. If Paul did not receive the gospel from man, as he here asserts, and as we are therefore sure he did not, the perfect conformity of his doctrine with the doctrine of the other apostles, is a proof that he was taught it by revelation from Jesus Christ, who revealed to him at first his resurrection, ascension, and the calling of the Gentiles, and his own apostleship; and told him then there were other things for which he would appear to him.

II Thessalonians 3:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The grace spoken of is that grace which originates from God, and has as its source, God's Son. *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* (John 1:17). True Christianity is a religion of divine favor,⁴⁸ generous

44 Heb. 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

45 *Romans, I–II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I–II Thessalonians, I–II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and perhaps Hebrews*

46 *I Thess. 1:8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.*

I Thess. 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

47 *I Thess. 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

48 *Acts 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.* *Rom. 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

Eph. 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) *Eph. 2:8–9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

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forgiveness,⁴⁹ and heavenly blessings.⁵⁰ These realities become available when men are exposed to and believe both in and upon the Son of God.⁵¹ It is quite reasonable that since Jesus died for us, we should live for Him.⁵² It is likewise

fitting that since Christ has brought us to God (I Peter 3:18),⁵³ then we should live the remainder of our earthly lives serving Him and anticipating His Son's return,⁵⁴ exactly as this early church of Thessalonica, lived theirs.

49 Ps. 86:5 *For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

Ps. 103:2-3 *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

Eph. 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

50 Gal. 3:14 *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Eph. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

Heb. 6:14 *Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*

I Pet. 3:9 *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

51 John 20:31 *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

I John 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

52 II Cor. 5:15 *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

53 I Pet. 3:18 *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

54 I Thess. 1:10 *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: I Cor. 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Jude 1:21 *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*