

## Week of June 14, 2021: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18



### Discussion Questions Set #1

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.” (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

We approached this issue of idle disruption in the Thessalonian church with the allegory that it was a stone chip issue in the windshield of this church and suggested that it created a weakness that might be exposed by added pressure (persecution). It was suggested that such a stone chip might compromise the ability of a Christian community to persevere under difficulty.

1. Discuss how this predisposition to remaining idle might have contributed to the spread of false teaching within the Thessalonian church. How might this stone chip issue have fueled false teaching? How might it have affected the Thessalonian church's ability to persevere under pressure?
2. Why might it be important to explore possible stone chip issues in one's life? What practical steps might you take?
3. How might stone chip issues more corporate in nature be identified and addressed within the life of a church community?

### Discussion Questions Set #2

“We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate.” (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9)

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work ...” (Exodus 20:8-10)

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

We established that as the Apostle Paul wrote this passage, he likely had both vocational work and the good works of the follower of Jesus in mind. This is important because it helps us to see two key realms of work in the life of the follower of Jesus.

1. We often key in on the explicit commandment to Sabbath rest in the fourth commandment, yet the implicit commandment to be about one's “work or labour” is implicit in this commandment. Discuss the importance of work – define that as you desire – in the life of the follower of Jesus.
2. Why is the realm of vocational work such an important focus for the follower of Jesus?
3. How might our “freedom 55” ideal in culture impact our application of such verses?
4. There exists in our world a radical branch of Christianity that is highly communal in nature and promotes a “retirement” from vocational toil in favour of a more sedentary, communal living. What problems might exist in such a system? Discuss the idea of the “burden” such a system might create.

### Discussion Questions Set #3

“We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat.” (2 Thessalonians 3:11-12)

“We urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

“They get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to.” (1 Timothy 5:13)

“Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.” (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

1. Why do you think that those who are idle, disruptive busybodies are of such a significant concern to Paul?
2. Do you think that we recognize the destructive nature of such behaviour in our world? Do we acknowledge this behaviour as strongly negative as does Paul?
3. Note Paul's approach to addressing issues of idle disruption in the church. How might a refusal to associate with them – without regarding them as an enemy – result in an idle busybody's restoration? What might this look like practically?