

# The Christian's Responsibility

In light of the last days that we live in, our practical, everyday decisions matter. We must not give in to the culture of apathy around us but work hard for the glory of the Lord while there is opportunity.

*2 Thessalonians 3:6-18*

## BIBLE VERSE

[2Th 3:6-18 NKJV] **6** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. **7** For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; **8** nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, **9** not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. **10** For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. **11** For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. **12** Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. **13** But [as for] you, brethren, do not grow weary [in] doing good. **14** And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. **15** Yet do not count [him] as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother. **16** Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord [be] with you all. **17** The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. **18** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen.

## INTRO

This morning we come to the final study in 2 Thessalonians, it's been a great book to dive into!

Paul has been addressing a church that had begun to lose hope due to the persecutions and tribulations they were facing. It wasn't necessarily the difficulty that was the problem, but the fact that some false teachers had the church convinced that Jesus had forsaken them and left them to endure the wrath of God that was coming upon the earth.

Paul writes to correct this faulty eschatology and firm up the church's hope.

- No, you aren't in the Day of the Lord's wrath and judgment, because the antichrist has not yet been revealed, and God has not appointed you to wrath, but to obtain salvation.
- He wants them to know that the temporary difficulties they were facing will not be unanswered by God, but that Jesus will give them rest when he comes to gather them together, and He will rightly judge and afflict those who rejected His truth and loved unrighteousness.

But apparently, the theological errors in the church also had some practical implications that were causing people to live in error. It seems as though all this talk about the end times and last days caused some people to give up on life altogether. They stopped working, they started mooching off everyone and becoming a burden and took up the local gossip chain rather than the prayer chain.

- In his final words, Paul offers some exhortation regarding the expectation of how Christians should address some of the practical issues of life.

On a side note, this is a pretty typical Pauline style of writing.

- He will spend most of his letters addressing the meat of theology and then close by telling his audience how that theology should now impact their lives.
- I love that he does this because it tells us that **[believing the right thing should always lead to living the right way; right theology should always produce right living.](#)**
  - Theology is not merely for the betterment of the mind or the increase of knowledge. We study, learn, and enrich our minds in order for our lives to be transformed by the power of God's truth.

So today, as Paul closes this letter, he addresses several areas of responsibility that we have as Christians living in the last days. This is important because throughout the years these same issues have plagued the Church. Some people, using the last days as an excuse, have checked out of life. IE, Jesus is coming back, the last days are here, so who cares about working and the

physical needs of life. We just need to trust God. Well, while they are “trusting God,” all the people who are still living life are the ones burdened with taking care of them. So Paul addresses this issue and others.

Today we will look at FOUR areas of responsibility that the last day believer has when it comes to the practical aspects of life and relationships.

# 1

## The Responsibility of Accountability

### BIBLE VERSE

**[2Th 3:6 NKJV] 6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ** (*Is what he is about to say optional for the Christian? This is an apostolic command done in the Name, and by the authority of Jesus!*), **that you withdraw from every brother** (*someone who calls themselves a Christian*) **who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition** (*doctrinal truths*) **which he received from us.**

### APPLICATION

The Church of Jesus Christ is not a country club, social gathering, or entertainment venue. The Bible is clear that the Church is a body. When one part of the body is infected, there are only a couple of options, attempt to heal it, or at some critical point cut it off.

Throughout his letters, Paul is clear that there are times when fellowship and relationship must be cut off, both for the preservation and protection of the body of Christ (from further infection) and for the salvation and rescue of the one who is in sin.

Here, Paul tells us that those who are walking (living a lifestyle) disorderly and not according to the truth of the scripture, must be separated from the fellowship of the body of Christ.

### QUOTE

*Disorderly – deviating from the prescribed order; out of rank.*

Military term. Those who step outside of the Bible's authority in their life, and live a lifestyle contrary to the truth.

## BIBLE VERSE

Paul details the qualifications for this to a greater degree in 1st Corinthians.

**[1Co 5:11 NKJV] 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.**

In both passages, he uses the term “Brother” to define the nature of the command. Paul is not suggesting that we end all relationships with people who live ungodly lifestyles, for then we would have to go out of the world altogether. We expect people without God to live like they are without God. **But when someone claims to know God, and walks with God, but lives a lifestyle contrary to the truth of the very God they claim to know and serve, the hypocrisy becomes an infection, both to the reputation of the church and its internal health.**

## APPLICATION

For such people, there is one option. withdrawal.

- We who care about them and care about the church are to withdraw our fellowship from them.
- **[Withdraw – to abstain from familiar interaction.](#)**

Any relational interaction that can come across as affirming toward a sinful pattern of behavior or lifestyle must cease.

- Christianity does not teach love as acceptance, rather it demonstrates that love can discipline and create boundaries that define right and wrong.
- You can be a loving, compassionate, kind, caring, patient Christian and still deny someone a relationship and fellowship.

Now we don't create the definitions for that. If we cut off relationships with others because we think they are annoying or because we establish unreasonable unbiblical boundaries, that's wrong. However, when a Christian won't submit to God's word, then we have a command and responsibility to withdraw ourselves from fellowship.

In Corinth, the church was boasting about how inclusive they were of people flaunting sinful lifestyles. Paul addresses them:

**[1Co 5:5-6 NKJV] 5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying [is] not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?**

The reason for this withdrawal is not because we think we are better than someone else. It's not because we now hate the other person. It's because sin and rebellion are deadly cancers, both the individual in it and to those infected around that person.

## 2

## The Responsibility of Authority

### BIBLE VERSE

**[2Th 3:7-9 NKJV] 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.**

### APPLICATION

For the Christian, there is a responsibility to follow the example and the instruction of the spiritual authorities God has placed in your life. For the Christian leader, there is a responsibility to sacrificially live out the gospel as an example to the flock of God.

- When ministering to the church in Thessalonica, Paul recognized a systemic problem... laziness and apathy toward work coupled with troublemaking.
- So what does he do? He sets the example for the believer to follow.

As a missionary, Paul frequently chose the path of being bi-vocational. As an apostle, he had a biblical right to be compensated and taken care of by the church for his work in the gospel.

- But in circumstances when Paul was being accused of peddling the gospel, or saw others walking out of step with the Word, he was willing to forego his rights in order to both be an example and not give anyone the opportunity to slander the faith.

This is not Paul's way of suggesting every pastor, missionary, or full-time ministry leader get a secular job and not take a salary. On the contrary. He told Timothy that the elders who rule well are worthy of double honor. But he also told Timothy, who was a young pastor, to, “[1Ti 4:12 NKJV] 12 ...*be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*”

But to the flock, Paul writes in Hebrews: “[Heb 13:17 NKJV] 17 *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*”

The burden of example lies on the leader, but the burden of submission lies on the follower.

- **It's wrong for a church member to criticize a pastor's every move if they refuse to ever take heed to any of his instructions. Likewise, it's wrong for a pastor to criticize a congregation if he himself doesn't do the very thing he asks of them.**
- In what ways is Paul wanting them to follow his example?

## 3

## The Responsibility of Activity

### BIBLE VERSE

[2Th 3:10-12 NKJV] 10 *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.*

### CONTEXT

Throughout history, the world apart from God has had a very utilitarian view of work; that manual labor was something beneath dignity, and only done as a necessary evil if you had to in order to survive.

Aristotle once declared that working in the trades or as a craftsman, ***“devoid of nobility and hostile to perfection of character.”***

Even today, many people do as little work as possible and cut as many corners as possible so they can eke out a living.

Church history is not much better. During the 2nd and 3rd centuries leading into the monastic traditions of the middle ages, the idea that truly spiritually people committed themselves to service of God above all else, and the more spiritually immature people troubled themselves with daily jobs and practical work within the world.

***That’s interesting considering the apostolic authority, Paul, plainly declared that it is not only noble, to work faithfully and diligently, but it is an act of obedience to the gospel!***

#### QUOTE

***“There is no such thing as a secular job for a Christian; all work is a spiritual duty to be done as an opportunity to give glory to God.”***

McArthur,

#### APPLICATION

Paul is so insistent that diligence, self-responsibility at work is so important to the gospel witness, that he lays out a high price for those who refuse to do so... “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”

- This is not a cause and effect statement (ie. if you don’t work you won’t have what you need to eat).
- This is a disciplinary statement (ie. if someone refuses to work, you need to refuse to feed them).

It's certainly not a popular statement, nor is it one that many people today see as a compassionate statement with our warped view of compassion.

This is not a slogan that many churches would want to adopt (**EXAMPLE: Grace Calvary: Don't work, don't eat!**)

#### **A. PAUL IS NOT CONDEMNING THE INABILITY TO WORK, BUT THE UNWILLINGNESS.**

There are those within the church that for physical or mental reasons, are incapable of supporting themselves. These are the people that actually need the support of the church. Paul is not referring to that. Paul is talking about the person who insists on having their every need met by others but is unwilling (through every excuse in the book) to bear their own weight of responsibility.

**[Gal 6:2, 5 NKJV] 2 Bear one another's burdens (a weight that's too heavy), and so fulfill the law of Christ. ... 5 For each one shall bear his own load (weight of personal responsibility).**

If I'm carrying my designated load and trying to carry your designated load, I won't be able to help carry someone else's burden when I need to. But if we are each carrying our own load, we will all have the capacity to help carry another's burden.

#### **B. PAUL HAS GENUINE CONCERN FOR THE OUTCOME OF LAZY CHRISTIANS**

They have become busybodies.

- Those who are not busy with the right things become busy with the wrong things.
- It's not that these people are not busy at all, they are just busy with all the damaging things.
- Instead of **BUILDING** something for themselves and others through a strong work ethic, they are **BURDENING** others with their needs and **BURYING** others with their gossip.

#### **QUOTE**

*Busybody – to busy oneself about useless and worthless matters or the affairs of others.*



## ILLUSTRATION

The Jewish Rabbis use to teach, “He who does not teach his son to work teaches him to become a thief.”

Even the ancient Romans had a saying, “By doing nothing, men learn to do evil.”

We’ve all heard the phrase, “Idleness is the devil’s playground.”

According to Paul, when it comes to working, and how you use your busy energy, **you want to be a John Wayne, not a Lucy Ball.**

## STATS

Sadly, I believe we are seeing a generation in front of us that is increasingly lazy, selfish, and entitled. I have talked to numerous business owners and tradesmen that have expressed how difficult it has been to find and maintain willing, diligent, skilled workers.

- One recent PEW research poll revealed that 42% of people age 18-24 still live with their parents without supporting their basic needs.
- The unemployment rate is highest, by nearly twice the amount, between the ages of 18-29.
- I’m sure the government won’t mind having people that are more dependent on them, but this is bad news for the church.
  - Serving the Lord requires people who are others focused, sacrificial, ethical, and diligent. But the church will suffer if the load of the work rests on the shoulders a the few that are trying to meet the demands and desires of the many.

## APPLICATION

The solution?

**[2Th 3:12 NKJV] 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread**

Work with your own hands, mind your own business and eat your own bread.

- Paul equates a full stomach to a work ethic. No loaves for the loafers!

In short, Paul is building a practical structure of living in the last days. How should you live in light of the fact that Jesus is coming? Sell everything! Move to the woods! Nope. Get a job, work in a way that honors God, mind your own business, and don't be a burden to others.

## 4

# The Responsibility of Perseverance

### BIBLE VERSE

**[2Th 3:13-15 NKJV] 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.**

### APPLICATION

I think it's sometimes a great discouragement for those who work hard, do the right thing, and seek to serve the Lord and others, when it seems as though their good works are in vain. Evil persists, things get worse, people are unappreciative and take advantage, and sacrifice goes unnoticed. It's enough to cause some people to just say, "it's not worth it anymore."

- Paul says, "No it's worth it." What would happen if all those who lived righteously just stopped? How much greater would be the suffering if self-sacrificial people ceased their service to those in genuine need?
- Yet, he recognizes a truth about doing good... it can get exhausting. But the solution is not to stop doing good, but rather learn how to endure and persevere in it.
- He writes the same thing to the Galatians, but adds a little motivating reward:

### BIBLE VERSE

**[Gal 6:9 NKJV] 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**

Sometimes the reward of doing the right thing isn't immediate. However, the reward will never come if we lose heart and stop. The promise remains that no good work goes unseen or unrewarded by God, even if it's in a future season.

### APPLICATION

Another area we need perseverance is dealing with those who refuse to submit to God's word. Paul reiterates what he said earlier, adding some more specifications.

### BIBLE VERSE

**14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**

### QUOTE

*“For the unruly Christian, Paul encourages admonishment, not complete abandonment.”*

Josh,

### APPLICATION

The goal of disciplining a fellow believer who is in disobedience is not utter destruction, but restoration. We don't shun people because we now hate them, for that would be haughty and self-righteous. But we do want those who are in sin to be ashamed of their behavior in the hopes that they find repentance.

**[Gal 6:1 NKJV] 1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who [are] spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**

### APPLICATION

But I've noticed that some people never truly get held accountable for their actions because they wear down the boundaries that have been established.

- He's my son, and I just can't say no.
- My husband is really not a bad man in spite of his lifetime pattern of bad behavior.
- She just needs my help this one more time. I know I put biblical expectations out there, but if I don't help they'll never be able to get out of it.

You need this word. PERSEVERE. If you love a person, you will hold the line of what will ultimately be for their good... not only now but eternally. To give in and give up before genuine repentance takes place doesn't accurately reflect the love of Christ. [One person said it like this: Make it an issue and keep it an issue until the person is willing to resolve the issue.](#)

- [The last thing a person in sin needs is t think that their sin is ok with God because it's ok with you, and it's ok with the church.](#)

## ASHAMED

Paul says the goal of the command is that they might be ashamed.

- this is not to shame them in front of others by putting them in the corner of the front of the classroom.
- No, this implies that the fellowship of the body of Christ is so safe, so comforting, so strengthening, that to be removed from it because of your own choices causes a shame or genuine sorrow over what your actions have caused.

Well, he's covered a lot. You have persecution, you have trials, you have some relational issues...

## BIBLE VERSE

**[2Th 3:16-18 NKJV] 16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. 17 The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

## APPLICATION

I love the thoroughness of this...

- What's available to you? Peace.
- Who gives it? The Lord of peace himself.
- When does He give it? All the time.
- How does He give it? In every way.

If you need some peace of mind, Jesus is the only source that provides it. **“My peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives.”**

