

Idle Hands

The Point: Your work ethic comes from your worship ethic

Source: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

How many times do we have to be reminded of something for it to set in?

Fact: The longer you don't do what you're supposed to do, the more likely it is you won't do it.

There is space between what you should and shouldn't do, and something will happen in that space: **Worship or Idolatry**

***Transition:** You have heard sermons on worship before, and today Paul helps us rearrange how and when we worship. This is beyond the four walls of the church building. It's when you walked in this morning, it's when you wake up tomorrow, it's how you raise your kids...*

God

Paul is writing to the Christians in Thessalonica to remind them of the importance of worship in light of Christ's final return.

However...

- They were getting lazy and selfish (this is the opposite of worship)
 - They had poor work ethic because they were super focused on themselves... Their worship was making sure they were good enough
- They were relying only on church members to take care of their needs
- Making noise through gossip, slander, and bad noise about God.

THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME HE'S ADDRESSED THIS!

- *1 Thessalonians - How to Live Series*
- *2 Thessalonians exists to address this worship problem*

Here is a reality we find...

Idle hands find idols

When you're lazy you will find something to worship, because you were created to worship.

Illus: Late night snacking...

Elephant: Some of us would like to say we aren't lazy... **BUT**

Paul is talking about people who aren't doing their work by being lazy or by doing all the other work except the thing they were supposed to do... **They were BUSYBODIES**

In order to understand what this mean, we have to see what Paul says.

6 Now we **command you**, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.**

Paul here is fighting their continued wrong view of Jesus' return, BUT he is also fighting the Greek culture that put more of the work on the slave rather than themselves.

The first time Paul addressed this, the people could claim ignorance, but this time there is no excuse...

- **Illus:** Maybe you make a mistake with company money. There can be forgiveness the first time, but a second time is a fireable offense.

"We command you... In the name of Jesus"

Same as military orders being passed down the chain of command

Ex: Failure to Obey an Order (Military Law)

- A disobedient military lacks order
- A disobedient soldier requires correction

So why does the military give your orders? To achieve victory. //
Why does God? Victory. // What does victory lead to? Worship

So what is the punishment for not following this order?

"Keep Away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us"

- Disassociate yourself from them & remove the unhealthy influences
- Keep away from people with poor work ethic

This is church discipline.

- The idea is to isolate the perpetrator so that they may see their sin
- They can recognize the thing that needs to change

Paul is saying, "look around and identify those who are distracting you from worship." (So let me ask you this....)

Who in your life is distracting you from worship in work/daily life?

- 1 of 2 people, those around you or you

Identify the sin and realize who's fault it is

That's exactly what Paul is about to do here

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, **8** nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a

burden to any of you. **9** It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

One of the biggest distractions from our worship to God is laziness.

If we are not actively seeking to worship God in our life, when we're lazy, we begin to worship in the wrong way.

- Biggest temptation we face is to worship the creation over the creator

Paul has set the example with his own life. He worked for a living. He didn't depend on the church to take care of him. The heart ache we feel with our children is the same heart ached Paul has here!

Paul is saying, "If you are worshipping, your are working"

10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. **11** For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.

This is where it's different:

What you are told today is if you don't blatantly meet the needs of everyone, you aren't being Jesus.

There are some needs that don't need to be met

Compassion does not mean enabling someone's laziness. When someone's lazy, they feel that time with something else. This is not how God has intended us to be. God is not lazy. Every action of our salvation required work.

GOSPEL

Based upon the gospel is how we arrive to verse 12

12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

He can command them in the Lord Jesus Christ to work because the Lord Jesus Christ worked

We should work quietly and so we don't have to be a burden to others-
But what happens if we lean into our laziness?

13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. **14** If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. **15** Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother

"If we are idle, the devil and a corrupt heart will soon find us somewhat to do."
-Matthew Henry

Idle Hands Find Idols

Bottom Line: Your work ethic comes from your worship ethic

The way you view your work comes from the way you understand your worship. Worship overflows into all areas of your life!

How do you worship God at your work? With your kids?

- Is God's patience with you reflected in your patience with your coworker?
- Is God's mercy, kindness and love for you seen in you by your kids?

This defines every Christian outside the four walls of this church building. Non-Christian, every Christian you work with or talk to should be defined by the one who worked on their behalf.

Transition: What's Paul telling you today? Is there laziness in you that is leading you to sin? Are you honoring God with your life? What does this look like for you? There is work to be done, and your work is a good thing, because your work reflects your worship.

Idol Hands Questions

1. When is a time where idolatry may have won over your worship?
2. What is something that may rob you from your time with God?
3. Who in your life is distracting you from worshipping God?
4. What sin in your life is distracting your worship?
5. How does knowing that God worked on your behalf, in saving you to himself, change the way you live your daily life?
6. What are some ways that you can begin to reflect your worship in your daily life?