

A Faith That Works

- Three things we'll look at today:
 - A Biblical View of Work
 - The Problem in Thessalonica
 - So What Are We Supposed to Do?

A Biblical View of Work

- Work was given to Adam before the fall, so it was not the result of sin. It was only impacted by sin like everything else.

Genesis 2:15(NKJV) Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

- The commandment to rest on the Sabbath implies that it's appropriate to work all the other six days.
 - Exodus 20:8
 - Deuteronomy 5:12

A Biblical View of Work

- The Proverbs repeatedly stress the importance of work in a flourishing life.

Proverbs 10:4-5(NKJV)

He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame.

Proverbs 12:27(NKJV)

The lazy *man* does not roast what he took in hunting, But diligence *is* man's precious possession.

Proverbs 14:23(NKJV)

In all labor there is profit, But idle chatter *leads* only to poverty.

Proverbs 21:5(NKJV)

The plans of the diligent *lead* surely to plenty, But *those of* everyone *who is* hasty, surely to poverty.

Proverbs 22:29(NKJV)

Do you see a man *who* excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown *men*.

- And many more.

A Biblical View of Work

- The Lord has frequently called people into His service while they were busy at their work.
 - Moses was busy tending sheep when the Lord appeared in the burning bush.
 - David was doing the same when Samuel came to his house to anoint him as king.
 - The prophet Amos was similarly occupied when he received his calling from God. (Amos 7:14-15)

Amos 7:14-15(NKJV) Then Amos answered ... “I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’

A Biblical View of Work

- In the New Testament, several disciples of Jesus received their calling while they were busy at their jobs.
 - Peter and Andrew, James and John were all fishermen when Jesus asked them to leave their nets to follow him.
 - Matthew was busy in his tax office when Jesus called him into His service.
 - Even Paul, we might say, was “just doing his job” when Jesus appeared to him on the road.

A Biblical View of Work

- The Lord has frequently used people in their professions to accomplish His will.
 - Joseph served in Pharaoh’s government.
 - Daniel did the same in Babylon, where God used him as a prophet.
 - Priscilla and Aquila worked with Paul in their shared occupation of tentmaking.
 - Paul refers to Luke as “the beloved physician.”
 - Ruth and Boaz first met in Boaz’s field during the harvest.

A Biblical View of Work

- Jesus, of course, was a carpenter before He began His public ministry.
- Finally, in the new creation, when the curse due to sin is removed, work will continue.
- God’s “servants will serve Him.”
- It’s probably safe to say that means He will give us all something to do.
- See Revelation 22:3

Revelation 22:3(NKJV) And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

The Problem in Thessalonica

- Some in Thessalonica had become lazy and were now doing nothing but meddling in other people's business.
- This was despite Paul's own example. (vv.7-9)
- And his clear teaching (v.10)
- The encouragement he gave them to work in his previous letter. **(1 Thess 4:11-12)**

The Problem in Thessalonica

- The problem here was not that the culprits were old or sick.
- Nor is it that they were somehow working but not earning money, as in the case of a mom with young children or business being slow.
- The issue is that they were being "disorderly," a military term used for someone who is not in their position.

The Problem in Thessalonica

- In v.10, the term Paul uses for "will not," suggests they were intentional about not having any productive job.
- In other words, they had no intention of ever doing anything more than they were doing right now.
- They're proving the truth of these sayings:

The Problem in Thessalonica

- "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."
- "Idle hands are the devil's tools."
- "No one ever died from work. But from being footloose and lazy, people lose life and limb. For man is born to work as birds are to fly." – Martin Luther
- "Idleness is to the human mind like rust to iron." – Ezra Cornell

So What Are We Supposed to Do?

- First of all, keep a right attitude toward work in general. "Doing good" (v.13) will always involve some sort of service, effort or diligence on our part.
- Secondly, don't get mixed up with rebellious loafers. (vv. 6 & 14)
- The phrase do not keep company with literally translates as "don't mix up together with" such people.

So What Are We Supposed to Do?

- One reason for not getting mixed up with such people is that we don't want to be corrupted ourselves. See 1 Corinthians 15:33.

1 Corinthians 15:33(NKJV) Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

- Another reason is that our unwillingness to take part in useless behavior with other believers can help them to think more clearly.
- They may become ashamed of what they are doing and repent. The goal is their restoration, not punishment. See v.15.

So What Are We Supposed to Do?

- Further, consider your own job and how you might do it more effectively – or even more ethically. Do it in such a way as to bring honor to Jesus Christ. See Colossians 3:23-24.

Colossians 3:23-24(NKJV) And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

- Scripture affirms every kind of honest work imaginable, from rulers to servants, farmers to teachers, artisans, scholars and musicians.
- Every serious occupation can be performed in a way that compliments Christ.

So What Are We Supposed to Do?

- If you are out of work, there are really only a few things you can do:
- Pray, then look for work
- Pray more, then look more
- Pray while you look and look while you pray.
- Ultimately, you really can trust the Lord because we know from Scripture that He desires us to have productive, God-honoring lives.
- Don't ever forget that!!!

So What Are We Supposed to Do?

- Don't ever forget what?
- We really can trust the Lord because we know from Scripture that He desires us to have productive, God-honoring lives.
- If you need a reminder, go back to all those verses from the first part – A Biblical View of Work

So What Are We Supposed to Do?

- And God expects us to do what we do well.
- We should consider our responsibilities as a stewardship we've been given from Him.
 - See Matthew 25:14-23.

Matthew 25:14-23(NKJV)

“For *the kingdom of heaven* is like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, **to each according to his own ability**; and immediately he went on a journey.

Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also.

But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.

After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’

His lord said to him, ‘**Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.**’

He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’

His lord said to him, ‘**Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.**’

- He gives to us according to our abilities. If you want to do more, consider increasing your abilities.
- He rewards us with more for our faithfulness. Be faithful and the Lord will reward you – with more responsibilities (according the parable).

So What Are We Supposed to Do?

- Finally, in these troublesome times, Paul ends with a blessing to the Thessalonians, but also to us – a prayer for our peace, our shalom – that we would enjoy the inner tranquility and outward prosperity that characterize lives that are genuinely blessed with the grace and peace of God.
- See vv. 16-18.

Next Week

- An Overview of 1 Timothy