# "A BIBLICAL WORK ETHIC"

**2 Thessalonians 3:8-12**

8-26-2026

INTRODUCTION:

***Christians must have a Biblical work ethic!**

**I. When you work, you are not a <u>BURDEN</u> to others (v. 8)**

**II. When you work, you set a good <u>EXAMPLE</u> for others (v. 9)**

**III. When you don't work, you don't <u>DESERVE</u> to eat (v. 10)**

**IV. When you don't work, you have idle time to get into <u>TROUBLE</u> (v. 11)**

**V. When you work, you get the <u>SATISFACTION</u> of enjoying the fruit of your labor (v. 12)**

CONCLUSION:

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Our sinful nature does not want to work. By nature we tend toward ease, leisure, and luxury without earning it. We are afraid of work. This four-letter word is practically a curse word in the 20th century. What do you say when you leave someone? "Don't work too hard!"

America once believed in "earning your bread."

Today America's philosophy is centered around putting in less and less time for more and more money.

Our nation will sooner or later pay for this attitude. No one wants to invest. Everyone wants to take, take, take.

Work was part of God's plan from creation (Gen. 2:15 - Adam was put into the Garden of Eden to dress [cultivate] it and to keep it); then after the fall, man was still to work, only this time it would not be as easy (Gen. 3:18-19).

Note: Context (v. 6-16) describes deliberate unemployment as a reason for Biblical separation and church discipline.

***Christians must have a Biblical work ethic!**

## I. When you work, you are not a <u>BURDEN</u> to others (v. 8)

***"for nought" -*** for nothing; for free; without paying.

If Paul stayed at someone's house for any length of time, he would not sponge off the company, but would renumerate them for living expenses.

***"Wrought" -*** energetically worked.

***"Labor and travail" -*** toil and hardship; wearisome work and struggle.

***"Night and day" -*** Because Paul was ministering at night, he had to work a job during the day.

Perhaps his tent-making trade was what he leaned on for employment (Acts 18:3)

***"Chargeable" -*** burdensome

Paul did not want to be a weight to anyone (no matter how well off they were). What consideration for others!

Our goal in life ought to be that we might be burden bears not burden givers. "weight lifters" not "weight leavers."

Today our government welfare socialistic system of taking from those who earn money to give to those who did not puts a tremendous unnecessary burden on the middle and lower class workers and his family.

Paul did not take advantage of people. His life was one of giving, not taking.
Paul was not a draining parasite; he was not a loafing leach.

Those who "deliberately impose upon the generosity of others are not living in love" (Hiebert, p. 185).

There are times when we do need each other
(EX: Acts 2, 4).

"While believers must always be ready to help others (Gal. 6:2) (as an act of love), believers must also shoulder their own burden (Gal. 6:5)." (Morris, p. 88)

But these times should be the exception not the rule.

We are seeking to give, not get! Eph. 4:28 - "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

**II. When you work, you set a good <u>EXAMPLE</u> for others (v. 9)**

Paul did not work night and day because he did not have authority ("*power")* which deserved the financial support of each church he planted. His reason for working was not because he did not deserve to be supported, but because as an apostle (who would only be a temporary preacher for each church he established), he wanted to set an example or model of hard work for others to follow.

People had already wrongly accused him of enough ministerial infidelity. Pedalling the Gospel for filthy lucre was not to be added to the list (II Cor. 11:7-9).

The Apostle "voluntarily waived this right" (Hiebert, p. 343).

I Thes. 2:9 - *"For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."*

It is right and proper for full-time ministers to be financially taken care of by the people to whom they minister.

I Cor. 9:11, 14 - *"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?"*

I Tim. 5:17-18 - *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward."*

Gal. 6:6 - *"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."*

When you work hard and honestly for a living, you give many people a model to copy, mimic, imitate or pattern after.

You become a good testimony to:
--Your co-workers
--Your family (children)
--The unsaved who watch your life

When you are lazy on the job, you are discrediting the cause of Christ.
When you are dishonest (steal time, extra-long breaks, late, etc.) on the job, you are discrediting the cause of Christ.

When you are unproductive on the job, you are discrediting the cause of Christ.
When you do a poor job (sloppy work) you are discrediting the cause of Christ.
A Christian should never be known as being slothful, unfaithful, etc. in his job.

A hard worker will win the respect of outsiders.

**III. When you don't work, you don't DESERVE to eat (v. 10)**

This command (imperfect) came repeatedly by Paul. Perhaps the "inspired and far-seeing wisdom of the Apostle had detected the seeks of disorder," laziness, and busy-body-ness in some of the Thessalonians (Hiebert, p. 344).

***"Would not" -*** *(thelo)* will not - to be unwilling. Note: it says "would not" not "could not."

Those who cannot work (the elderly and disabled) should be provided for; but not those who can but won't work.

Every adult is to work! Married women are to work also! Their place of employment is at home!

God commands them to be *"keepers [workers] at home"* (Tit. 2:5). They are to *"guide the house"* (I Tim. 5:14).

God gives an order: If anyone is unwilling to work. . . do not feed him! By feeding him, you are reinforcing his laziness, and will do more harm to him than good.

Most if not all of the homeless people in NYC are not innocent victims of circumstances, but are suffering the consequences of their own sin (usually drugs and alcohol).

The panhandlers of our city do not all suffer from lack of employment opportunities (for anyone who is legally a citizen here can make an opportunity if none exist); rather, they are all "self-inflicted paupers."

**IV. When you don't work, you have idle time to get into TROUBLE (v. 11)**

***"Some" -*** Perhaps not many, but just a few could be a dangerous *"hurtful leaven"* (I Cor. 5:6) to the rest.

***"Walk" -*** to conduct their life; to have a lifestyle of not working.

***"Disorderly" -*** to be out of God's order; to be idle.

This is the person who does nothing and is going nowhere. His life is in "park"! And his car is off the road. This man watches while the rest of the world goes whizzing by.

***"Working** (ergazomai) **not. . . busybodies** (periergazomai)* - a deliberate play on words -- lit. "not working but working around" or "not busy but a busybody"

They became "busybodies who do no business" (Conybeare).

They did not work, but worked around at meddling and obnoxious, troublesome behavior.

"Idle hands are the devil's workshop."

That which turned Sodom to homosexuality was "*abundance of idleness"* (Ezek. 16:49).

"Almost every culture has its saying about idleness. The Romans said, "By doing nothing, men learn to do evil." The Jewish rabbis taught, "He who does not teach his son a trade teaches him to be a thief." (Wiersbe, p. 169).

A major problem with our city is we have too many busybodies. People wouldn't have time to get into so much trouble if they were busy working a consistent job.

**V. When you work, you get the <u>SATISFACTION</u> of enjoying the fruit of your labor (v. 12)**

***"Command" -*** a binding order

***"Exhort" -*** an encouraging plea

***"Quietness" -*** a calmness produced by a contentedness to work. This feeling is the opposite of the agitated, meddlesome, and troublesome busybody.

"quietness" refers to having a calm, peaceful life; it's the opposite of being disorderly and disturbed, which always will lead to your causing disturbances.

Being quiet is tied to working in I Thess. 4:11.
You have an inner peace; because when you are working you are concentrating your energy on something without divided interests.

"Your body, mind, and emotions were designed for hard work, and will break down without it" ("Last Days" Journal, 1986, p. 25). The phrase "Use it or lose it" is true!

EX: of people who don't have a job. They have energy that isn't being used, so they are restless (an honest day's work gives you a good night's sleep), tense, flustered, in a tempest - going this way and then that, but accomplishing nothing!

Work is God's invention. It's good for you!

"Salt from the sweat of work preserves the soul" ("Last Days" p. 27).

I am miserable (depressed, etc.) when I don't get things done.

Man needs a sense of accomplishment.

The happiest people in a church are those that serve the most.

If you want something to get done, give it to someone who is already busy (If you give it to someone who isn't doing anything, chances are he won't get at what you give him to do).

Working hard has great therapeutic value for those of you who are "sick" all the time. Work is really a great healer!

--You get your mind off yourself
--You use muscles and tone them (lose weight)
--You get circulation going
--You have a sense of accomplishment

***"Eat their own bread" -*** to eat the bread they earned.

There is great satisfaction to know you honestly worked for the bread you are eating.

Those who live off of food stamps and welfare checks do not appreciate the food they eat, like those who worked for it.

CONCLUSION:

SEE: I Thes. 4:11-12

How should we work?

1) Enthusiastically David says in I Chron. 29:2, "I have prepared with all my might for the house of God"

2) Cheerfully - Col. 3:23 - "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

3) Be thorough - finish the job

4) Go the extra mile = Do it right! We are ambassadors for Christ! You will really shock the unsaved world! (leave things cleaner when you are finished with them than when you started)