

And this we know is not possible, because God is faithful to both ***“strengthen and protect”*** us from his deception, and Paul clearly ascribes our perseverance to the keeping power of Christ and His faithfulness.

B. 4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command – In describing their perseverance in ***“what we command,”*** which he describes back in verse 2:15 as ***“traditions,”*** he yet again ascribes their obedience primarily to Christ when he says, ***“We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command.”*** Notice the emphasis on ***“doing”*** the things the ***“we command.”*** The Christian faith is one filled with high and holy commandments given by our Lord and His Apostles in the New Testament, which are to be fully obeyed. And this obedience is a sign of true saving faith that has been wrought in a person by God’s regenerating power. This is clearly seen as Paul assigns their perseverance in obedience to his ***“commands,”*** as Christ’s faithful work in them, and in contrast to falling prey to the ***“evil one.”*** And even though it be true that Christ work obedience in us by His faithfulness, nevertheless we are charged to carry out obedience to His commands with our own hands.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 - 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.** NASB

C. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ – See here yet another benediction from Paul seeking to encourage them to again that having their ***“hearts”*** directed ***“into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ,”*** is a work that God works in them, for it is ***“the Lord”*** who ***“directs our hearts”*** into these things. Even Christian obedience is ascribed to God, for He alone is to receive the glory for the work of salvation he has wrought in our hearts, because His love for Him which he has placed there, and it is obedience and ***“steadfastness”*** which is the proof and fruit of our love to Him, which He has placed in our hearts by the regenerating work of the Spirit. This is why Paul can elsewhere tell us to ***“work out our own salvation,”*** and yet describe that as being the very work of God within us, ***“both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”***

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work** for His good pleasure. NASB

See here in these verses, 2:13-3:5, that a strong emphasis is placed on many aspects of God’s work in salvation. Not only has He ***“chosen us from the beginning for salvation,”*** (v-2:13), but He is working ***“sanctification by the Spirit”*** in us through the gift of ***“faith in the truth”*** (v-2:13). He also ***“called us by His Gospel”*** (v-2:14), so that we could ultimately ***“gain the glory”*** of Christ in glorification (v-2:14). He further ***“comforts and strengthens”*** us in such a way that it produces ***“every good work and word”*** (v-2:17) with His ***“good hope by grace.”*** Because He is ***“faithful”*** to ***“strengthen and protect us from the evil one”*** (v-3:3), we ***“will continue to do what He commands”*** (v-3:4), as He ***“directs our hearts into His love and steadfastness.”*** These expressions of God’s sovereign work not only in the election to salvation (His past work), but also in the many and varied aspects of sanctification (His present work), and also in our final glorification, all because of His sovereign love and grace, should cause us to clearly see what the Bible means by the expression that salvation belongs to the Lord (Psalm 3:8). It is all His work from first to last, and He is to get the glory for it, from us, who are the objects of His grace, for every aspect of it. It is of these glorious things that we will sing forever and ever, in the presence of the Lamb, and to His and the Father’s glory, world without end. May our lives reflect a constant gratitude for His amazing love to us, according to His eternal purpose in Christ.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-9 - 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. NASU A. 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us – Paul here now issues a stern command when he says, “*Now we command you,*” but this “*command*” is softened by the word “*brethren.*” But the authority that Paul issues this “*command*” is not of some man, or even of His own Apostolic authority, but rather “*in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” a frequent saying of Paul. This of course makes this an emphatic imperative that is to be taken note of, and swiftly and consistently obeyed. What is the command? It is “*that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.*” The idea of “*keep away*” is to shun, to keep aloof from, or to ostracize. This process is the third step of corrective discipline as outlined by our Lord in Matthew 18, and meant to turn the person to repentance so that they can be lovingly restored to Christ and the church.

Matthew 18:15-18 - 15 "And if your brother sins, **go and reprove him in private**; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 "But if he does not listen to you, **take one or two more with you**, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 "And if he refuses to listen to them, **tell it to the church**; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, **let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.** NASB

Notice that Paul calls this person a “*brother*” and is to be admonished by this behavior in a spirit of corrective loving discipline. This is because his behavior is that of an “*unruly life*” and is certainly “*not according to the tradition which you received from us.*” Paul had always taught the church that Christians ought to “*work with their own hands*” (1 Thess 4:11) in order not to be a burden on others, but to meet their own needs by steady hard work, and also then to meet the needs of others who had legitimate and genuine needs because of an inability to work or some other employment hindering circumstance. Paul also points to this as a witness to “*outsiders*” of the attractive nature of the Christian work ethic and example of loving sacrifice for others.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 - 11 and to make it your ambition **to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you**; 12 so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and **not be in any need.** NASB

2 Thessalonians 3:11-12 - 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an **undisciplined life, doing no work at all**, but acting like busybodies. NASB

Ephesians 4:28 - 28 Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather **let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.** NASB

Therefore when a Christian refuses to work or is too lazy to work, he is to be taken note of as one who is “*unruly,*” meaning that he is disorderly and disobedient to the Christ. Paul had obviously dealt with these “*unruly*” persons in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, and even at that time commanded the church to admonish them.

1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 - 14 And we urge you, brethren, **admonish the unruly**, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. NASB

These instructions should highlight for us the weight and importance that God puts on the Christian work ethic, and cause us to see that Christ expects us to be fruitful laborers who work hard to meet their own needs and also the needs of others.

Acts 20:34-35 - 34 "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men

who were with me. 35 "In everything I showed you that **by working hard in this manner you must help the weak** and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, **'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**" NASB

This matter is so important, that believers living in this *"unruly"* manner are to be disciplined to the point of being ostracized. Painful though it may be, this is what love demands!

B. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example – Paul obviously taught this to them as he reminds them saying, *"For you yourselves know."* As he frequently does, he points to his own behavior as a model for them, saying, *"how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you."* The idea of living in an undisciplined manner is in contrast to *"leading an unruly life,"* which is not according to the tradition we gave you. He clearly points to the fact that they worked for their own sustenance saying, *"nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day."* The idea of *"eating one's own bread"* is a Hebraism meaning more than just food but also life sustenance of all kinds. The importance of working for one's own bread is biblical commandment, so that we don't burden others with our needs, but rather work hard to have an abundance to meet the genuine needs of others how have much less. This Paul makes clear saying *"so that we would not be a burden to any of you,"* hoping that they would see his example and follow suit noting *"but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example."* The Apostles were obviously preaching and working simultaneously as Paul states, *"with labor and hardship we kept working night and day."* See here that Paul had every right to eat the bread of those within the church when he says *"not because we do not have the right to this."* Jesus and the Apostles consistently taught that Christian pastors are surely worthy of their life sustenance and material goods from those to whom they minister, as they are servants of those to whom they minister for their *spiritual and eternal* benefit, especially those who *"worked hard at preaching and teaching."*

Matthew 10:9-11 - 9 "Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, 10 or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; **for the worker is worthy of his support.** NASB

1 Corinthians 9:11-14 - 11 **If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?** 12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? 14 So also **the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.** NASB

Galatians 6:6 - let the **one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.** NASB

1 Timothy 5:17-18 - 17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially **those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."** NASB

If your pastor spends his earthly labor and his days and time, a mere 40 or 50 years, serving the interests of His people which benefits them throughout eternity, should they not uphold and under gird him in this short life? Indeed they should, and they should do it in a manner worthy of the kingdom of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, for we do not want to be held in contempt by him on the great Day for the way we treated His ministers here and now.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 - 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat

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their own bread. NASU

A. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either - The fact that Paul also taught this principle to them verbally, and not just in his letter, is clearly seen by the statement, ***“For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order.”*** That is was a command and not just a suggestion is clear by the words ***“give you this order.”*** Paul’s teaching in the church was authoritative and was to be fully obeyed. Christians will do well to obey the leaders with proper respect and ready obedience, when it is very clear that they are being taught accurately and with a hearty example of the Christian faith, for it is not men that we serve, but rather, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul reminds them that he used to give them this imperative, ***“if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.”*** And the fact that he had dealt with this problem both by word of mouth and also by letter, magnifies the nature of this problem in the Thessalonian church. There were among them, obviously, some who were ***“busybodies”*** and lived in this ***“undisciplined”*** manner. We should take note at this point that it is those who are ***“not willing to work,”*** who are in view here, and not those who are **unable to work**. A hearty distinction is to be made by those who are ***“not willing”*** and **not able**. Moreover, in our day and in our culture, there is much work that can be performed even by those with some physical disability, and if ready employment can be found, even for those with some limitations, it should be. We have an entitlement problem in America which is created by the abuse of the welfare system and many lazy people in our culture, who are ***“not willing to work,”*** use even the slightest excuses and disabilities to have their needs met by those who work hard. But this is not to be the case for the Christian. We have a much higher work ethic than those who are in the world, and only those with legitimate and genuine needs are to be dependent on others. Paul’s command is clear, the lazy man is not to be given food, but should be allowed to have his hunger drive him to the workplace. Paul elsewhere tells us that people who are unwilling to meet the needs of themselves and their own families are ***“worse than unbelievers”*** (1 Tim 5:8).

B. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread – Paul now refers to some report he heard, saying, ***“For we hear that some among you.”*** This report likely came from Timothy’s visit to deliver 1 Thessalonians. But nevertheless, the issue is, ***“that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.”*** Paul again mentions that this behavior is substandard for the Christian life saying that they are ***“leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all.”*** See here again, the weight and importance that Apostle places on the Christians working hard to be fruitful and to produce, rather than be lazy and ***“do no work at all.”*** It is imperative that Christians work hard to meet not only their own basic needs, but also to have an abundance to share in loving their neighbor. But these lazy Thessalonians brothers were not only ***“not willing to work,”*** but were causing problems because in their idleness were going around like ***“acting like busybodies,”*** a reference to meddling in the affairs of others. Paul uses the term also in 1 Timothy, and it is usually associated with idle behavior coupled with a loud mouth which gossips and meddles in the affairs of others.

1 Timothy 5:13 - 13 And at the same time they also learn to be idle, as they **go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.** NASB

Peter uses the same term, which is translated in NASB as a ***“troublesome meddler.”*** The alternate in the NKJV is ***“a busybody in other people’s matters.”***

1 Peter 4:15 - 15 By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a **troublesome meddler;** NASB

Paul had dealt with this same issue and these same people earlier when made reference to

working and coupled that together with leading a *“quiet life”* and minding one’s *“own business.”*

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 - 11 and to make it your ambition to **lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands**, just as we commanded you; 12 so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need. NASB

Paul now reaffirms this commandment, in a very direct manner, and by the authority of *“the Lord Jesus Christ”* Himself saying, *“Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.”* Note the contrast in these statements between the idle and gossiping meddler or *“busybody,”* and the hard working Christian who leads a *“quiet life”* in a *“quiet fashion,”* and supplies their own bread. Learn then two important things in this verse 12. First, Christ commands the Christian to work hard for their own needs. And second, that Christians are not to be *“busybodies,”* that is, *“troublesome meddlers”* in the business and affairs of others. It is crystal clear in this passage that this kind of behavior is not tolerated in the Christian church and is worthy of the process of church discipline. This process is a part of every healthy church, for a church which does not love its people enough to discipline and correct their misbehavior, is not worthy of being called a church.

2 Thessalonians 3:13-15 - 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. NASU

A. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good – Paul now presents yet another contrast when he says *“But as for you, brethren.”* Here it is between the *“unruly busybody”* who refuses to work and the rest of the church. In this contrast he means to encourage the church at large to press on in their virtuous example of *“working hard”* to provide for their own and living in a *“quiet”* and orderly lifestyle, when he says *“do not grow weary of doing good.”* In this contrast, it is important to note that Paul does not want them to be affected by these *“busybodies”* and becomes themselves lazy and disobedient, but in every way to follow Paul’s example (verses 7-9) of hard work so as not to be a burden on any of the brethren (verse 8) or the church at large. This is clearly seen by the fact that verse 13 is really a continuation of the authoritative command in verse 12, which he pronounced by the authority of *“the Lord Jesus Christ”* Himself. In summary Paul is giving them an authoritative command to continue in their hard work and to *“not grow weary of doing good”* in doing so.

Church Discipline

B. 14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother – Now Paul means to continue his instruction from back in verse 6 when he said *“that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.”* Here Paul picks up the thought again to provide clarification when he says, *“If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him.”* Here Paul is bringing further action upon a situation that he has been dealing with since the first visit (2 Thess 3:10) and also his first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:11-12). Because these lazy *“busybodies”* had been stubbornly obstinate and refused to work, even after being corrected, Paul now exhorts the church to take corporate action in an official disciplinary proceeding. This is the third step in the Church disciplinary process outlined by our Lord in Matthew chapter 18.

Matthew 18:15-18 - 15 "And if your brother sins, **[1]go and reprove him in private**; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 "But if he does not listen to you, **[2]take one or two more with you**, so that