

A Biblical Call to Personal Responsibility

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10

INTRODUCTION: "When the Church Tolerates Laziness, It Compromises Holiness"

Showing kindness is good—but helping people stay lazy isn't. There's a difference between helping someone and just making their problem worse. We are living in a generation where churches bend over backwards to accommodate people who **refuse** to live in obedience to the Word of God. And the damage is showing out there.

People expect pastors to pay their rent, but won't work a job. They want the church to carry them, but they won't lift a finger to carry their own load. They call it "trusting God," but it's really just **spiritual-sounding laziness**.

In this passage, the apostle Paul doesn't tiptoe around it. He doesn't say, "Be patient with them, they're trying." No—he gives a bold command: **if any man will not work, neither should he eat**.

This isn't written to unbelievers. This isn't about people who are sick, injured, elderly, or abandoned. This is written to **brethren**—professing believers who are **disorderly, undisciplined, and deliberately disobedient**.

And Paul doesn't just tell the lazy person to get right—he tells the church how to respond if they won't. This is not just about work ethic. It's about **church purity, biblical authority, and obedient living**.

Today, a lot of churches are full of gossip, laziness, and people who don't care about living for God. But this passage makes things clear and tells us exactly what to do.

You're about to see:

- How the church is supposed to **withdraw** from disobedient believers (v.6)
- How Paul set the example of **hard work and personal sacrifice** (vv.7–9)
- The divine command: **no work = no food** (v.10)
- The reality of **busybodies and disorderly conduct** (v.11)
- The solution: **quietness, labor, and responsibility** (v.12)

- The call to the church: **keep doing right, mark the disobedient, and lovingly correct them** (vv.13–15)

This passage gives us a **blueprint for church discipline** that most modern congregations have ignored—and the result has been devastating.

So let's walk through it **verse by verse**, and let the Word of God speak clearly about what to do **when believers stop living like believers**.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 – Full Verse

""2 Thessalonians 3:6

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.""

“Now we command you, brethren...”

- **Not a suggestion** – This is a **command** from the apostle Paul, speaking with apostolic authority through the Holy Spirit who is God.
- He's not saying, “This is a good idea,” or “You might want to consider...”
He's saying **do this**—no excuses, no delay.
- **“Brethren”** reminds us that this instruction is being given **to saved believers**—to those in the church, the family of God. This isn't about how to treat the lost world, but how to deal with *professing Christians* who live in rebellion.

This isn't legalism. It's love for holiness. The church must obey God *above* emotional loyalty to lazy or rebellious “brothers.” Obedience starts with the household of faith.

“...in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

- This command doesn't come from Paul's personal opinion—it comes with the **full authority of Jesus Christ**.
- Doing something “in the name of Jesus” means **on His behalf, with His approval, and under His lordship**.
- That means if you disobey this command, you're not just ignoring Paul—you're ignoring **Jesus Himself**.

People say, “What would Jesus do?” Here it is. He would have you **separate** from Christians who are out of order and unrepentant. You know you're doing wrong by not contributing, but you won't fix it. That's not cruelty—it's **obedience to Christ**. Cruelty is when you won't help.

“...that ye withdraw yourselves...”

- **“Withdraw”** means to **pull away**, **distance yourself**, or **stop associating** closely.
- This is not passive. It's intentional. It means to **stop fellowshiping** with certain Christians who are walking in disobedience.
- It doesn't mean hate them—but it does mean **don't act like everything's okay**.
- This is a form of **biblical discipline**—not excommunication from salvation, but from **close fellowship**.

This goes against modern church culture. Today's churches welcome everyone no matter how they live. But the Bible says: if someone claims to be saved and refuses to live right—**step back**.

“...from every brother that walketh disorderly...”

- **“Every brother”** – again, this is someone who **claims to be saved**.
- **“Walketh”** – this is **ongoing lifestyle**, not a one-time failure. This person has a **pattern** of being out of line.
- **“Disorderly”** means:
 - Out of rank (like a soldier breaking formation)
 - Irresponsible
 - Unruly
 - Neglectful of duty

Paul uses this word in context to refer to **people who refuse to work**, who expect others to provide for them when they are fully able.

This verse directly applies to **lazy Christians who won't work**, who drain others, and walk outside of God's order. God says—**pull away**. **Don't act like that's okay**.

“...and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

- “**Tradition**” doesn’t mean man-made religion. It means **apostolic teaching**—what Paul and the other apostles taught, both by word and example.
- The Thessalonians had **already been taught** how Christians should live—including the expectation that they **work, walk orderly, and take personal responsibility**.
- These “disorderly” Christians are **willfully rejecting** what they were taught.

This is not ignorance—it’s rebellion. They know what’s right. They were taught what’s right. And they’re refusing to live it. God says don’t pretend that’s fellowship. **Withdraw**.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 teaches that the church must not keep close fellowship with Christians who are walking in disobedience—specifically those who are lazy, irresponsible, or refuse to live by the clear teaching of the apostles. This command is given with the authority of Jesus Christ. It is not optional. It is not harsh. It is holy and perfect.

In Practical Terms:

- Don’t let the lazy brother mooch off you while ignoring the Bible.
- Don’t keep close friendships with people who call themselves saved but reject God’s Word.
- Don’t play nice with rebellion in the church—**call it out and pull away**.
- Do it in love, but do it **without apology**, because Jesus commanded it.
- You need to get things fixed immediately.

2 Thessalonians 3:7 – Full Verse

""2 Thessalonians 3:7

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;""

“For yourselves know...”

- Paul is appealing to **firsthand knowledge**.
- He’s saying, *“You saw this for yourself. You were there. You know how we lived.”*
- There’s no guesswork here. Paul isn’t relying on hearsay or secondhand reputation. He’s pointing to a real-life example.

A preacher should live in a way that the people **know**—not guess—that he’s walking uprightly. There should be no doubt about the example being set.

“...how ye ought to follow us:”

- The word **“ought”** means it’s not optional—it’s expected.
- Paul is saying, *“You’re supposed to follow our example.”*
- The word **“follow”** means to **imitate**, like a child copies a parent.
- Paul wasn’t just teaching with words—he taught with **his lifestyle**.

A true man of God can say, “Look at my life, and do what I do.” Not just *“Listen to my sermons,”* but *“Copy my walk.”* When I’m doing right, you are supposed to follow me.

If someone claims to preach the truth but doesn’t live it—they are **not** qualified to be followed. Paul says if you want to know how to walk in order, **look at how we lived when we were with you.**

“...for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;”

- Paul is giving the **reason** they should imitate him: because he **didn’t live disorderly**.
- This ties directly to **verse 6**, which warned against associating with anyone who “walks disorderly.”
- Paul says, *“When I was with you, I didn’t do that. I didn’t sit around and expect handouts. I didn’t freeload. I didn’t act like I was above work. You can work but I won’t.”* Paul didn’t do that. Paul worked hard.
- Again, the word **“disorderly”** means:
 - Irresponsible
 - Out of line
 - Lazy or unwilling to labor
 - Undisciplined in lifestyle

Paul practiced what he preached. He didn’t demand the spotlight, didn’t expect special treatment, and didn’t mooch off the church. He was **orderly, hardworking, and disciplined.**

That's what leadership in the church is supposed to look like.

2 Thessalonians 3:7 reminds the church that Paul and his team set the example of **godly, hardworking, disciplined living**. He's not asking the believers to do something he refused to do. He showed them by example how a servant of God should behave—**not lazy, not disorderly, not entitled**.

They were to **imitate** that pattern. And today, we are too.

In Practical Terms:

- Don't follow lazy leaders. Follow godly ones.
- Don't just listen to preaching—**watch the preacher as he follows Jesus**.
- If someone talks a big game but won't lift a finger to serve, don't imitate them.
- Church members need to see an **orderly walk**—a life of responsibility, humility, and real obedience.

2 Thessalonians 3:8 – Full Verse

""2 Thessalonians 3:8

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:""

“Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought;”

- **“Eat any man's bread”** – This is a **figure of speech** meaning they didn't live off others. They didn't take handouts. They didn't let others provide for their daily needs **for free**.
- **“For nought”** means *without paying, without working for it, or without giving anything in return*. For nought equals for nothing.
- Paul is saying: *“We didn't accept meals, support, or hospitality without pulling our weight.”*

This rebukes the freeloading spirit in churches today—people who show up for potlucks, handouts, and sympathy but never contribute, never serve, never give, never help. Paul says, *“That wasn't us.”* Paul didn't do that.

Paul was careful not to eat anyone's bread "for nothing," so no one could ever say, "*I took care of Paul.*" Paul took care of himself just as you have a personal responsibility to take care of yourself. I am calling you right now to do this. You must work. You must provide.

"...but wrought with labour and travail..."

- **"Wrought"** means *worked*—not spiritually, not metaphorically—**literally, physically worked**.
- **"Labour"** refers to ordinary, steady work.
- **"Travail"** adds the idea of **painful effort, sweat, strain, and exhaustion**. It wasn't easy work—it was **hard work**.

Paul is saying: "*We didn't just preach—we worked hard on top of that to support ourselves.*"

Some modern-day preachers think ministry is a luxury job: sleep in, study a little, show up on Sundays, and expect a paycheck. But Paul says **real servants work**. Sometimes physical work. Sometimes bi-vocational. Sometimes painful. But always **productive**.

"...night and day..."

- This phrase shows their **diligence and sacrifice**.
- Paul and his team worked **around the clock**—not just a 9-to-5 schedule.
- It speaks of their willingness to **do whatever it took** to avoid burdening others.
- Their work ethic was **relentless and selfless**.

Paul used his own hands—**not other people's wallets**.

Some people work one hour and want to be paid like they worked ten. Paul worked **long and hard**—because that's what real men of God do when others are watching and when they're not.

"...that we might not be chargeable to any of you:"

- **"Chargeable"** means a **burden, a financial drain, or dead weight** on someone else.
- Paul is saying: "*We worked like we did because we didn't want to cost you anything or slow you down.*"
- He refused to be a **drain on the church**, even though, as an apostle, he had every right to receive support.

Paul could have pulled the “apostle card.” He could’ve demanded support. But instead, he worked to **set an example**. That’s leadership: **not being a taker, but a builder**. Not being a burden, but a blessing.

2 Thessalonians 3:8 shows that Paul and his ministry team didn’t live off others. They didn’t accept free food, free lodging, or free help without working hard in return. They labored **physically**, even **at night**, so that no one could say they were a burden. This was not because they had to—but because they **wanted to show what Christian responsibility looks like**.

In Practical Terms:

- Don’t expect others to do what you won’t do. If you won’t work, don’t expect them to work for you. If you won’t give, don’t expect them to give to you.
- Don’t take from people while you give nothing back. If everyone does that, we’re finished.
- Don’t drain your church, your pastor, or your family.
- **Work hard. Show up. Pull your weight. Set an example.**

2 Thessalonians 3:9 – Full Verse

""2 Thessalonians 3:9

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.""

“Not because we have not power...”

- **“Power”** here means **authority, right, or permission**.
- Paul is saying: *“Don’t misunderstand—it’s not that we couldn’t ask for support. We had every right to.”*
- As an apostle, Paul had the **God-given right** to be supported financially by the churches he served.

Paul is saying, “I had the biblical right to be supported—but I **chose not to use it**.”

Paul didn’t abuse his position. He didn’t take advantage of the flock. Just because you *can* do something doesn’t mean you *should*—especially if doing so might hurt your testimony or enable laziness in others.

“...but to make ourselves an ensample unto you...”

- “**Ensamples**” (plural of example) means **a visible pattern to follow**, a **model**, something to **copy**.
- Paul is saying: “*We lived this way on purpose—so you’d see what the Christian life looks like in real time.*”
- He didn’t just tell people what to do—he showed them by **how he lived**.

The apostle Paul didn’t just deliver truth—he **demonstrated** it. He gave the church a **living picture** of responsibility, discipline, humility, and service.

In a world full of talkers, the church needs **examples**—not just influencers, but **imitators of Christ**. The next generation doesn’t need more advice—they need someone to *watch* and *follow*.

“...to follow us.”

- “**Follow**” means to **mimic**, to **walk after**, to **pattern your life** after someone else’s.
- Paul is telling them: “*We lived the way we did so that you could copy us.*”
- He knew that example is more powerful than instruction.

Too many people want a platform but not the pressure of being an example. But if you’re saved—**people are watching you**. If you’re a father, husband, pastor, or teacher—**others are following your steps**.

The question is: are you giving them something worth following?

2 Thessalonians 3:9 makes it clear that Paul didn’t refuse help because he wasn’t allowed to receive it—but because he wanted to **lead by example**. He laid down his personal rights for the spiritual good of others. He lived responsibly, humbly, and sacrificially so that the church would learn to do the same.

In Practical Terms:

- Just because you *can* take something doesn’t mean you *should*.
- Good leadership isn’t about using your power—it’s about **laying it down** for others.
- If you’re in a position of influence, the way you **live** is your loudest sermon.
- Don’t expect others to walk straight if you’re walking crooked.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 – Full Verse

""2 Thessalonians 3:10

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.""

“For even when we were with you...”

- Paul reminds them: *“This isn’t new.”*
- This wasn’t some reactionary rule or a last-minute policy. This was taught **from the beginning**.
- When Paul first planted the church in Thessalonica, he laid down this principle **in person**.

Don’t let anyone say this is harsh or unloving. Paul taught it **face to face**, not from a distance. A real leader lays the foundation early—and doesn’t shift with culture or emotion.

“...this we commanded you...”

- Not a suggestion. Not advice. Not optional. This is a **command**.
- And not just a personal opinion—this is apostolic, Holy Spirit-led, authoritative instruction for the **whole church**.
- Paul didn’t leave it up to individual opinion or church vote. It was a **God-given directive**.

Today, churches want to avoid confrontation. But Paul commanded this boldly. If we want biblical churches, we need **biblical commands**, not just soft encouragement.

“...that if any would not work...”

- Let’s be very clear: this is not talking about **those who cannot work** (due to disability, age, or genuine hardship).
- This is about those who **refuse** to work. “Would not” means they **won’t**, not that they **can’t**.
- This shows **willful refusal**—they are **able-bodied**, but **unwilling**.

There are plenty of people today who are **physically able** but **spiritually lazy**. They’d rather complain, beg, and coast than get up and take responsibility. God says—*don’t support that*.

“...neither should he eat.”

- This is the **divine consequence** for laziness: **no work, no food**.
- Not a threat. Not a punishment. A **principle**.
- God says if a person **chooses** not to work, the church should **withhold support**.
- Not to be cruel—but to let hunger teach what preaching couldn't.

God has built hunger into man as a motivator. If you always feed the lazy, you short-circuit the very lesson God is trying to teach them.

Feeding the lazy is not mercy—it's disobedience. It teaches people to depend on others instead of depending on God through obedience and work. Churches and families must **stop enabling sin**.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 is crystal clear: **if someone is able to work but refuses, they shouldn't be supported**. This isn't harsh—it's holy. God commands it because **enabling laziness leads to deeper sin**. The church must hold the line—not to shame people, but to lead them to repentance and responsibility.

In Practical Terms:

- If someone refuses to work, stop bailing them out.
- If a grown man won't support his family, don't keep making excuses for him.
- Hunger is sometimes the best teacher.
- Churches need to stop confusing **helping** with **hurting**—because enabling disobedience is rebellion against God's command.

CONCLUSION: “God Doesn't Bless Laziness—He Commands Responsibility”

What have we seen so far? This isn't a gray area. These verses don't leave any room for soft excuses or confusion. God's Word is very simple and very clear:

- If a brother is living out of order, **withdraw** (v.6).
- If someone won't work, **don't support them** (v.10).
- If the preacher doesn't live it, **don't follow him**—but Paul did (vv.7–9).

TRUE WORDS

Baptist Church

Revelation 21:5 

Sunday Morning

22 June 2025

- And if someone is sitting around doing nothing, they are **walking in sin**, not in faith (v.11 coming next).

God is not okay with idleness. God is not okay with freeloading. God is not okay with Christians who **refuse to take responsibility** and expect others to carry them. We WORK together here. It's not Josh works and you watch. We WORK together here.

And Paul didn't just say it—**he lived it**. He worked day and night so that no one could say he was a burden. He led by example. And now he's commanding the church to follow that same example.

If someone **can work but won't**, they should **not be eating off others**. That's not cruel. That's Scripture. That's righteous correction designed to bring people back into **obedient fellowship**.

These verses aren't about being harsh—they're about being **holy**. They aren't about being mean—they're about being **faithful** to what God has clearly said.

So the question for the church is simple:

Will we **obey God's commands**, or will we continue **carrying people God said to correct**? This sermon is for correction. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God for CORRECTION.

We're going to do things the right way here. We are going to correct things here. And I have patience with you correcting things, but that patience will come to an end. God's patience comes to an end as well.

Let's pray.