



Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

## No Working, No Eating

God's earnest desire is that the spiritual children who bear and represent His name live a disciplined, orderly lifestyle. God Himself is disciplined and orderly. The planets and various moons in the solar system move in very precise orbits; their paths are mathematical and their locations can be predicted with amazing precision. This orderliness is an exhibition of the character of the Creator, as was noted by Paul in his epistle to the Roman Christians. "For since the creation of the world," were his words, "His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). His orderly character is one of the things on display by the creation. God is also disciplined, one exhibition of which is His ability to do things on time. "At the right time," noted the apostle Paul, "Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). Those, then, that desire to be the sons of their Father in heaven will be imitators of His discipline and orderliness.

- **Necessity of work** — One of the disasters of the modern digital age is how video games have replaced the games played on the field or on the court by vast numbers of children. It is a simple fact: virtual reality is not reality — reeving on a joystick is not the same as pushing the body down the hardwood. Hence the toughness needed to discipline the body for real life is lost to a generation who will give up when the going gets tough. Of course, the tendency of the race of man to go for the easy way rather than the right way is nothing new. "We hear," Paul had stated, "that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all." This is not good for God's spiritual children, since such lack of discipline is essentially ungodliness. "For even when we were with you," the apostle reminds them, "we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Given the choice of working or starving, the able-bodied man will finally work. "A worker's appetite works for him," is wisdom from the sage of Proverbs, "for his hunger urges him on" (Proverbs 16:26). Necessity may be the mother of invention, but it certainly is the father of motivation!

*God works, and  
He expects His  
children to be  
workers also.*

- **Eat your own bread** — God wants His spiritual children to be partakers of His divine nature, to be givers rather than takers. Hence He wants those whom He is calling out of the darkness into the light of His glorious character to lay aside old undisciplined ways, and walk orderly before Him. "For we hear," is Paul's comment, "that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies" (2 Thessalonians 3:11). Dad in heaven is not going to let that pass! The instruction is issued through the apostles, coming in this case through Paul: "Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread" (2 Thessalonians 3:12). The message is clear: quit the gossip and idle chatter ["quiet fashion"], get off the chair or off the couch ["work"], and quit freeloading off other people ["eat your own bread"].

God started the creation with His work. "On the seventh day," say the ancient records, "God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" (Genesis 2:2). As the One who worked, and is working, He is well within His character rights to expect that those who are called by His name be exemplary workers also. He is orderly and disciplined, and He is right to expect that those making a claim to godliness will be orderly and disciplined also. Christian men and women need to "listen up": get rid of any lazy bones, work hard, and be disciplined in the management of time and finances. Or else!

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