

Thoughts from Second Thessalonians ...

Attitude Adjustments



Life on this planet is full of challenges in the physical realm, to say nothing of challenges which might arise in the directly spiritual sphere. "For we know," asserted the apostle Paul, "that the whole creation groans and suffers with the pains of childbirth together until now" (Romans 8:22). The second law of thermodynamics was unflinchingly imposed upon all creation by the wisdom of an Almighty God, establishing clearly that the law of decay and death is constantly in operation. Christians, therefore, do not get to escape the ravages of that law during their existence in the physical realm. "Also we ourselves," was his observation, "having the first fruits of the Spirit [the indwelling presence of the Spirit], even we ourselves groan within ourselves,

waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body [our resurrection from the dead]" (Romans 8:23). Because of the nature of this struggle in all aspects of Christian living, there can be attitude challenges to overcome.

- **No let up** — The Christian life is compared to a long run. "Let us run with endurance," exhorted Hebrews' author, "the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). Under those conditions, a weariness can set in, and the individual then be persuaded to quit. The sacred scriptures always encourage the brethren to power through those moments, and keep a great attitude and a high level of performance. Thus, as the apostle Paul discusses the importance of saints' maintaining discipline and orderliness in the midst of an unorganized and slovenly society, he brings forth exhortation to assist them in the long race. "But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good" (2 Thessalonians 3:13). This is a theme that runs through new covenant writings — not getting weary in the midst of doing good for brethren and the lost. Ultimately, all things are to be done for Christ, the consciousness of which will prevent a lot of the tendency toward weariness. So when the saint is working hard, doing good things for God and for the church, and no one notices, there is no room for getting tired of it and just quitting. When there is no thanks, or seemingly no results, kick weariness aside. When it seems that no one wants to listen, or if they are consistently hostile or indifferent to the truth, and the thought comes to "throw in the towel," eliminate that thought and focus on Christ and His reward. Keep working in quiet fashion, keep eating your own bread, keep being a good example, and keep imitating the example of Jesus, as well as Paul and the other apostles.

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- **What if?** — So what if one of the saints in the local congregation doesn't follow these instructions from the sacred writ? What if he gets a little stiff-necked, and makes comments such as, "You can't tell me how to run my life." What saith the Lord? "And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man, and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame" (2 Thessalonians 3:14). There it is: if a man is a non-working freeloader, and he refuses to listen to the pleadings of the congregation to get it right in this sector of his life, then the congregation is to withdraw from associating or fellowshiping with him. "And yet," says the apostle, "do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thessalonians 3:15). Once he shows some honest effort and consistent real improvement, then the doors of fellowship are to be swung wide open for him.

The Lord clearly is committed to having his saints exhibit orderly and disciplined lives to the world. They are to make the necessary attitude adjustments to be shining examples of those who work hard, who do things right, who manage their finances properly, and who set the right priorities. May each of the modern brethren implement these things in his life and the life of his family. And may the Lord be glorified by that example in the midst of a darkening world.

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