

May 10, 2026



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas



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Work as Christian Duty

Gen 2:15; Exod 20:9; John 5:17; 9:4; Acts 20:33-35; 2 Thes 3:6-12

Lesson Background and Introduction

In today's lesson, we will explore God's design for work, starting from creation and continuing through the life of the first-century church with application for today. While this lesson reviews a variety of Scripture texts, those of primary interest will be Acts 20:33-35 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12, both focusing on words from the apostle Paul.

Lesson Context: Acts

The book of Acts covers events from about AD 30 to 63. Our lesson segment from that book takes us almost to the end of that period. In about AD 58, Paul traveled to Jerusalem after concluding his third missionary journey. Some members of the church in Jerusalem had fallen into poverty. Therefore, Paul's trip included collecting offerings from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia (Romans 15:25-26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4). This offering allowed Christians who were predominately of Gentile background to support the Christians in Jerusalem who were predominately of Jewish background. Paul initially planned to sail to Syria from Greece to deliver the offering. But discovering a plot against him, he traveled by land through Macedonia (Acts 20:3). Paul aimed to arrive in Jerusalem by Pentecost (20:16), which would mark the anniversary of the church's beginning (2:1). This would be a significant occasion for one group of Christians to receive a life-sustaining gift from fellow believers of different backgrounds.

Lesson Context: 2 Thessalonians

Paul took the message of the gospel to the city of Thessalonica during his second missionary journey (AD 52-54). What we know about his effort to plant a church there and the immediate aftershock of doing so are recorded in Acts 17:1-9, 13. The apostle did not start a church in every town or city he visited. But the demographics of Thessalonica made that city a good candidate for a church plant. *First*, the city had one or more synagogues, where Paul liked to begin voicing his message (Acts 17:2, 10, 16). *Second*, the city was large—by some estimates, nearly 200,000 people lived there in the Roman era. *Third*, Thessalonica sat astride major trade routes of land and sea. Some commentators think that the letters we call 1 and 2 Thessalonians were the very first of the New Testament documents written. Since our study concerns 2 Thessalonians, the most immediate literary context for it is 1 Thessalonians. That letter features a mixture of expressions of Paul's gratitude, a summary of his ministry in the city, doctrinal clarifications, and instructions for daily life. The tone of 2 Thessalonians is direct, as Paul finds it necessary to review some of the same topics again.

Key Verse: Acts 20:35

I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Work is a call to cultivate God's world for His glory.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK:
Dear God, thank You for the honor of joining You in Your work in the world. Help me to reflect Your love, wisdom and order in my life and in the place where I work.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

(Genesis 2:15 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", July 27, 2020)

Spring Series: Social Teachings of the Church

NEXT WEEK

UNIT 3: Fulfilling Our Obligations to God & Society

Christian Manner of Justice
Deuteronomy 24:14-21; Ephesians 6:5-9; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Work Given by God (Gen 2:15; Exod 20:9)

Earthly work (15)

- Work to share with those in need (Eph 4:28)
- Work to be obedient (Matt 21:28-31)
- Work for God is never in vain (1 Cor 15:58)
- Work must always be to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)

Limits for work (9)

- Limited for refreshment (Exod 23:12)
- Limited for obedience (Luke 23:56)
- Limited for rest (Exod 31:15)
- Limited because of holiness (Gen 2:3)
- Limited because made it for man (Mark 2:27)

Work of God (John 5:17; John 9:4)

God the Father's work (17)

- God's work in creation (Isa 40:26)
- God's work is in His people (John 14:10)
- God's work through His gifts (1 Cor 12:6)
- God's work is for man to believe in Jesus (John 6:29)

God the Son's work (4)

- Jesus' work is to save the lost (Luke 19:10)
- Jesus' work is to save from sins (Matt 1:21)
- Jesus' work is to call the sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32)
- Jesus' work is to die for the ungodly (Rom 5:6)
- Jesus' work is to intercede for believers (Heb 7:25)

Work to Meet Needs (Acts 20:33-35)

Helping self by not coveting (33-34)

- Not coveting by working with the skills God has provided (Acts 18:3)
- Not coveting by using what we have for God (Mark 12:42-44)
- Not coveting by using things that have future spiritual value (Mark 14:8-9)
- Not coveting by using Jesus provided gifts to serve others (1 Pet 4:10)

Helping others (35)

- Helping others as part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:26)
- Helping others with actions not words (James 2:15-16)
- Helping others where it is in our power to provide (Prov 3:27)
- Helping others where our plenty will supply the need (2 Cor 8:14)
- Helping others to display the love of God (1 John 3:17)

Work and the People of God (2 Thess 3:6-12)

Work as if working for Jesus (6)

- Work as working for God not man (Col 3:23)
- Work in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col 3:17)
- Work for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)
- Work for employers as part of serving God (Eph 6:5-7)

Carry own burdens (7-9)

- Carry own burdens by working day and night (1 Thess 2:9)
- Carry own burdens by support from others (2 Cor 11:9)
- Carry own burdens by seeking spiritual gains versus physical (2 Cor 12:14)
- Carry own burdens by working to share with those in need (Eph 4:28)

Warning about freeloading (10-12)

- Don't be freeloading by keeping busy (Eccl 11:6)
- Don't be freeloading because of warnings (1 Thess 5:14)
- Don't be freeloading because it could bring slavery (Prov 12:24)
- Don't be freeloading because it ends in having nothing (Prov 20:4)
- Don't be freeloading by refusing to work (Prov 21:25)
- Don't be freeloading by working with our own hands (1 Thess 4:11-12)