

# Work as Christian Duty

Gen 2:15; Exod 20:9; John 5:17; 9:4; Acts 20:33-35; 2 Thess 3:6-12  
SS Lesson for 05/10/2026

**Devotional Scriptures:** John 6:26-29

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*  
*Key Verse: Acts 20:35*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### 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)

## **CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM J. HAMPTON KEATHLEY, III  
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

## **Lesson Background and Key Verse**

### **Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

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.'*

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

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

15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

#### **Earthly work (15)**

*Work to share with those in need (Eph 4:28)*

28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

*Work to be obedient (Matt 21:28-31)*

28 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 29 "I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. 31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

*Work for God is never in vain (1 Cor 15:58)*

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

*Work must always be to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)*

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

#### **Limits for work (9)**

*Limited for refreshment (Exod 23:12)*

12 "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed.

*Limited for obedience (Luke 23:56)*

56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

*Limited for rest (Exod 31:15)*

15 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.

*Limited because of holiness (Gen 2:3)*

3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

*Limited because made it for man (Mark 2:27)*

27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

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

17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."  
4 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

### **God the Father's work (17)**

*God's work in creation (Isa 40:26)*

26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

*God's work is in His people (John 14:10)*

10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

*God's work through His gifts (1 Cor 12:6)*

6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

*God's work is for man to believe in Jesus (John 6:29)*

29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

### **God the Son's work (4)**

*Jesus' work is to save the lost (Luke 19:10)*

10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

*Jesus' work is to save from sins (Matt 1:21)*

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

*Jesus' work is to call the sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32)*

32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

*Jesus' work is to die for the ungodly (Rom 5:6)*

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

*Jesus' work is to intercede for believers (Heb 7:25)*

25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

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

33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.  
34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.  
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.'

### **Helping self by not coveting (33-34)**

*Not coveting by working with the skills God has provided (Acts 18:3)*

3 and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

*Not coveting by using what we have for God (Mark 12:42-44)*

42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. 43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything, all she had to live on."

*Not coveting by using things that have future spiritual value (Mark 14:8-9)*

8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

*Not coveting by using Jesus provided gifts to serve others (1 Pet 4:10)*

10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

## **Helping others (35)**

*Helping others as part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:26)*

26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

*Helping others with actions not words (James 2:15-16)*

15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

*Helping others where it is in our power to provide (Prov 3:27)*

27 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.

*Helping others where our plenty will supply the need (2 Cor 8:14)*

14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality,

*Helping others to display the love of God (1 John 3:17)*

17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

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

6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;

8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,

9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

## **Work as if working for Jesus (6)**

*Work as working for God not man (Col 3:23)*

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

*Work in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col 3:17)*

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*Work for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)*

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

*Work for employers as part of serving God (Eph 6:5-7)*

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,

### **Carry own burdens (7-9)**

*Carry own burdens by working day and night (1 Thess 2:9)*

9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

*Carry own burdens by support from others (2 Cor 11:9)*

9 And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so.

*Carry own burdens by seeking spiritual gains versus physical (2 Cor 12:14)*

14 Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

*Carry own burdens by working to share with those in need (Eph 4:28)*

28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

### **Warning about freeloading (10-12)**

*Don't be freeloading by keeping busy (Eccl 11:6)*

6 Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

*Don't be freeloading because of warnings (1 Thess 5:14)*

14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

*Don't be freeloading because it could bring slavery (Prov 12:24)*

24 Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.

*Don't be freeloading because it ends in having nothing (Prov 20:4)*

4 A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.

*Don't be freeloading by refusing to work (Prov 21:25)*

25 The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.

*Don't be freeloading by working with our own hands (1 Thess 4:11-12)*

11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### *Commentary Thoughts from J. Hampton Keathley, III*

#### **The Example of the Apostolic Team (3:7-10)**

**3:7** For you know yourselves how you must imitate us, because we did not behave without discipline among you, **3:8** and we did not eat anyone's food without paying. Instead in toil and drudgery we worked night and day in order not to burden any of you. **3:9** It was not because we do not have that right, but to give ourselves as an example for you to imitate. **3:10** For even when we were with you we used to give you this command: "If anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat."

The apostle was always deeply concerned about his own example of Christ-likeness for he knew that a student will become like his teacher (Luke 6:40). His great concern for this is evident in his statement in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 when he said, "... for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved (literally, "came to be") to be among you for your sake."

In these verses, then, Paul was able to turn to his own example and that of his team. "Imitate" is the Greek *mimēomai* from which we get our word "mimic." As mentioned previously (see exposition on 1 Thes. 1:6-7), this word has no negative connotation as the word *imitate* sometimes does in our language. As a quick review: The idea of this word is that of modeling, becoming like, or following after another. It stresses the nature of a particular kind of behavior modeled by another that we are to follow. In the New Testament, it has a spiritual, ethical or moral emphasis and is generally linked with an obligation to a certain kind of conduct or character as a product of faith in the directives of the Bible and the example of the apostles or other leaders who were also following the Lord Jesus as our ultimate example. It is linked to certain ones who are living examples for the life of faith and the character of Christ.

This the apostle states is a moral and logical obligation. He said, "you *must* imitate us." "Must" is the impersonal verb *dei*, "one must, ought, it is necessary." It may refer to the compulsion of duty, of law, of custom, or of an inner necessity that grows out of the situation. Here it is the moral necessity that arises out of the fact these men were their spiritual mentors who followed the Lord Jesus and who had provided them with a godly example.

Thus, Paul added, "because we did not behave without discipline among you, ..." As always, though they had the right to receive support from the Thessalonians, they set aside that right in order to provide a fitting example of Christ-like behavior (see vs. 9). This not only provided an example to new Christians, but was a way of answering the false accusations of their accusers (see exposition of 1 Thes. 2). "Without discipline" is *atakteo*, "to be out of order, out of line." It's the verb form of the word used and discussed above in verse 6.

Paul himself was not idle. His readers could verify this claim ("you yourselves know," v. 7; cf. 1 Thess 2:1; 3:3; 4:2; 5:2). In imitating Paul, they would be imitating the Lord himself (1 Thess 1:6) because Paul's life was so carefully patterned after his Lord's. He did not loaf at Thessalonica (v. 7b), nor depend on others to supply him with free food (v. 8a). He supported himself in spite of much fatigue ("laboring," v. 8) and many obstacles ("toiling," v. 8; cf. 1 Thess 2:9) in order to relieve the new Christians in Thessalonica of the burden of maintaining him.

Paul did not have to exert himself so tirelessly. As an apostle, he had "the right to such help" (v. 9; cf. 1 Cor 9:4 ff.; 1 Thess 2:7) from his converts. He decided, however, to forego this privilege and leave an example for them to imitate.

With verse 10, the apostle reinforced their example by reminding them of their previous instruction as it pertained to working and supporting oneself and family. As mentioned previously, the instruction here is aimed at those who are "unwilling to work." Also, this instruction was not just a matter of some cultural tendency they may have noted in the Thessalonians, but of a fundamental biblical principle. God is Himself a worker. After all, He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. As such, He designed a working vocation as a necessary part of life even before the fall and He expects each of us to be involved in some form of vocation that we might support ourselves, find a sense of significance and destiny in our labor, and be a productive member of society. Thus, denying support to those who are unwilling to work is not cruel, but becomes a basic form of discipline to force idlers into reality and into the responsibility of becoming productive people. This kind of discipline is tough love and provides a protection to both the individual and to the society.

### **Further Exhortations of the Apostolic Team (3:11-15)**

**3:11** For we hear that some among you are living an undisciplined life, not doing their own work but meddling in the work of others. **3:12** Now such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and so provide their own food to eat. **3:13** But you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary in doing what is right. **3:14** But if anyone does not obey our message through this epistle, take note of him and do not associate closely with him, to put him to shame. **3:15** Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

In verse 11, the apostle first mentions the reports they had received regarding those who were leading an undisciplined (idle) life. Two things characterized their behavior: doing no work at all and as a further result, meddling in the affairs of others; they became busybodies rather than busy self-supporting workers engaged in a productive occupation. By working they would become a blessing to themselves and to others, but their idleness had led to the opposite. The Greek word for “meddling” is *periergazomai*, from *peri*, “around,” and *ergazomai*, “to work, labor.” It literally means “to work around or in a circle.” It thus came to mean “to do something useless, to be busy, but accomplishing nothing.” You have heard people say or perhaps said this yourself, “I feel like I have been going in circles.” What we mean is obvious. We mean that, though busy, we feel like we have been getting nowhere fast. Though not mentioned here, 1 Timothy 5:13 describes the results of such behavior, “And besides that, going around from house to house (*perierchomai*, “to go around or about”) they learn to be lazy; and they are not only lazy, but also gossips and busybodies (*periergos*, “a meddler, busybody,” the noun form of *periergazomai*), talking about things they should not.

Almost every culture has its saying about idleness. The Romans said, “By doing nothing, men learn to do evil.” Isaac Watts wrote: “For Satan finds some mischief still, for idle hands to do.” The Jewish rabbis taught, “He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief.”

My mother and grandmother use to say to me, “Idleness, Hampton, is the devil’s workshop.” And of course, they were right. Now, based on the reports mentioned in verse 11, the rule of verse 10 is reinforced in verses 12-15 with three more instructions.

First, in verse 12 and with the words, “in or by the authority of the Lord Jesus,” Paul specifically addressed the idle meddlers who are commanded (*parangello*) and urged (*parakaleo*, either “to comfort, encourage,” or as here, “to exhort, appeal to, urge”) “to work quietly and to provide for their own food to eat.” This instruction gives us further insight into the behavior of these idlers. First, their false views about the return of Christ had evidently led them into a kind of feverish excitement which they were seeking to spread from person to person as they went about from household to household. Second, they eventually ran out of money and food and began to expect others to support them. Thus, Paul commands and urges them to settle down and then to go back to work.

But what if these idlers again refuse to follow these instructions (see 1 Thes. 4:11-12; 5:14)? With this possibility in view, the apostle gives instructions to the rest of the Thessalonian Christians to show them how they should deal with idlers who might not obey these instructions (3:13-15).

**(1) They are urged to not grow weary in doing what is right.** “Grow weary” is the verb *enkakeo*, “to become tired, weary,” and then “to loose heart, despair.” One is often the result of the other. In struggling with a matter one often becomes weary which may then lead to losing heart. This suggests that some might lose heart in struggling with their idle brothers. Doing what is right would include remaining examples themselves by working, by reprimanding the disorderly idlers of verse 10, and by refusing to support those who refused to work. To continue to support those who refuse to work is wrong for all concerned.

**(2) The apostle speaks to the matter of church discipline (verse 14).** This is a subject that is too often avoided today, but not without serious consequences to the body of Christ. It is applied here to those who refused to obey their instruction, which clearly illustrated a rebellious spirit and a wrong relationship to the Savior Himself. Thus, specific and tough measures were needed. First, they were to take special note of such people. “Take note” is the Greek *semeioo*, “to mark, note.” It’s in the plural and in the middle voice which suggests “note for oneself,” with the implication that all the members of the congregation were to take responsibility for following these instructions. Church discipline will have little effect if not followed by the whole body. Second, they were not to associate closely with an idler, one who refused to work. The verb here is *sun-ana-mignumi*, a triple compound word meaning “to mix up together,” and then “to associate closely with.”

There is a difference between acquaintanceship, friendship, and fellowship; for fellowship means “to have in common.” For obedient saints to treat disobedient Christians with the same friendship they show to other dedicated saints is to give approval to their sins.

In essence, these idlers were to be ostracized from intimate fellowship with the believers of the assembly as a means of shaming them into repentance and change. This should not be confused with formal excommunication as in Matthew 18. Rather it appears to be more a matter of group disapproval and social ostracism. In our country today, Christians will often just change churches to avoid such discipline, but this was a serious thing for believers at that time in a heathen society and the same would apply to many countries today where believers are faced with serious persecution for their faith.

**(3) They are not to be regarded as enemies, but to be admonished as brothers.** That this was not total excommunication is suggested by the third instruction given in verse 15, “Yet do not regard (hegeomai, “to think of, consider, regard”) him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” “Not as an enemy” means “not as one who is opposed to Christ.” “But as a brother” could be taken to mean “as though he were a brother,” but the idea is “because he is a brother, i.e., a fellow member of the body of Christ.” This draws our attention to a couple of important principles in church discipline. First is the fact that the goal of church discipline is never punishment, but tough actions of love done with a view to *reformation* and *restoration* to fellowship with Christ and the body of Christ. Second is the issue of extremes. Rather than being balanced as with the Lord Jesus who was full of “grace and truth,” people tend to go to extremes—they are either too lenient or too harsh. Thus, Paul stresses they were not to be treated as enemies, but admonished as brethren, as fellow believers.

“Admonish” is *noutheteo*, “to admonish, warn, instruct.” The fundamental idea is to put sense or biblical wisdom into the mind so that it changes behavior. It includes an admonishment to change through instruction regarding the principles, consequences of sin, and godly aims, etc. “To sum up, the recalcitrant idler was not to be treated as an enemy cut off from all contacts, but was allowed to continue in a brotherly status. So lines of communication were kept open for continued warnings about his behavior.”

*(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/9-final-exhortations-regarding-idleness-church-2-thes-36-18>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

As fraught with difficulty as work may be in the fallen world we currently inhabit, work remains good. Given as a gift to humanity prior to the fall, and part of our purpose, we are invited to work alongside our heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit enables us to walk obediently, joining our worker God in his good work. The old axiom “We don’t work to live; we live to work” helps engage our thinking on this. Paul reminds us that work serves both to meet our own material needs and the needs of those around us. Beyond earning a living, we can leverage our work and the resources it provides to serve others. Through our work, we follow the example of our Creator and set a positive example for others to follow. Ignoring this example can lead to disunity and a weakening of the church, diminishing its testimony to the world. However, when the church works together and supports those who are weak and unable to work, unity is strengthened, God is glorified, and the church presents a powerful testimony to the world.