



READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

EXHORTATIONS, COMMANDS AND
WARNINGS THAT PREPARE US
FOR WHAT IS NEXT SO THAT WE
ARE ABLE TO HOLD FAST AND
REMAIN FAITHFUL TO OUR LORD
NO MATTER WHAT



1. Pray for the preemptive effectiveness and honor of the word, 3:1-2.

- (2 Thessalonians 3:1–2 ESV) Finally, brothers, **pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored**, as happened among you, 2 and **that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men**. For not all have faith.
- (1 Thessalonians 2:13 ESV) And we also thank God constantly for this, **that when you received the word of God**, which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers**.

A. Pray that the word will perform its task preemptively in preparing the soil.

May speed ahead ... *τρέχω* [trekho] – conceived of as running; of those who run in a race course.

B. That good soil would be prepared.

- (Mark 4:20 ESV) But those that were sown on **the good soil** are the ones who **hear the word and accept it and bear fruit**, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.
- (Luke 8:15 ESV) As for that in **the good soil**, they are those who, hearing the word, **hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience**.

C. Understand as we pray and preach that God's word will accomplish God's purpose.

- (Isaiah 55:10–11 ESV) **For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven** and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 **so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth**; it shall not return to me empty, **but it shall accomplish that which I purpose**, and **shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it**.

D. Make the forever nature of God's word a point of emphasis to ourselves and to others—shout it out.

- (Isaiah 40:6–8 NLT) A voice said, **"Shout!"** I asked, **"What should I shout?"** **"Shout that people are like the grass**. Their beauty fades as quickly as the flowers in a field. 7 **The grass withers and the flowers fade** beneath the breath of the LORD. And so it is with people. 8 **The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever**."

E. Pray for the deliverance of the ministers of the word from evil and wicked men.

These evil, wicked men are those who do not have faith in God. Faithful ministers of the word will come under attack by them and will need rescued by God.

F. Insight from Habakkuk ... Make sure the word is plain and clear for the reader.

- (Habakkuk 2:2 ESV) And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; **make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it**."

The vision was given to Habakkuk in such a way that the message would be clear and unmistakable and would allow a person to run with confidence. Running expressing the idea of moving through life in confident obedience to God and the will of God.

2. Have faith that the Lord is faithful, 3:3-5.

- (2 Thessalonians 3:3–5 ESV) **But the Lord is faithful**. He will **establish** you and **guard** you against the evil one. 4 And we have **confidence** in the Lord about you, **that you are doing and will do the things that we command**. 5 May the Lord **direct your hearts to the love of God** and **to the steadfastness of Christ**.

A. The faithful person trusts in the Lord's faithfulness without reservation.

- (Proverbs 3:5–7 ESV) **Trust in the LORD with all your heart**, and **do not lean on your own understanding**. 6 **In all your ways acknowledge him**, and he will make straight your paths. 7 **Be not wise in your own eyes**; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

B. Trust that the Lord will establish us.

Establish ... *στηρίζω* [sterizo] – to make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix in place; to strengthen; to confirm; to make more noticeable or pronounced by firm determination or resolution.

- (1 Corinthians 1:7–9 ESV) ... so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 **who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ**. 9 **God is faithful**, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. Trust that the Lord will guard us against the evil one.

Guard ... *φυλάσσω* [phulasso] – to guard, keep watch over; to have an eye upon; to guard a person (or thing) that he may remain safe.

D. Have confidence in the Lord's work of obedience to his will in our lives.

- (Philippians 1:6 ESV) And I am sure of this, that **he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**
- (Philippians 2:13 ESV) ... **for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work** for his good pleasure.

E. Direct our hearts to trust in God that we might fully know and receive the love he has for us and the security of the promise of the steadfastness of Christ.

Direct ... κατευθύνω [kateuthuno] – to make straight, guide; of the removal of the hindrances; making something straightforward and simple.

Steadfastness ... ὑπομονή [hupomone] – steadfast endurance; the power to withstand hardship or stress; unswerving from deliberate purpose; a patient, steadfast waiting for, enduring, sustaining, perseverance.

- (Galatians 2:20 ESV) I have been crucified with Christ. **It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.** And **the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,** who loved me and gave himself for me.

The promised accomplishment of the steadfastness of Christ could not be made more emphatic than by these words—**my life is now Christ living in me.**

3. Obey the command to establish and maintain orderliness in our lives personally and in the church fellowship, 3:6-12.

- (2 Thessalonians 3:6–12 ESV) **Now we command you, brothers,** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness** and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, **because we were not idle when we were with you,** 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, **but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.** 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: **If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.** 11 **For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.** 12 **Now such persons we command and encourage** in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

Excursus: Establishing the context ...

Why would Paul spend so much time on idleness and busybodies? Because it is crucial to the health and vitality of the church going forward. Here is how we come to understand what Paul is doing.

- I. We first need to let the impact of the length and the timing of this section direct our thoughts to a proper interpretation and then application in our lives.
- II. We need to understand what it means to walk in idleness.

If we do not know this, then we will miss the main point that Paul is trying to establish in this entire section of Scripture which is to live obedient, quiet, orderly lives in doing the work God has for each of us.

Even more succinct ... mind your own business as you go about the Lord's business.

- III. This section is not primarily about working or not working.
- IV. This section is primarily about the reason the person is unwilling to work—he prefers to spend his time as a busybody.
- V. This section is also about our responsibility to the church and to Christ in our relationship with people who insist on being busybodies.

End Excursus

BACK TO THE COMMAND ...

A. They are commanded to keep away from those who are walking in idleness.

Keep [στέλλω stello] – keep away from; to avoid, to stay clear from; to remove one's self, withdraw one's self; to abstain from familiar interaction with one.

Idleness ... ἀτάκτως [ataktos] – disorderly, without order; in a manner not submitting to discipline and order; deviating from the prescribed order or rule.

- B. The word idleness does not mean merely not doing anything but is used to identify and describe those who are disorderly, disruptive and disobedient.
- C. These people continued in disobedience in regard to both Paul's instruction and his example.
- D. They disobeyed a direct command to stop being idle and disorderly and to work.
- E. We should understand the main problem was not that they were not working but why they were not working.
- F. They were not working because they were busy at being busybodies.

G. Paul commanded these people to work quietly and to earn their own living.

Busybodies are noisemakers who have an elevated view of themselves. Their arrogance makes them easy prey for the schemes of the devil and as a result they bring confusion and contention into the church body.

4. Do not grow weary in doing the good things that are necessary for the witness and health of the local fellowship, 3:13-15.

- (2 Thessalonians 3:13–15 ESV) As for you, brothers, **do not grow weary in doing good**. 14 **If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.** 15 **Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.**

Our first task is to determine what Paul means by doing good. Is this doing good in general? Or is it possible that we should interpret this in the context of honoring our Lord in being disciplined and obedient in taking care of the business of his church.

- A. In general doing good is finding our place in God's kingdom and submitting to the work he has for us in whatever role that may be.
- B. More specifically obeying God in our interactions with the disorderly and busybodies is doing good.
- C. This seems to be more Paul's point in the context—do not be weary in dealing with the disobedient, disorderly people in the fellowship.
- D. This is a point of emphasis because it is one of the most disheartening things in the church.

Weary ... ἐγκακέω [egkakeo] – to be disheartened; to be or become discouraged; lose spirit; to be utterly spiritless, to be wearied out, exhausted.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:12–14 ESV) **We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,** 13 **and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.**
- E. Obeying the command is doing good for the sake of Christ's body—our local fellowship—so we are exhorted to not give up in frustration.
 - F. We are to take note of that person which means we are to identify the person specifically.

G. We are to have nothing to do with them with the intent that they may be ashamed.

H. We are not to go too far and regard him as an enemy but we are to warn him as a brother.

CONCLUSION: DON'T BE DECEIVED, GOD IS NOT MOCKED

- (Galatians 6:7–10 ESV) **Do not be deceived:** God is not mocked, **for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.** 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 **And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.** 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

- I. If you sow trust in and obedience to the Lord, then you will reap the blessing of living the life that God chooses for you.

God will establish you, guard you, direct you further and further into the knowledge of his love for you and secure and guard your mind in the steadfastness of Jesus Christ.

- (Philippians 4:7 ESV) **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**
- II. If you sow disobedience to God, then you will reap a self-directed life apart from God.

God will leave you to yourself, and you will reap the sad, bitter, discontented life of a fallen human who knows nothing of life with God.

- III. If you do not grow weary of doing good, in due season you will reap the inestimable, incalculable, unsearchable reward of the Lord God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth ... for all eternity.

