

The Theology of Work

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

2 Thessalonians 3:6–15 (NKJV)

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.

¹³ But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good. ¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep

company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Introduction:

One of the most interesting things that has happened in that last few years, is the growing appreciation of the only fast food restaurant to offer “Christian Chicken” or at least that what some have called it.

Chick-fil-a is a house hold name among christian families. And there is a reason for it. It represents what the American work ethic used to be.

The product is good and the people you talk with are usually polite, unlike many other fast food places where you are lucky to get someone to look at you and care at all about what they are doing.

Chick-fil-a is a success story built on the back of the Christian work ethic.

1. The first Chick-fil-A opened in 1967 in Atlanta and since then the chain has grown steadily

2. Chick-fil-A generated \$12.8 billion in sales in 2020 and is the third largest restaurant chain in the United States behind Starbucks and McDonald’s.

7. Chick-fil-A now has 2,598 stores in the United States.

8. At \$4.58 million in sales per store, Chick-fil-A generates more sales per store than any other large fast food restaurant chain.

12. It only costs \$10,000 to be “granted the rights necessary to operate a franchised Chick-fil-A restaurant business.” That is significantly less than the initial investment of between \$1 million to \$2 million along with a liquid cash fee of \$500,000 it costs to open a McDonald’s. McDonald’s also charges an initial franchise fee of \$45,000. It costs less to open a Chick-fil-A since operators do not own the restaurant or the land.

13. Chick-fil-A pays for equipment, real estate and start-up costs for store operators. “The reason why it’s only \$10,000 is because Chick-fil-A controls everything,” says Joel Libava, a franchise consultant. “You can call yourself a franchisee, but you’re an operator.”

15. It is extremely difficult to become a Chick-fil-A franchise operator. Chick-fil-A receives more

than 60,000 applications per year but only grants around 100 new franchisees. With an acceptance rate of 0.17% it is harder to become be a Chick-fil-A operator than it is to get into Harvard which had an acceptance rate of 4.92% for the class of 2024.

16. Speaking about Chick-fil-A's founder Truett Cathy, David Farmer, Chick-fil-A's SVP of restaurant experience said that: "he didn't care so much about getting bigger. He was just obsessed with getting better. He would drill that into us: **if you focus on getting better, bigger will take care of itself.**"

17. Chick-fil-A is closed on Sundays, a practice that began decades ago to observe the Lord's day of rest. **In closing on Sundays Chick-fil-A forgoes an estimated \$1 billion in sales.**

20. Success is never an accident. Chick-fil-A has high standards, which is demonstrated by how long it takes to develop new menu items. **It took four years to create its best-selling original chicken sandwich.**

Sam Truett Cathy is the founder of Chick-fil-A
Born in Eatonton, Georgia in 1921, S. Truett Cathy

was the second-youngest of seven siblings, according to the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans (HAADA), which awarded Cathy a membership in 1989. "I was born in poverty," Cathy told an interviewer in 2007 (via Inc.), and things only got worse when the Great Depression hit in October 1929. Cathy recalled that his father never quite got over the trauma that period wrought, per HAADA. His mother, who was already running a boarding house out of the family home, became the close-knit family's primary breadwinner as well as its central inspiration and influence. Not for nothing, the Chick-fil-A website points out that many of Truett Cathy's earliest memories involve helping his mother in the kitchen.

All the Cathy siblings helped out with the boarding house business, including cleaning the bathrooms and making the beds. Nevertheless, by the time he was 8, Truett Cathy had already started his own business — selling Coca-Cola, per Inc. By age 12, he and his brother, Ben, were delivering newspapers in Atlanta. By age 14, Truett and Ben had become the primary breadwinners of their family. Although poverty took its toll on Truett's self-image, his circumstances and his triumph over them helped him

to draw strength. "It made me realize you can do anything if you want to bad enough,"

Truett and Jeanette married on September 19, 1948, according to Truett Cathy's biographer, Dr. Richard E. Hattwick (via AJC). The modest farmhouse they lived in had been built by Truett, himself, along with his older brother, Horace, whose name will come up again shortly. Soon after the wedding, Jeanette began working at The Dwarf Grill, becoming an integral part of its day-to-day operations until she and Truett became parents (they would eventually have three children). However, Jeanette's contributions to Truett's success went well beyond that, according to Trudy Cathy White, the Cathys' only daughter. Of her mother's next role as homemaker, Trudy has said that "much of what Dad could do was because of what Mom was doing behind the scenes"

...you must know that Chick-fil-A is not open for business on Sundays. Nor has it ever been, according to Chick-fil-A's website. The decision was made because Truett, himself, had experienced the stress, both physical and spiritual, that came from working seven days a week

Truett stuck to his ethos even at the risk of turning off potential customers. "People have always said I was crazy not to be open on Sunday," he told the Shreveport/Bossier Christian Family in 2011 (via Blue Toad). However, Cathy didn't mind losing business if it meant that he and his employees would have Sunday to honor their lord. Moreover, he saw closing on Sundays as a way to attract employees who embraced his kind of values.

When Cathy wasn't worshipping in church on Sundays, he was teaching Sunday school, according to Juvenile Justice Information Exchange, which wasn't work so much as an act of love and an affirmation of faith, according to Cathy. Having Sunday off was invaluable to the Cathys, his daughter, Trudy, recalls. "Those slow Sundays meant everything to them."

In 2012, when Truett Cathy was still CEO of Chick-fil-A, his son, Dan (then CFA's President and COO), told an interviewer that it was his belief that extending the definition of marriage to include same-sex unions is "inviting God's judgement on our nation," per Vox and the Atlantic Journal-Constitution. When called out on his anti-equal-rights stance, Dan Truett stood firm (via Biblical

Recorder). "We know that it might not be popular with everyone," he acknowledged, "but thank the Lord, we live in a country where we can share our values and operate on biblical principles."

Read More: https://www.mashed.com/256322/the-untold-truth-of-chick-fil-a-founder-s-truett-cathy/?utm_campaign=clip

From there Website,

From the beginning, Truett based his business on Biblical principles that he believed were also good business principles, and since 1982, our Corporate Purpose has guided all that we do. We keep our Purpose front and center because it helps us to steward our business and our work to positively influence everyone we meet.

"To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A."

<https://www.chick-fil-a.com/careers/culture>

In recent years, the pressure of the Godless culture has taken its toll on the Leaders of Chick-fil-A

after being embroiled in the same sex marriage issue and the Social Justice movement. Time will tell where it will be in years to come.

A recent poll indicated some news that is not surprising at all. The poll indicated that belief in God in our Country has dropped to an all time low of 81%.

And I can assure you that belief in the Biblical God is much much lower than that. Most in America who have a belief in God see him as the “man upstairs” or as a “Santa Clause figure or a Jeanie in a bottle to call on when you want or need something”.

But when you start defining God as the way the Bible describes God, the belief drops to a low 27% and knowing what I know about the current status of the evangelical church in America, I believe that figure is overblown by double digits.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/04/25/when-americans-say-they-believe-in-god-what-do-they-mean/>

We have been on a downward spiral in America for some time now, but we are seeing a major speed increase now since God has removed His restraint in Judgement. The slope has been greased and we are descending with no breaks.

Each week offers us a glimpse into an economy spiraling out of control and reminders everywhere

that businesses are in need of workers. Just this week I read an article that said the workforce is depleting at a rapid rate. This can be as a result of a number of things, but one thing is for sure that is affecting it and that is the passion to play.

There is the obvious problem of the disappearing work ethic but also there is this incessant occupation with play. Work is simply a means to an end and the end is all of my pleasure and play time being met.

We've all seen those little license plate frames that have such profound philosophy. They say things like, "I'd rather be fishing," "I'd rather be flying," "I'd rather be golfing," "I'd rather be skiing," "I'd rather be sailing," "I'd rather be hiking," "I'd rather be four-wheeling," et cetera, et cetera. In other words, whatever it is I'm doing, it certainly has no value when compared with play. We're a very infantile, adolescent kind of society. We really don't want to grow up. In fact, I saw a bumper sticker that said, "He who wins is he who dies with the most toys"

All this sort of conveys the current idea that people would rather play than work and they depreciate the

value of work. Work is only the way to finance pleasure, so it's a necessary evil.

I suppose we've all seen the bumper sticker sign that says, "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go," which views work as a very crass thing. It sees work as mercenary, work as simply a way to pay off your debts, to fund your lifestyle, Without a proper work ethic, we don't work well, we don't do quality work, we don't work with excellence, we don't do the things that ought to be done. Going back a little bit to our bumper sticker theology or philosophy, I have seen a bumper sticker that says, "Work fascinates me. I can sit and watch it for hours." And you've all seen the little sign that says, "Thank God it's Friday." I saw one that said, "Hard work may not kill me, but why take a chance?"

Now, I want to know if you have ever seen a sign on the back of a speed boat that said, "I'd rather be working" or a license plate that said, "Thank God it's Monday" – not likely. We really do have a warped perspective on the matter of work. Our materialistic, self-indulgent, adolescent, infantile, child-like culture has a warped view of the place and role of work, but honestly, it isn't anything new. <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/53-15/work-a-noble-christian-duty-part-2>

The more Godless our country becomes the lazy and playful it will be. It is all about satisfying the flesh. Work has no real value without a true belief in the Biblical God. Without God, you are no different than the cattle about to be slaughtered or the chicken laying the egg, You have minimal reason to exist and a short time of existence at that. So why not go for the gusto. Get all you can out of life, milk it for all its worth. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. Our culture is now beginning to connect the dots between Darwinians and duty or evolution and ethic. What many have believed for years was just a benign view of the origins of man has now blossomed into a full blown, anti-god, me centered, pleasure seeking, lazy society.

We see this spelled out in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 1:3 (NKJV)

³ What profit has a man from all his labor
In which he toils under the sun?

Ecclesiastes 2:22–23 (NKJV)

²² For what has man for all his labor, and for the
striving of his heart with which he has toiled under

the sun? ²³ For all his days *are* sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ What profit has the worker from that in which he labors?

Ecclesiastes 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And this also *is* a severe evil—

Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.

And what profit has he who has labored for the wind?

Ecclesiastes 2:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done

And on the labor in which I had toiled;

And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind.

There was no profit under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 2:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

Ecclesiastes 2:22–23 (NKJV)

²² For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? ²³ For all his days *are* sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 4:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

⁵ The fool folds his hands
And consumes his own flesh.

Ecclesiastes 4:6–9 (NKJV)

⁶ Better a handful *with* quietness
Than both hands full, *together with* toil and
grasping for the wind.

⁷ Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun:

⁸ There is one alone, without companion:
He has neither son nor brother.
Yet *there is* no end to all his labors,
Nor is his eye satisfied with riches.

But he never asks,

“For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?”

This also *is* vanity and a grave misfortune.

- 9 Two *are* better than one,
Because they have a good reward for their labor.

Ecclesiastes 5:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ As he came from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return,

To go as he came;

And he shall take nothing from his labor

Which he may carry away in his hand.

¹⁶ And this also *is* a severe evil—

Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.

And what profit has he who has labored for the wind?

Ecclesiastes 6:7 (NKJV)

- 7 All the labor of man *is* for his mouth,
And yet the soul is not satisfied.

The answer to all of this is,

Ecclesiastes 2:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Nothing *is* better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this *is* the gift of God.

How is work a gift from God

1. It is a means by which we can glorify God.
2. It is a means to provide value and meaning to life
3. It prevents us from idleness, allowing for sin
4. It is the means of providing for the necessities of life.
5. It is a way we can serve others.

Lesson:

In our text, Paul introduces us the the importance and biblically mandated work ethic. Or we might call it the Theology of Work. The relation of your Work to God.

Christians sadly are as guilty as the world in many cases of seeing their jobs as just that...a job. It puts food on the table and helps me educate my children pay my taxes and fill my tank with gas.

No more, no less.

But the Bible and The God of the Bible sees work in an entirely different light. It is not just a means to an end. But is as gift of God for man to glorify God.

Your job is a divine calling (vocation) as the Puritans taught and they got this from the whole Bible. God ordained and gave work for man to do before the fall and after the fall. Is is not part of the curse but it is cursed. It was divinely decreed for Adam to do before the fall and was a necessary and prescribed duty before God, and after the fall, it was a necessary and ordained responsibility of man although it would be harder.

God works and He expects us to do the same. Six days, He said you shall work and on the seventh you rest. We often spend more time on defining the Sabbath than we do looking at the other 6 days of work that God commanded.

Paul knew this and he spends verses 6-15 addressing the Biblical and Godly importance of work.

The reason for this is that apparently there were some believers at Thessalonica that had been deceived into believing that work was bad, or unnecessary or useless because of a wrong view of eschatology that they had been misled on, they thought they should stop work and wait on Jesus.

Whatever the real reason was, it is clear they weren't working. Paul had warned about this in his first letter and when he was physically with them had commanded them that if they do not work, they should not eat.v 10

So this is no small matter. It is very displeasing to God for a Christian not to work and work well. Laziness is a sin, Being a sluggard is a total disregard for the purpose you were created... to glorify God.

So in order to stress the importance of the severity of the sin of laziness and not working Paul gives six

incentives to motivate those sinning to repent and get to work:

—Fellowship, Follow-ship, Food, Factions, Fallout, Family

1. Fellowship

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (NKJV)

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.

This by itself should be enough to move those believers to work.

Paul tells the church to withdraw and avoid any brother who is idle, or walks as a pattern of life as a lazy person who will not work.

This is in the 3rd step of church discipline according to Matthew 18.

2 things stand out to me in this text.

1. The nature of the Command
2. The necessity of the Church

1. The nature of the command had the authority of God in it. Not just Paul, Silas or Timothy but In the Name of Jesus Christ. In other words, To disobey is to disobey God himself.

2. The Necessity of the church. To be put out of the church or avoided by the church was a means of disfellowshipping. It was meant to leave the believer isolated and under the discipline of God for correction and repentance. There is a unique grace of divine protection in the fellowship of believer. There is the worship with the saints, the reception of the Lord's Table, the purification of the body, the promotion of good works, the pray of the saints, the communion of the Word of God preached, and the fellowship of the saints. All of these are essential to church growth and being able to stand in the evil day.

To be put out or avoided divorces you of all of these things.

Paul in this text, rightly places the fellowship of believers and the ministry of the church is a very high and lofty position. It is not an optional thing or and convenient reality. Church and the fellowships of saints is an absolutely necessary thing. A means of sanctification and protection of the believer.

To be put out is very very serious. This is the first in the order of incentives, but it is also the first in the order of priorities. CHURCH IS FIRST.

1. Fellowship

2. Follow-ship. v. 7-9

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.

The apostle Paul would have agreed wholeheartedly with the statement of the Puritan Thomas Brooks, “Example is the most powerful rhetoric” (cited in I. D. E. Thomas, A

Puritan Golden Treasury [Carlisle, Penn.: Banner of Truth, 1977], 96)
MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 305). Moody Press.

follow our example. The Greek verb used in both instances is a form of the verb *mimeomai*;
mimeomai: to imitate

Original Word: μιμέομαι. **Present tense**

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: mimeomai

Phonetic Spelling: (mim-eh'-om-ahee)

Definition: to imitate

Usage: I imitate, follow.

Cognate: 3401 miméomai – to imitate, emulating a mentor or example. [See 3402](#) (mimētēs).

the related noun is the source of the English word *mimic*. Paul was an example for the Thessalonians to imitate because he himself imitated the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). He was a model of gospel preaching (1 Thess. 1:6), enduring suffering (2:2), honesty and integrity (2:3–5), humility (2:6), gentleness (2:7), affection (2:8), self-sacrifice (2:8), holiness (2:10), and prayer (3:10). Just as they followed his example in those areas (1:6), they needed to follow his example of hard work (2:9).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 305). Moody Press.

7 For you yourselves know

This clearly indicates that they had first hand knowledge of Paul's exemplary behavior.

Acts 20:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in

what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;

Acts 20:33–35 (NKJV)

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.'** ”

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

atakteó: to be out of order, be remiss

Original Word: ἀτακτέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: atakteó

Phonetic Spelling: (at-ak-teh'-o)

Definition: to be out of order, be remiss

Usage: (lit: I march out of order; then: I riot, rebel), behave disorderly, neglect my duty, am careless (or idle) in habits. Cognate: 812 ataktéō – properly, to be out of proper order (arrangement), i.e. breaking rank (disregarding commands, authority). **See 813** (ataktos).

Reinforcing his point, he reminds them,

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,

labor

kopiaó: to grow weary, toil

Original Word: ΚΟΠΙÁΩ Pres.

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: kopiaó

Phonetic Spelling: (kop-ee-ah'-o)

Definition: to grow weary, toil

Usage: (a) I grow weary, (b) I toil, work with effort (of bodily and mental labor alike).

Cognate: 2872 kopiáō (from 2873 /kópos, "exhausting labor")
– to labor until worn-out, depleted (exhausted). See 2873 (kopos).

toil mochthos: toil, hardship

Original Word: μόχθος, ου, ó

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: mochthos

Phonetic Spelling: (mokh'-thos)

Definition: toil, hardship

Usage: wearisome labor, toil, hardship.

3449 móxthos (from mogos, "laborious toil") – wearisome, difficult effort (psychologically or physically); hard work, "implying unusual exertion of energy and effort" (L & N, 1, 42.48).

1 Thessalonians 2:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

¹⁰ You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

1 Corinthians 4:12 (NKJV)

¹² And we **labor**, working with our own hands.

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

Paul made it clear that his reason for doing manual labor was **not because** he, Silas, and Timothy did **not have the right to** receive support for their intense work of preaching and teaching. He did not always forgo accepting support from the churches to

which he ministered. In fact, the Philippians twice sent him a gift during his stay in Thessalonica (cf. Phil. 4:16), and he also received support from other churches while ministering in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:8–9). He particularly chose to work in Thessalonica so that those who refused to work could not point to his not working as justification for their idleness.

Instead, the missionaries dignified work by offering themselves **as a model for the believers to follow.**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 306). Moody Press.

Paul knew he could have had full support of those he was ministering too. He taught this in other areas.

Galatians 6:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

1 Timothy 5:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, “*You*

shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer *is* worthy of his wages.”

1 Corinthians 9:3–15 (NKJV)

³ My defense to those who examine me is this:

⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

⁸ Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.*” Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more?

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings* of the altar? ¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

¹⁵ But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

I would like to add a foot note here for you to know and understand the tremendous labor and sacrifice it takes for faithful bi-vocational pastors. Having been there, I understand the amount of time and how exhausting it is.

In our world, the churches that get all the attention are the big, mega churches. But the large majority of churches are under 100 in attendance. The average attendance of all churches added together is 80 and falling. A number of churches I know personally have anywhere from 8 to 15. Thirty would be high attendance.

<https://research.lifeway.com/2016/02/24/majority-of-american-churches-fall-below-100-in-worship-attendance/> And usually not able to support a full time pastor. So he usually works a full-time job, and spends his

evenings and Saturdays and Sundays in ministry. Most work 7 days a week all the time. Many are faithful, unknowns to the world that care for their sheep, teaching faithfully the Word of God. The only one who knows the full extent of this kind of ministry is the Lord.

1. Fellowship
2. Follow-ship.

3. Food

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

This is a very simply and important command.

A man who is unwilling to work but prefers to be lazy and a sluggard and sponge off of others should not eat. NO free meals.

It is an amazing driving force. Hunger.. when an man gets hungry enough he will be willing to do what ever he can to get a meal.

Proverbs 16:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ The person who labors, labors for himself,
For his *hungry* mouth drives him *on*.

The #1 drive in any human is self preservation. You will do what ever it takes to take care of your self and make sure you have what you need to survive.

Hunger is one of the drives that makes us get moving to find food.

And according to
1 Timothy 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

And to clarify this command even more. Paul is not talking about the one that are unable to work because of

1. Disabilities
2. Age, Seniors and small children.

He is talking about the able bodied men. The ones that have no handicap that restricts them from work.

There a people all over that have learned that they can make more money standing at off-ramps making begging, saying they will work for food. And at the

same time there are jobs everywhere. Our cultural offend enables the homeless.

“But neither the world nor the church owes a living to those too lazy to work. We are used to “entitlements” in our society. This is the idea that those who will not work hard are entitled to be paid money taken from those who do. The results of the welfare culture are visible for all to see—family breakups, immorality, crime, hopelessness, meaninglessness, and bitterness.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 308). Moody Press.

Now I am not saying that there are cases that are legit. That someone has lost everything and needs some assistance getting back up on his feet. But there are many more that work the system and a more than capable of working a job.

For the Christian there are clear principles to help the poor and downcast. The ones that have legitimate needs.

Matthew 6:2–4(NKJV)

² Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in

the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³ But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Galatians 2:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *They desired* only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

Hebrews 13:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

James 2:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it profit?*

1 John 3:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Jonathan Edward is know for a rigorous routine of work in his ministry of study and writing. His preaching in the Great Awakening is what he is best known for. But that does not happen by chance. There is usually behind all great preaching, great discipline. And Jonathan Edwards was that man.

Edwards usually rose at four or five in the morning in order to spend thirteen hours in his study. In his only diary entry during his early years in Northampton he wrote, in January 1728, "I think Christ has recommended rising early in the morning, by his rising from the grave very early." The discipline was part of a constant, heroic effort to make his life a type of Christ. He began the day with private prayers followed by family prayers, by candlelight in winter. Each meal was accompanied by household devotions, and at the end of each day Sarah joined him in his study for prayers. Jonathan kept secret the rest of his daily devotional routine, following Jesus' command to pray in secret. Throughout the day, his goal was to remain constantly with a sense

of living in the presence of God, as difficult as that might be. Often he added secret days of fasting and additional prayers.

His work was also a service to God in the many hours each day he devoted to study. As Daniel Walker Howe has observed, if one is looking for the prototype of the work ethic in colonial America, it would be better to look to Edwards than Benjamin Franklin. As Edwards saw it, the discipline of work was part of his worship of God, an offering of his time to God. Moreover, huge amounts of work were directed towards knowing the ways of God. In addition to carefully crafting lengthy sermons each week, he was deeply engaged in biblical study, a daily activity that produced several major notebooks filled with his tiny writing. <https://pastoral-theology.com/2011/06/30/the-rigorous-discipline-of-jonathan-edwards/>

Being considered a leading minister in either of those historic revivals would be enough success for any one pastor's lifetime, but Edwards also authored several highly significant written works, including landmark books on revivalism, theology, missions, and philosophy. If you take a quick look at the lifetime collection of his written corpus, it is

astonishing to realize that there are 26 full, printed volumes of his official Yale Works; in addition to another 47 digital-only volumes, for a total of 72. Side by side on a shelf, these would be wider than a grown man's arm-span. Not only that, but since Edwards had to use a feather and inkwell (the computer keyboard would not be invented for many generations to come!) it is a wonder that one solitary man could be so impossibly productive.

We might ask: in the midst of leading a “normal” pastor's life — *how in the world did Edwards have time to do all this!?*

Time Management

We do know that Edwards was very particular about time from a young age, and the nineteen-year old prodigy had resolved very early on to, “never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.” In one 1723 *Diary* entry, he wrote, “Sabbath day, Jan. 6, at night. Much concerned about the improvement of precious time. Intend to live in continual mortification, without ceasing, and even to weary myself thereby, as long as I am in this world, and never to expect or desire any worldly ease or pleasure.” Later that May, he

wrote again in his *Diary*, “Saturday night, May 11. I have been to blame, the month past, in not laying violence enough to my inclination, to force myself to a better improvement of time.”

It seems then, that Edwards was somewhat of a time management fanatic. His days were no longer than anyone else’s, and his years were fewer than many. From the earliest biographers, we read that his colleagues noted how Edwards maintained an incredible work ethic. One contemporary biographer, Samuel Hopkins, suggested that Edwards spent about thirteen hours per day in his study.[1] Pretty impressive if true, especially for a man of one wife, ten children, and a farm to manage too. Less flatteringly perhaps, Hopkins also tells us that “He was less acquainted with most of his temporal affairs than many of his neighbors, and seldom knew when and by whom his forage for winter was gathered in, or how many milk kine he had, whence his table was furnished, etc.”[2] To say it less politely, he was totally clueless about his own household.

All this points to a man that modern terminology might label a “workaholic.” Yet despite all of this, every testimony that we have from personal letters and contemporary observations from the people that

knew him best indicate that Edwards had a truly sweet and tender relationship with his wife, and that his children both respected and loved him. In other words, his many duties as a pastor did not cause him to experience a breakdown in his most vital *nuclear* relationships. He loved his family and they loved him back.<https://modernreformation.org/resource-library/web-exclusive-articles/jonathan-edwards-a-model-of-high-pastoral-productivity/>