

INTRODUCTION

- This week we come to the 3rd major area that Paul addresses which is to be sought by every Christian as an area of sanctification, being conformed to the image of Christ

EXPOSITION

I. THE EARNEST PURSUIT OF A QUIET LIFE

- Paul urges the Thessalonians to **aspire** (Gk. philotimeomai) to something
 - to be **ambitious, earnestly aim, endeavor to accomplish** - Rom15:20 (preach) 2Cor5:9 (to please God)
 - It is **not passive**, but a striving after something earnestly
- That which Paul urges them to pursue is **to [lead a] quiet [life]** (Gk. hasuxadzo).
 - To be silent, rest, cease; lit. “pursue quietness” - Lk14:4 (talk) Lk23:56 (resting on Sabbath)

What does this mean?

- Does Paul mean a life of **isolation, carefree, undisturbed**? – utopian separation from the cares of life
- Perhaps a setting in which one can just enjoy creation without the messy business of dealing with people and sin?

II. THE TWO-FOLD DEFINITION OF A QUIET LIFE

- This quietness seems to be in contrast to a problem that only grew worse, and is mentioned in 2Thes3:12
- They (in anticipation of the coming of Christ and excitement about the end time) were not working
- “Since Jesus was going to burn everything up anyway (they thought), then why work for the temporary?”
- He repeats the positive command he had already given them (end of v.11)
- **As we commanded you** (Gk. parangelo) to command, order, announce what must be done – something that was a basic part of the sanctification that they had taught the Thessalonians

A. To Mind Your Own Business

- The way to pursue a quiet life is **to mind** (Gk. prasso), to do or carry out
- What he instructs them to mind is **your own** [business] (Gk. idios) one’s own, personal; lit. “to do your own things”
 - Paul’s assumption in this use of this phrase is that everyone has what would be called “their own things”, their own business, their own responsibilities
 - The passage is primarily emphasizing what is known as our “calling” or vocation

B. To Work with Your Own Hands

- He calls them to **work** (Gk. ergazomai) perform, trade, do
- They are to do work with **your own hands** (Gk. cheir); two things this means:
 - God’s blessing on physical labor; there are essentially two kinds of labor, mental and physical (though both to some degree include the other) - the Bible is filled with examples of the blessing of physical labor jobs
 - This would also include mental work, as exemplified in the fact that God speaks the world into existence out of His mind, and yet it is called the works of His hands/fingers (Ps8:3, 6)
- The Apostolic teaching on the 2nd coming wasn’t supposed to foster laziness and indifference, but rather diligence
 - *Christianity does not discharge us from the work and duty of our particular callings, but teaches us to be diligent in it.* (Matthew Henry)
- The temptation is, believing Jesus will come anytime, that the time is too short to work, just save souls
- Another temptation is that since Jesus will return, and will burn up all temporal works (2Pet3:10), then nothing will last
- Illustration: creating art on the walls of a building that is on fire (unless it is a message to tell them to get out)

Excursus: A Christian View of Work/Calling

1.) **We are to embrace the truth that our call to work came at creation (Genesis 2:15)**

- Thus, before the fall; work itself is not a punishment, and its difficult a consequence of sin

2.) **We are to understand our work as a calling from God (1Corinthians 7:17, 20)**

- **A job** - typically considered as what we do to get money to survive; merely utilitarian task in which one provides material goods for the family or to prepare for pleasure
- “Everybody’s Working for the Weekend” (Loverboy) is the world’s, not the Christian’s theme song
- **A calling/vocation** – a God given task to be done with faithfulness to Him
 - *The idea of vocation is based on the theological premises of a divine call. The Word vocation comes from the Latin words meaning “calling.” In our secular society the religious meaning of the term has lost its significance, having become merely a synonym for career. [In] its original sense [it means this]: a*

divine call, a holy summons to fulfill a task or a responsibility that God has laid upon us. (R.C. Sproul, God's Will and the Christian)

3.) **We are to do our work first and foremost as service to God (Colossians 3:23-24)**

- One of the great doctrinal truths that we have inherited as great grandchildren of the Reformers and the Puritans is the rejection of the dichotomy between sacred and secular work. Ryken reminds us:

Work is a means by which a person lives out his or her personal relationship to God. (Leland Ryken, Worldly Saints)

- This is true **whatever** our calling may be; when it is done for God's glory, He **receives pleasure** in it from us *[If we look externally] there is a difference between washing of dishes and preaching of the Word of God; but concerning how it pleases God, there is no difference at all. (William Tyndale, English Reformer and translator for the English New Testament)*

- The great challenge is to do that calling in a "**Godward**" way; it isn't automatic, but must be **intentional**

4.) **We are to consider our work secondarily as an exercise of love to our neighbor (Matthew 22:39)**

- Rather than **merely** trying to get a paycheck, not get fired, get a raise, everything worth doing is worth doing for the **good of others** (including janitorial, fast food, etc.)

It renders every task of intrinsic value and integrates every vocation with a Christian's spiritual life. It makes every job [significant] by making it the arena for glorifying and obeying God and for expressing one's love (through service) to one's neighbor. (Leland Ryken, Worldly Saints)

5.) **We are to seek faithfulness in all of our callings, not just our "career" (Psalms 119:6)**

- The call to work is not the call to be a "workaholic"
- Part of a man's "own things" and calling by God include his family; to neglect them is sinful

6.) **We are to continue to pursue our calling until death, not until retirement (2 Timothy 4:7)**

- With enough faith to believe that I am finished laboring for His Kingdom (in whatever calling) only in Rev 14:13
- Assumption of this in **10 commandments**, 6 days of work
- We should not believe that **riches** (saved up) and **technology** (WALL-E) alleviates this calling
- I don't mean that we will continue in **the same work**, but that we work **until the end** is clear
- Retirement from a regular vocation should be seen as an **opportunity to serve**, not just become **inactive and die**
- These are things that **we should embrace** (it is in this we will find joy)
- We should teach these things to **our children**; where else will they learn it?

III. THE BLESSED FRUIT OF A QUIET LIFE

- Two things Paul points out in particular that this kind of faithfulness will result in.

A. Witness in the World

- **That you may walk** (indicating conduct and behavior) **properly** – (Gk. euschamomos) respectably
- The audience in mind is **those who are outside** – unbelievers outside of the church
 - 1.) not being accused of **idleness and laziness**
 - 2.) the **quality of the work** that we do - there is a point of witness when we do our work, whatever it is, with excellence - the accusation that becoming a Christian simply makes one bad at what they do; cheesy, substandard quality
 - 3.) the **paying of our debts** and responsibilities

B. Provision for the Believer

- *That you may lack nothing* – lit. "no need have"
 - Ordinarily that a person is able to provide for themselves the necessities of life, and will not need to beg or ask others for what they need
 - While there are certainly exceptions due to unforeseen physical problems or providential circumstances, it is to be the pursuit of the believer to ask "how do I provide what I need"
- I want to **go further** than this (and outside of our text), because sometimes it is merely the pursuit of what "I need" or even "my family" - once this is met, with perhaps a little giving to the church, that must be all
- Ephesians 4:28 points us in another direction, and the desire to provide for others who have need (assuming that there will be)

If a man has no need to add to what he has for his own temporal comfort, what a privilege it is for him to toil in promoting public improvements: in founding colleges, libraries, hospitals, and asylums; and in sending the gospel to those who are sunk in wretchedness and want! (Albert Barnes)

- Even more modest goals with modest means

No one who has already enough for himself and family, but who can make money to do good to others, has a right to retire from business and to live in idleness. (Albert Barnes)

APPLICATION

- Christ as the example of excellence and diligence – John 17:4
- If you are not a Christian, there is one particular work and calling that I want you to know about that you can never accomplish, and that you can never complete: that of righteousness before God
- If you are a believer, then there is one area in which you can completely rest – the righteousness of Christ
There is enough in this world for every one to do, and the Savior set such an example of untiring industry in his vocation as to give each one occasion to doubt whether he is his true follower if he is not disposed to be employed. (Albert Barnes)
- Whether your calling is primarily outside of the home, in the home, in a classroom, in a truck, with children, etc. – these are all areas or responsibility given by God and to be done for God above all human eyes
- We are called to do it without grumbling, with thankfulness, with an awareness of God's presence
- This doesn't mean that you will necessarily enjoy everything that God calls us to do or find pleasure in the things itself
- Some of you are in hard callings, and things are difficult; you may pray, like the Savior, for some other way
- If the answer for now is "no", then you embrace it as what is necessary to glorify Him
- We go to the cross to find forgiveness and to find help to do the "hard stuff"
- You look to the reward that is ahead and endure the difficult, knowing that God sees and is well pleased
- We look to the Lord Jesus, and His supreme calling to His death on the Cross and its difficulty for help to do our difficult things