



Today's study is titled "Don't Waste Your Life." In light of Jesus coming to earth, dying on the cross, and resurrecting for our salvation, and in light of His anticipated return to earth, we don't need to waste our lives on matters that aren't of eternal significance. As Paul wraps up the end of 2 Thessalonians, he speaks to the issue of idleness in the Christian life – in other words, wasting your life. With all the hope of Christmas and Christ's return, the last thing we need to do is waste time.

**Key Passage:** 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Looking back at your notes, what encouraged or challenged you the most from the sermon?
2. How can the command in verse 6 to keep away from every brother "who is walking in idleness" prompt us to reflect on our own lives? What does it look like to be an idle Christian? When are we most tempted toward idleness?

One of the greatest dangers to the Thessalonian church wasn't from people on the outside but the lazy or idle people on the inside. Twice in these final verses of the book, Paul refers to these people who behave irresponsibly and cause problems within the church. Among these idle people were some who may have quit their jobs anticipating Christ's return and others who were taking advantage of the more affluent members of the church to meet their needs. (Christ-Centered Exposition, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, pg. 247)

3. In verses 7-10, how does Paul describe his, Silvanus, and Timothy's lives while they were with the Thessalonians? What do these verses teach us about personal responsibility and accountability in our approach to work?

This final passage of 2 Thessalonians includes five cautions: don't be lazy, don't be a burden, don't be weary, don't be negligent, and don't be forgetful. Paul challenges the Thessalonian believers by offering his life as an example. Paul knew the importance of his life matching his words; the same could be said of us. Our lifestyles will either bring credibility to our words or detract from our words.

4. Verse 11 addresses those who "walk in idleness." How does Paul describe these kinds of people? What is the connection between being idle and being a busybody? How can we avoid being a busybody and instead cultivate a positive atmosphere among our families, workplaces, and church?

As if being lazy weren't bad enough, it seems that many of those choosing idleness were also interfering with those attempting to live out their faith faithfully. Idleness doesn't leave people with

nothing to do – idleness leads to being a busybody. The irresponsible members of the Thessalonian church were meddling in other people's business and slowing down the work. Thus, Paul admonishes the idle to get to work and be productive.

5. What does it mean when Paul encourages us to "not grow weary in doing good" in verse 13? What is he implying? What does this say about the need for encouragement? How can you encourage those who are doing good in this season of celebration?

This word of encouragement from Paul was directed at those who were not suffering from idleness but for those who were actively serving the Lord and seeking to live a God-honoring life. Paul knew the challenges of ministry all too well. Therefore, he aims to encourage those faithfully seeking to honor God with their life and lifestyle. This encouragement from Paul may have also meant to encourage these faithful believers to hold the idle members of their church accountable and see to it that they do not grow weary in trying to lead the idle into maturity.

6. In verses 14-15, how does Paul advise us to handle those who are disobedient to God's Word? How can we balance accountability with compassion in our relationships?

Followers of Christ are responsible for holding one another accountable when it comes to living by God's Word. This accountability is for the good of the church at large – nothing disrupts the church's unity like those who fail to live in step with biblical truth.

2 Timothy 2:24, A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people." (NLT)

Matthew 18:15, "If another believer sins against you, go privately, and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back." (NLT)

7. In verse 18, Paul closes the letter similarly to how he started, highlighting God's grace. Despite his directness in this letter, what does this gracious ending say about Paul? How does this ending serve as a final encouragement to the Thessalonians? How can a deep understanding and reliance on God's grace influence our interactions with others, fostering forgiveness and compassion?
8. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on this week?