

“Hard-working”

1 Thessalonians 4:9 – 12

I. Intro

A. At the beginning of creation, command gave to Adam and Eve - Genesis 1:28-29 (NIV)

28 God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful** and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be **yours for food.**

- i. *Be fruitful ...* - be productive; insinuation given that God has given the food supply but it takes some effort to actually gather/obtain the food

B. It's been God's plan from the very beginning that we be productive/working creatures; Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

C. After the fall, our labors more difficult; Genesis 3:17-19 (NIV)

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

D. Griping and complaining about having to work, but we should be grateful that God gave the capability for knowledge, skills, abilities to work; God not only intended for us to be creatures of work but also creatures of responsibility

E. Paul's first letter to Thessalonians – READ 1 Thessalonians 4:9 – 12

F. Apparently still some in Thessalonica that didn't pay much attention to Paul's first letter, writes again in second letter – READ 2 Thessalonians 3:6 – 13

G. Question: Why some people are “busy-bodies”? Have nothing to do; Paul's answer? They need to work; all throughout scripture this is confirmed – the answer for being a “busy-body” is to keep our bodies busy; v. 11 – *live quietly ... mind your own affairs ... work with your hands*

H. Another reason behind God's intentions for us to be people who work and who accept responsibility is so that we can bless each other; v. 9 - ... *been taught by God to love one another*

- I. **Being a productive member of society also means being a productive member of God's kingdom**
- J. **Question:** What does this have to do with family? (Messages on family) In our families, as parents (grandparents), God expects us, Bible tells us, to be Godly examples for our children in ALL aspects of life, including being responsible and productive
- K. **Mixed views of work in our culture:** 1) nation of workaholics – people working excessive amount of hours per week to the neglect of family – main motivation being the almighty dollar and getting ahead; 2) nation that worships pleasure and entertainment – work just enough to get a paycheck and survive; 3) nation where attitude is – why work if the government will support me?
- L. **3 reasons why God's intent for us, His creation, to be satisfied, contented, motivated working and responsible people**

II. **Work Leads to Self-Sufficiency**

- A. **v. 12** – Paul says *work with your hands ... and be dependent on no one*
- B. **Paul's strong words for a lazy person - 1 Timothy 5:8 (NIV)**
 - 8 If anyone **does not provide for his relatives**, and especially **for his immediate family**, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
 - i. **Sad individual, not a very Godly example, who is not willing to work in order to provide for their own family**
- C. **Proverbs 10:26 (NIV)**
 - 26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard (**lazy person**) to those who send him. ; **Proverbs 10:26 (NLT2)**
 - 26 Lazy people irritate their employers, like vinegar to the teeth or smoke in the eyes. ; **very descriptive analogy – also could say lazy people irritate God**
- D. **Proverbs 18:9 (NIV)**
 - 9 One who is slack in his work is **brother to one who destroys**. ; **a person that is not productive is just like and just as bad as a person who is destructive**

III. **Work Leads to True Satisfaction in Life**

- A. **Work brings the fulfillment of accomplishment; elaborate on two products of productivity – contentment and fulfillment**
- B. **1 – contentment;** scripture tells us that true contentment has a major impact on our experiencing the abundant life that Jesus wants us to know and that He died for
 - i. **1 Timothy 6:6 (NIV)**
 - 6 ... godliness with contentment is great gain. ; **living in obedience to God's Word not only leads to godliness, but also real contentment which is the most beneficial, rewarding thing we can do for ourselves**

ii. **Proverbs 13:4 (NIV)**

4 The sluggard (**lazy person**) craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent (**working, productive person**) are fully satisfied.

iii. **Book, “Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks”**
quote: “The secret of a happy life is not to get what you want but to live with what you’ve got. Most of us spend our lives concentrating on what we don’t have instead of thanking God for what we do have. Then we wake up, our life is over, and we missed the beauty of the present.”

C. **2 – fulfillment**

i. **world’s view of work – just earning a living to pay bills, many times involves exorbitant debt and trying to “stay afloat”, and/or just being able to have “stuff”**

ii. **Christian’s view of work – calling from God, doing my very best to bring glory to God; work should be what we live to do for the Lord not just what we do to live**

iii. **Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)**

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

24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

D. **Colossians 1:10 (NIV)**

10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: **bearing fruit in every good work**, growing in the knowledge of God,

IV. **Work Can Lead to Salvation**

A. **Question:** What do the following charitable organizations have in common – Salvation Army, Red Cross, public education, college education, children’s homes and orphanages, senior adult centers?
Beginnings came out of Christian ministry

B. **For centuries hard-working, productive followers of Christ have provided for the needs of others and through doing so have honored their Savior and have brought many to the Savior**

C. **Jesus said - Matthew 5:16 (NIV)**

16 ... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and *glorify* your Father in heaven.

D. **v. 12 – work with your hands ... so that you may walk properly before outsiders**

v. **Close**

A. **Jesus’ words - Matthew 5:41 (NIV)**

41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ; **Jesus telling us as His followers that in life we're to go above and beyond what's expected**

B. **Quote:** *"There's no traffic jam on the second mile"*; few people today want to go that extra mile especially if doing so means someone else is the beneficiary

C. **But going that extra mile, in our work, productivity, and all our responsibilities doesn't just impact us, it has an impact on every area of our lives – family, marriage, friendships, church, community – more than all those it impacts our relationship with our Lord and Savior**

D. **1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV)**

19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, **to win as many as possible.**

20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

23 **I do all this for the sake of the gospel,** that I may share in its blessings.