

# How to Know When the Difficult Choice is the Right Choice

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Sunday, September 1, 2024 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

## Three Commands Given in Love:

1. **Keep away from the \_\_\_\_\_ . vs. 6**
  
2. **Let the idle believer be \_\_\_\_\_ by their \_\_\_\_\_ . vs. 10**
  
3. **Work \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ your own bread. vs. 12**

## ***2 Thessalonians 3:6–18***

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<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. <sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. <sup>11</sup> For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

<sup>13</sup> As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

<sup>16</sup> Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

<sup>17</sup> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. <sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. (ESV)

## ***Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions***

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**Open:** How would you describe your attitude toward work?

**Read & Discuss:** 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

1. This passage addressed believers who could work but refused to do so. To what extent would you describe this as an issue in our modern church context? How would you defend the biblical value of work?
2. In verse 6 Paul says believers are to keep away from any brother walking in idleness. What would it look like for us to apply this instruction in our context today? Are there other ways we can apply this instruction faithfully which are appropriate to our cultural context?
3. According to verses 7-10, what were some key distinctives in the example that Paul and his companions modeled? How can we foster an environment here at Neighborhood Church which celebrates the value of work? What is the potential danger of overemphasizing the importance of work? How do we maintain a God-honoring balance?
4. Paul references his example to the Thessalonians as a foundation for their expected behavior. To what extent should we as Christians be replicating the behavior of other Christians? (*See also 1 Corinthians 11:1*). Do you think we emphasize this too little or too much today? Explain.
5. Paul addressed the issue of idleness among this community multiple times (*2 Thess 3:10, 1 Thess 5:14, 2 Thess 3:12*). How does their persistence in this sin impact how we ought to rightly understand and apply this passage?
6. ***Read Matthew 18:15-20***. What has been your experience with applying the accountability principles of Matthew 18 in your relationship with other Christians? What, if anything, might need to change in your pattern moving forward?
7. Where do you see opportunities to apply Paul's instruction regarding the value of work within the culture of our church family? To what extent do the values we encounter here inform how we interact with secular or government support programs within our nation?
8. Given the surrounding context, how would you further detail what Paul means in verse 13 by "doing good"? Verses 12-15 seem to keep the progress of the sinning brother in the forefront of our motivations. How is this essential given what Paul commanded in the preceding verses?

**Apply:** How can you encourage those you know about the value of work? Where might you need to correct your own thinking or repent of past patterns of behavior regarding work?

**Pray:** Ask God to give our church family wisdom and discernment as we aim to apply these principles in our context. Pray for God to build a healthy culture of accountability in the NCAC family.