



Instructions for the strength and purity of the church

Found in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

One of the most important Scriptures for me is...*"In all thy ways acknowledge him and He shall direct thy paths."* Proverbs 3:6

This is not a command...but a statement of truth. It is to be a voluntary action on the Christian's part. It is like God is saying, "If you want me to direct your life (your "goings and comings") in order to be successful and fulfilling, then you have to acknowledge that God is interested in your everyday activities (path to success) and be willing to trust Him."

The above verse is not a command, but a statement declaring that we must be willing to place our trust in Him. However, the 6th verse of 2 Thessalonians, chapter 3 is a command, not a "should do", "If you would do" statement. Therefore, we should heed to His Word.

"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." 2 Thessalonians 3:6

The "command" to withdraw from the disorderly.

The strength of this statement is plain. It was not only a **command**, but it was also made **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Someone has said, "Jesus is watching you and seeing how you conduct yourselves. Are you/me willing to listen to a command of the Son of God and acknowledge His presence?"

Note: This command is for the church (brother; fellow Christians).

"That you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly":

- Paul defined the **disorderly** as those who did not walk **according to the tradition** (the pattern of teaching and living) Paul and the apostles gave to them.
- Churches should never withdraw from someone because he fails to conform to *man's* traditions or teachings. The only standard to uphold is *apostolic* tradition and teaching found in the Word of God.

Remember: Paul was an apostle called to the Gentiles. The Words he gave them were revealed by God. Paul's letters to the churches and to individuals were those things personally revealed to him through the Holy Spirit's teaching.

Note: The present tense of the verb *walks* denotes that it is a deliberate course of action. Their disorderly conduct is not an occasional lapse but a persistent practice.

“Withdraw from every brother”:

Paul had already told the Thessalonians that they should warn the unruly ([1 Thessalonians 5:14](#)). Now...since the problem still remained to some measure, he told them to now discipline the unruly ones in question.

- The purpose in withdrawing from these disobedient Christians was not so much punishment, but more simply to deny these disobedient ones the aid and comfort of the fellowship of the body of Christ until they repented.
- It put them out of the church into the “domain” of Satan (the world); in hope that they might miss the fellowship of the church so much they would repent of their disobedience.

Paul echoed the same command in [1 Corinthians 5:4-5](#). The purpose was to bring about repentance and salvation in the disobedient ones, not to condemn or damn them.

In an indirect way, Paul showed that his vision for the church was that it should be such a place of love and comfort that one would genuinely feel sad and sorry to be excluded from the church.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9, “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 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, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”

“For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us”:

Paul was an excellent example among the Thessalonians, in that he worked hard to support his own needs. This wasn't because apostles like Paul didn't have the right to request support. Instead, it was because he wanted to set a good example of hard work and prove false any accusation that he preached the Gospel for personal gain.

“To make ourselves an example of how you should follow us”:

Paul was not bragging or building up self esteem; he was giving a truth that can't be misinterpreted.

Therefore, the Thessalonians should follow Paul in his example of both hard work and willingness to sacrifice for the furtherance and integrity of the Gospel.

2 Thessalonians 3:10, “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”

ANOTHER COMMAND...NOT A REQUEST. IT IS A “MUST DO” INSTEAD OF A “SHOULD DO.”

“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”:

- **Simple command:** Paul says that if anyone **will not work** (instead of *cannot work*), **neither shall he eat**.
- **God's plan** is to provide for our needs through our work.
- Since God is able to provide through our needs in any manner imaginable, it means something that He has chosen (for the most part) to meet our needs through work.
- **This is part of God's character**, because He is a busy God and always at work.

Someone has said, “Every evening I turn my worries over to God. He's going to be up all night anyway.”

- ✓ ***The psalmist writes, “He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” Psalm 121:3-4.***

Note: When Paul commands the faithful Christians to withdraw from the idle-disruptive Christians, he doesn't intend that withdrawal to be permanent (We will see this again in verses 14-15). Instead, he hopes to get the attention of those who are idle and disruptive—and to encourage them to start working and to stop meddling. At that point, they can be restored to the community of faith—which then will be harmonious rather than troubled.