

WORKS

Part 9

Working for A Living

1st Thess. 4:10-12

INTRODUCTION

Webster's dictionary describes "making a living" as "to earn the money one needs to pay for housing, food, etc." Men have been working as a means of providing for his sustenance since the fall. The ancient Greek world had a favorable view of work. The ancients saw work as:

"A duty which man must fulfill in his life to have justification and dignity. And it is Hesiod again who emphasizes the aspect of labour, when he insist that not work, but idleness is shameful, and that the idler is like a parasite." -- Rodolfo Mondolfo and D. S. Duncan --The Greek Attitude Towards Manual Labor

Paul, in his epistles encouraged believers to follow his example and to work, not only to provide for self, but to have enough to provide for other believers who have need. Today, we will consider work as it relates to the believer laboring to provide for the needs for living.

I. WORKING FOR A LIVING IS WROUGHT WITH LABOR.

A. Labor is the Greek word *kopos* which is used in varying forms to describe the toil-- ***working to the point of exhaustion*** -- Tim Holscher --a common result of working.

B. Labor is exemplified two ways in Scripture.

1. Labor is used of toil in ministry. 1st Tim. 4:10 (of Paul with the Ephesians); 1st Thess. 2:9 (of Paul with the Thessalonians); 1st Thess. 1:3 (is a result of love for the brethren); 1st Co. 15:58 (the labour in the Lord is not in vain)
2. Labor is used of toil involved in making a living. Lk. 5:54 (common in fishing); 2 Thess. 3:8 (Paul exemplified among the Thessalonians)

II. SCRIPTURE EXHORTS BELIEVERS TO WORK IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A MEANS OF LIVING.

A. The apostle Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to work with their own hands. 1st Thess. 4:11

1. Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to "study to be quiet" -- *philotimeomai* -- make it their ambition. Cf. 2 Co. 5:9 (of being well pleasing to the Lord)
2. "To be quiet" is from *hesuchazo* which means to cease and desist from a current or future activity; to be tranquil in the way one conducts his life.

--K.D.J. Cf. Acts 21:14 (of believer's trying to persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem)

3. "Do your own business" can be translated "to practice your own things" as opposed to being a busybody in another's matters.
 - a) This phrase is used in Scripture of things that belong to a person. John 1:11 (of the Lord's creation)
 - b) It is used of one's own home. Acts 21:6
4. "And to work with your own hands" -- from ergomai -- (pres. Mid. inf) -- to work for yourself -- for your very own benefit.

B. The apostle exhorted those at Corinth to work for their living. 1st Co. 4:12

1. Paul noted that he as an apostle did manual labor. Vs. 12 The use of kopos in the present active indicative notes a continual activity Paul was conducting even at the time of writing.
2. Paul exemplified this throughout his ministry. Acts 18:1-3 (He was a tentmaker); 1st Co. 9:14-15

C. Paul exhorted the Ephesians to engage in labor. Eph. 4:28

1. Paul encouraged those saints to labor instead of stealing what they needed. Vs. 28
 - a) Many poor who believed were used to stealing as a way of provisions.
 - b) Paul exhorted the saints to labour:
 - (1) Kopos is used in the pres. Act. imp. -- A strong admonition to labor because it was what was best for them.
 - (2) Work to the point of exhaustion.
2. Labor included:
 - a) This included working "the good" -- the beneficial thing that God provides for believers to accomplish. Rom. 14:16 (in proper use of freedoms); Philemon 14 (in deeds for the brethren)
 - b) "With your his (your very own) hands.

III. THE BENEFITS OF WORK GO BEYOND PROVIDING A MEANS FOR LIVING.

A. Work provides the opportunity to meet the needs of others.

1. Paul worked to minister unto his needs and those of others who accompanied him. Acts 20:34-35
2. Paul exhorted the Ephesian saints to labor in order that they might have to give to ones who have need. Eph. 4:28
3. Paul connect working with eating in his second epistle to the Thessalonians. 2 Thess. 3:10
 - a) Paul uses the first class condition (since) to indicate that there are ones in the church who intentionally were not working.

- b) The use of the phrase “would not” is from thelo which can be translated they are desiring (for the purpose) not to work.

B. Working allows for the believer to have a good appearance towards unbelievers. 1st Thess. 4:12

- 1. The word “honestly” is a word that actually means to conduct one’s self in a good fashion; having an outward appearance that is good. Cf. Rom. 13:13 (should characterize the believer’s walk); 1st Co. 14:40 (it is the focus of the conducting of business)
- 2. The focus of the good fashion of the believer are “them that are without”.
 - a) “Them” is the use of the Greek article (the).
 - b) “That are without” is the Greek word “exo” which is literally used of those on the outside -- outside of the church. Cf. 1st Co. 5:12 (believers have no authority to judge those outside the church); Col. 4:5 (believers are told to walk in wisdom towards those on the outside)

C. Believers who work follow the order that God has provided concerning how believers are to care for themselves. 2 Thess. 3:6,11

- 1. The use of the word “disorderly” is ataktos -- “ **of soldiers who do not keep the ranks; who are regardless of order; and then who are irregular in any way.** -- Barnes’ Notes on the Bible
- 2. Paul made himself an example to believers by working. 2 Thess. 3:7-9

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ONE INTENTIONALLY NOT WORKING ARE TWO-FOLD.

A. The believer is hurt by not working.

- 1. Not working lead to idleness.
 - a) The word for “idle” is argos, a phrase used six times in the New Testament four times of “free from labour, at leisure; lazy, shunning the labour which one out to perform.” -- Joseph Thayer . Cf. Matt. 20:3,6
 - b) Paul asserts that some learn to be idle. 1st Tim. 5:13 -- “Learn is manthano which means to be taught a discipline. Cf. John 7:15 (of the Lord not being taught in the rabbinical schools); Heb. 5:8 (of the Lord learning obedience)
- 2. Idleness lead to satanic attacks. 2 Tim. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:11

B. Idleness give way to meddling in the affairs of others. 1st Tim. 5:13-16; 2 Thess. 3:11

CONCLUSION