

WORTHY OF HIS CALLING

How To Wait Well

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Main Point: As we wait on the return of the Lord, we must learn to wait well by obeying the Lord's command, following Godly examples and living faithfully for the Lord.

Wait well by obeying the Lord's command (6)

- *Keep away from persistent idleness.*
- *Recognize that Idleness is Contrary to the Gospel teaching.*

The church at Thessalonica had so many questions concerning the return of Christ that Paul had to write two letters to help them with their understanding of this topic. Here in the second letter Paul is forced to call out certain disobedience in the church. There were some who had taken to idleness, persistently not living out their calling to walk as Christ instructed as they waited for the Lord's return. Paul addresses this issue with very strong language saying, "Now we command you, brothers." This word "command" is one that carries a military meaning, calling those who were living disorderly lives to get back in step with what they had been taught, "the tradition that you received from us." It is obvious that some in the church had begun to neglect their responsibilities as followers of Christ to work at everything as unto the Lord, focusing only on waiting and watching for the return of Christ.

1. Why do the Lord command us to keep away from idleness and disorder? What are the effects of living disorderly or idly when it comes to our Christian walk?
2. What are some practical ways to keep ourselves from becoming idle or disorderly in our walk? What does the Bible say about idleness or disorderly conduct? How has the Lord called us to live as we wait for his return?

Wait well by following a Godly example (7-9)

- *Paul was not Idle among them (7)*
- *Paul worked for the food he received (8)*
- *Paul refused to become an unnecessary burden (8)*
- *Paul sacrificed his rights to give an example for others (9)*

Paul had already reminded the church of the tradition that they had received from him in his teaching while he was with them. That teaching included how to live for the Lord in every aspect of their lives. But now Paul turns and points them not only to what he had taught them, but also to the example of how he lived among them. Paul set the example for them in how to live. This is discipleship 101, Jesus commanded us not to just teach people how to live but to show them how to live. In the Great Commission, which we recite every Sunday, the phrase "teaching them to observe" carries this idea of modeling for the new believers and disciples how to live. Paul was not idle or disorderly while living with them, he worked tirelessly to pay for his

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food, and not to be a burden upon anyone. As a minister of the Gospel he could have been entitled to the support of others, but to set an example of true servant leadership, he forfeited that right. Godly leaders do not merely tell people what faithfulness looks like—they seek to demonstrate it with their lives.

1. How important is a Godly example? What are some examples of Godly examples you have had in your life?
2. Pastors are often looked to as Godly examples, but who else is called to be Godly examples according to Scripture? To whom and how should you be a Godly example?

Wait Well by Living Faithfully for the Lord (10-18)

- *We must accept personal responsibility (10)*
- *Work quietly and earn your own living (11-12)*
- *Do not grow weary of doing good (13)*
- *Take persistent disobedience seriously (14)*
- *Correct the disobedient as brothers, not enemies (15)*
- *Depend on the Lord for peace, presence and grace (16-18)*

In this final section of the letter Paul turns to exhortations. An exhortation is a strong, earnest plea or piece of advice to persuade and encourage someone to take action. And Paul has exhortations for those who are being idle, for those who are being faithful and for the church as a whole. This is yet another aspect of discipleship, as we walk this faith journey as a faith family, we need everyone to be doing their part as God designed it. Sometimes we need to be rebuked for our inaction, sometimes we need to be encouraged to persevere, sometimes we must be reminded of the seriousness of disobedience, sometimes we must correct our brothers, and we must always be reminded to depend on the Lord. Faithful living is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, transforming us into the likeness of Christ. And in doing that in our lives, the Holy Spirit can use us to help encourage others in that process of transformation as well.

1. Why is it important for us to take personal responsibility for our actions as we strive to live faithfully for the Lord? What does taking personal responsibility look like when we have been disobedient? Why do we sometimes find it so difficult to repent?
2. As faithful servants of the Lord, it can be discouraging to see so many people who don't seem to care about what the Lord has commanded, it is even more discouraging when those people call themselves Christians. How do we persevere in doing good when everyone else isn't? Where does our strength come from to continue to do the right things? How are we as a faith family supposed to handle a brother or sister who has become idle or disorderly?
3. Where do we find the peace and grace that we need to live faithfully? How does that help us to help one another?