
Words of Truth

I Thessalonians 4:11-12

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You have heard the phrases, “mind your own business” and “get a job.” Well, we are about to read inspired instructions that teach these points very clearly. Here is what we will be studying in this article: *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing”* (I Thessalonians 4:11-12).

Before we get into our study, we should define a few words we are going to be looking at. The Greek word that is translated “study” [φιλοτιμέομαι] means: “to be fond of honor, that is, emulous (eager or earnest to do something.): - labour, strive, study” (Strong’s # 5389). The Greek word that is translated “quiet” [ἡσυχάζω] means: “to keep still (intransitively), that is, refrain from labor, meddlesomeness or speech: - cease, hold peace, be quiet, rest” (Strong’s # 2270). The Greek word that is translated “business” [ἴδιος] means: “pertaining to self, that is, one's own; by implication private or separate: - X his acquaintance, when they were alone, apart, aside, due, his (own, proper, several), home, (her, our, thine, your) own (business), private (-ly), proper, severally, their (own)” (Strong’s # 2398).

Now that we have those definitions down, let’s think about the lessons in this text. First, the teaching that Christians must strive to live quietly. Consider some things Solomon wrote: *“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife... Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit”* (Proverbs 17:1 and Ecclesiastes 4:6). As Christians, we should want to live quiet and peaceable lives (I Timothy 2:2). We shouldn’t want chaos in our lives.

One of the ways we avoid chaos in our lives is to stay busy handling our own business. For men, one of the great responsibilities we have in life is to provide for our families (I Timothy 5:8). One of the ways a Christian man provides physically for his family is by securing gainful employment. Work has long been a taught principle among God’s people (Proverbs 13:11, Proverbs 14:23, and Ephesians 4:28).

While there may be married women who help their husbands in the form of labor outside of the home (Proverbs 31:10-31), one of the great responsibilities married women have is to be keepers at home (Titus 2:3-5). A married woman should be so busy caring for her family that she does not have time or room in her life for chaos or being a busybody. In fact,

there is something to learn from what was written about young widows. Notice: *“But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully”* (I Timothy 5:11-14).

The saints in Thessalonica had been taught to work and mind their own business in person. Then, they were taught this in writing. However, we later find that the message was not received by all. In the second letter, this was written: *“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother”* (II Thessalonians 3:6-14).

Working and minding your own business also helps in our relationships outside of the body of Christ. We are supposed to strive to live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:17-18). By taking care of ourselves, we are able to walk honestly in this world (Romans 13:13-14). Think about how Christians need to be good examples in this world with this point (Philippians 2:14-16 and Titus 2:7-8). It is really hard to let your light shine to the glorification of our Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:14-16) if we are involved in things we have no business in. Also, if you are a good for nothing bum; who would hear you concerning the Gospel?

By providing for ourselves we are not going to be leeches on society. Think about what Paul said to the Ephesians: *“I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:33-35). When I think of all of these points together it brings to my mind a phrase that I heard in the past. That phrase is: “An honest days work.” Well, that is certainly what is taught in this text we are studying. Get busy in your business. Provide for your own. Mind your own business. This aids greatly in keeping our lives peaceable.