

April 6, 2025
God's Good News Story–The Church Alive & Growing
2 Thessalonians 3:6-18
Do's & Don'ts of Church Family Life

God’s Good News Story - “The Church Alive & Growing” is our ongoing multi-year sermon series where we are working our way chronologically, historically, and missionally through the New Testament. Our goal is to have a clearer understanding of what the Bible says about the 1st Century church and its’ growth, principles and lessons that we can learn from to keep the Church Alive & Growing in the 21st Century.

Today we close out our study on Paul’s 2nd Letter to the Thessalonians.

2 THESSALONIANS: STANDING FIRM WHEN YOUR WORLD IS SHAKEN		
This is the 53^d book of the Bible, 14^h in the New Testament and is one of 13 Books written by the Apostle Paul shortly after the 1st Letter @51AD.		
Three Things That Were Shaking the World of the 1st Century Church		
OPPOSITION FROM THE WORLD <i>Chapter 1</i>	CONFUSION ABOUT THE FUTURE <i>Chapter 2</i>	CARELESSNESS IN RESPONSIBILITY <i>Chapter 3</i>
Trouble From the Outside	Trouble From the Inside	
Persevere in Faith	Hope in God's Word	Behave in Godly Love
Encourage the Troubled	Enlighten the Confused	Warn the Careless
Commendation: For their persevering testimony of faith	Challenge: To stand firm against falsehood.	Command: To work faithfully until Jesus Christ comes.
Key Verse: 2 Thessalonians 3:5 May The Lord Direct Your Hearts Into The Love Of God And Into The Steadfastness Of Christ . <small>(preachingtoday.com/W. Wiersbe</small>		

CARELESSNESS IN RESPONSIBILITY
<i>Chapter 3</i>
Trouble From the Inside
Behave in Godly Love
Warn the Careless <i>Command: Work Faithfully Until Jesus Comes</i>

I am sure that you have had times when people you care about or that you have a close association with simply don’t act right. They surely know better, but they don’t act better. This is disappointing to say the least. How many times do you have to say to a child, or a family, member a friend or a co-worker... “*This is the Right way to do this or say this*”, only to have them ignore it do it the wrong way. Paul, Silas & Timothy had addressed several **Do’s & Don’ts of Church Family Life**, both in person when they were there in Thessalonica, as well as in the 1st Letter that they had sent to them. Sadly, some of these ‘Church Family’ members were not listening and were acting in an undisciplined, unruly manner.

Paul follows up his commendation of good behavior in chapter one and his challenge to stand firm in the face of false doctrine in chapter two, with a rather stringent ‘*fatherly discipline talk*’ in this last section of his letter.

We can look at this section as a series of **Do’s & Don’ts**. To be honest, they apply to us in the 21st Century Church just like it did to the 1st Century Church.

DO BE DISCIPLINED
DON'T BE DISORDERLY

2 Thessalonians 3:6-9...⁶ Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother or sister who leads a disorderly life and not one in accordance with the tradition which you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined way among you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; ⁹ not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a role model for you, so that you would follow our example.

Paul takes a direct and firm approach to this difficult situation, but he maintains an attitude of love, grace and restoration. We will do well to follow his example.

Paul starts out with a 'COMMAND', not a suggestion on how to deal with undisciplined, unruly Church Family Members. He makes a point to remind them that he is speaking from a place of authority in the Name of '***Our Lord Jesus Christ***'. This is not just a pet peeve that Paul has, or a 'bone to pick' with some rowdy people. He sees his role and the church family's role in dealing with conflict as a command and calling from Jesus Himself. It is not about a power trip; it is about holy living. The Church is to be a disciplined group of holy believers who do what is right and do it consistently. Sometimes we get a skewed view of what being loving is all about.

When you truly love, you desire to do what is right and just in God's eyes. Love is not some wishy-washy, sentimental, "*I don't want to hurt your feelings*" emotion. As I referenced before, if you are a parent and you see your child about to do something very dangerous, you will act to stop them, and sometimes it will come off as being controlling and bossy. But you have to act to make sure that they learn the RIGHT behavior. Sometimes that involves punishment, time out or other non-pleasant means.

As maturing humans, we have to be told, taught, modeled and expected to be disciplined people. Even one of the Fruit of Spirit (**Gal. 5:23**) teaches us that...**Self-Control**. Paul states clearly in verse 7 how he, Silas and Timothy taught and modeled for them how they should live. Paul is reminding them that to be a Follower of God, a Disciple of Jesus (aka The Church) requires high standards of belief and behavior. When one of the Church family members gets out of line they must be addressed, out of love, yet in firmness, and to maintain the high honor of God.

Key Point: Do Be Disciplined, Don't Be Disorderly

Next, we look at verses 10-12.

**DO WORK PEACEFULLY
DON'T BE A BUSY-BODY**

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. ¹² Now we command and exhort such persons in the Lord Jesus Christ to work peacefully and eat their own bread.

It appears that there was a significant group of Church Family Members who were not living a disciplined life but were being lazy **busy bodies**. This is probably a result of the false teaching and doctrine that some had accepted that Jesus was coming so soon that they didn't need to do anything but sit around and wait. Sadly, as they waited, they went around distracting those who were trying to DO SOMETHING for God. Since they were not working, they had no money or food, and they 'sponged' (took advantage of) the others and expected them to provide for them. What selfish narcissistic behavior. Paul soundly reminds them this is not acceptable behavior. He makes the statement that has been often repeated 'no work, no eat',

As Christians we are to do our best at everything that we do because when we do, it brings Glory to God. A point for us to note and put into practice is Don't get lazy and distracted by things in this world and forget that we have a job to do for God's Kingdom.

Let's get to work peacefully and devotedly.

Just a reminder, this is for those who are able to work and don't. Our love, grace and mercy should be extended to those who are unable to work.

Key Point: Do Work Peacefully -Don't Be A Busy-Body

**DO GOOD CONSISTENTLY
DON'T GIVE UP**

This verse is another well-known and well-used verse. It is often difficult and challenging to be a faithful servant of God, but when you have fellow Church family members causing disorder and grief it is often tempting to just say, "*I give up, I quit*"! But I say... Don't you give up!

Throughout the Bible we have exhortations to stand firm, hold own and not give up. The Christian life can be difficult, but when we rely on the Love of God, The Grace of our Lord Jesus and the Power of the Holy Spirit, we can do all things.

Keep being faithful, keep serving, even if you're the only one. God has called you, Stay Faithful!

Key Point: Do Good, Don't Give Up.

**DO ADDRESS BAD BEHAVIOR
DON'T BE NEGLIGENT**

¹⁴ If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person so as not to associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. ¹⁵ And yet do not regard that person as an enemy but admonish that one as a brother or sister.

Paul gets specific on the responsibilities of faithful church family members when another person steps out of line. We call it Church Discipline today. It is a God commanded responsibility to deal with unruliness and undisciplined people firmly, thoughtfully and directly. God does not want His family to be contaminated by bad behavior or doctrine. It is not a pleasant or easy thing to do, but it is the right thing to do.

Godly church members must address bad behavior and not neglect it. We cannot overlook it just because someone is a fellow member, or friend or worker. God's honor and proper behavior must take precedence.

But a key point to note is that it is not to be done out of sheer punishment, this addressing and separation of the offending member is for the specific reason to cause them to see the error of their ways, repent and be restored. We must keep that in mind, it is an act of firm love and righteousness. There are other scriptures that address the fate of those who do not repent, after two attempts they are to be turned away. See Paul's advice to Titus.

Titus 3:9-11... *⁹ Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These things are useless and a waste of time. ¹⁰ If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them. ¹¹ For people like that have turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them.*

Key Point: Do address bad behavior, Don't be negligent

**DO SEEK PEACE
DON'T NEGLECT GRACE**

Paul closes out this loving, firm and direct letter with this encouraging and hope-filled prayer.

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! ¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Paul is reminding them that true peace, and true grace come from a loving, personally relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do Seek Peace, Don't Neglect Grace

Our Take-Away: God Desires & Expects Us To Be Loving, Faithful, Obedient Disciples.

**Do Be Faithful
Don't Dishonor God**