Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

No Work, No Eat
Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 3
Code: BQ031213

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. (3:10)

To the missionaries' example, Paul added a pointed command. The divinely revealed, authoritative, axiomatic truth that those who **are not willing to work** are **not to eat** was not new to the saints. Ignorance was not their problem, **for even** when the missionaries **were with them**, they **used to give** them that **order**. Paul had also discussed this issue in his first epistle (4:11; 5:14). His point is simple: if people get hungry enough, they will work to get food. As Solomon put it, "A worker's appetite works for him, for his hunger urges him on" (Prov. 16:26). Believers who have the opportunity and the ability to work for their own food are to do so. Those who do not are worse than unbelievers (1 Tim. 5:8).

It is important to note that Paul addresses here the issue of **those not willing to work**, not those unable to work. Both individual believers and the church as a whole have a responsibility to care for the poor (Matt. 6:2, 3; Gal. 2:10; 1 Tim. 5:4; Heb. 13:16; James 2:15–16; 1 John 3:17). But neither the world nor the church owes a living to those too lazy to work. We are used to "entitlements" in our society. This is the idea that those who will not work hard are entitled to be paid money taken from those who do. The results of the welfare culture are visible for all to see—family breakups, immorality, crime, hopelessness, meaninglessness, and bitterness.

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