

Don't Be Fooled
You are Called To Produce
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Introduction: Before we get into today's passage, we need to do a little background work on the doctrine of work, that is, what the Bible teaches us about what we were designed to do.

God made everything in the entire universe to work and, in so doing, accomplish things that benefit themselves and others; that is, to prosper in living for themselves and to benefit the system that enables everything else to do the same. Nothing, nor anyone, was designed to simply take from the system. Instead, everybody and everything were meant to be self-sustaining within a system that is self-sustaining through the collective input of all within it. Thus, all within the system benefit from the excellent, hard-working participation of everyone and everything within it.

Furthermore, not everyone and everything in the system was built to perform the same tasks; rather, each entity and each person was designed to accomplish different tasks within the system. In Genesis 1:27-28, we see the five specific responsibilities humanity was given in the system God created,

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:27-28)

Obviously, the words "**fruitful**," "**multiply**," "**fill**," "**subdue**," and "**have dominion**" are all action words of things mankind is to do. However, these words also point to the high level of productivity mankind was made to accomplish. Each word is a high-output word. There is no complacency in any of them, but rather an ongoing commitment to productive work that's done with the highest level of accomplishment and achievement.

The word "**fruitful**" literally means to produce effectively. Any temptation someone may have to believe this allows for minimal production is undermined by the rest of the action words.

"**Multiplying**" is a vastly different outcome than adding. There is no minimalist output concept in multiplying!

To "**fill**" is a goal with no acceptable outcome other than completion. Mankind was not meant to settle for something that wasn't fully finished.

Finally, to "**subdue**" and "**have dominion**" are not mild in tone or context, but intense, thorough, and continually complete in their outcome. One cannot be partially subdued. To be partially subdued means they are not yet subdued. Likewise, one cannot have partial

dominion. To have partial dominion is to actually not have dominion; it means one has yet to achieve it!

Now, some would argue that because this was God's command before man fell into sin, there was no real effort involved in accomplishing what mankind was made to do. That is, the action of subduing and continually overseeing (dominion) would not be work, but rather things that just happened as we sat around looking at Instagram and Netflix all day. But that's not the case at all. In Genesis chapter two, Moses zooms in on the relationship of God with Adam, and in that we read this,

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)

God put Adam in the Garden not to walk around and smell the flowers, but to **"work it"** and **"keep it,"** which means to do all the things necessary for the garden to continue being highly prosperous, fruitful, and multiplying! Furthermore, the word **"work"** is inseparable from the word **"effort!"** **"Work"** is, by definition, a focused and intentional action that requires significant effort to produce an outcome.

My point here is that in God's uncorrupted creation, Adam and Eve were both made to **WORK**, just as He made everything else in the universe to do! Nothing in the universe was made to be idle nor without a purpose that benefited others. Why? Well, it's actually not that hard to understand.

God is three and perfectly one, all the time and all at the same time—the Trinity. In being three and one at the same time, all the time, God is also the perfection of LOVE! Everything in God's creation was made with that ethos as well, meaning God made nothing to only serve itself or to be of itself nothing but served, but rather to perfectly supply for itself and others, all at the same time receiving from others what they bring to the system, which enables them to perfectly provide for themselves and others as well. This ethos was not only inherent in created things but also in humanity. Everything and everyone God created was created with this ethos and expectation in mind.

The apostle Paul made this God designed aspect of productivity for others crystal clear when he addressed how we are meant to use our gifts and talents in the work of the local church. He wrote,

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

Our work in and through the local church is not only given to us as a gift of enjoyment to be part of the work of Christ, but it is necessarily intended to have a positive impact on others in the local church—productive!

Now, it is absolutely true that the fall of man and the entrance of sin and death into the world corrupted the entire system's ability to do what it was made to do with the

perfection it was made to do it, but that doesn't change the fact that the system is still made with the same design and purpose. Sin didn't change the purpose and design of the system; it changed how we function in it.

For instance, after the fall of man, God didn't tell Adam and Eve that their jobs had changed. What He told them was that the experience of doing what they were designed to do would no longer be exclusively described with the word 'joy,' but would now include pain, suffering, and disappointment. Sin and death had now entered the system, and in doing so, they had corrupted every part of it! What was once 100% efficient production with nothing but the highest level of success for themselves and others as an output, would now not be the case. Work would no longer be filled with nothing but joy as its experience, and success as its outcome. Moses gave us insight into this new sinful reality of mankind in Genesis 3 when God pronounced judgment on Adam and Eve,

16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:16-19)

Notice that both were still meant to work; sin didn't change that, but what sin did do was change our experience in work. So, work is something God created for everyone and everything to do, and that work is meant to benefit both oneself and others. However, because of sin, work has an entirely different experience, and the outcomes are not nearly as effective as they were before the fall. Nonetheless, God made us and everything else not only to produce for ourselves but also to be part of what empowers others to do the same. Sin stands in the way of work being the experience it was meant to be, but it doesn't change the fact that it's how everything is designed to function. Everyone and everything is still called to produce!

In John Calvin's commentary on the passage in 2 Thessalonians, which Calvin published in circa 1550 AD, he made a very relevant comment to what I'm talking about here,

"Idleness causes disorder. If we ignore the reason we were made, we will leave chaos in our wake. It is only when we live by the rule that God has given that our lives are correctly regulated. Once this way of living is set aside, nothing but confusion remains. This should also be noted by anyone who is tempted to ignore God's commands. God has created us so we can be useful to other people."¹

¹ Calvin, J. (1999). [*1, 2 Thessalonians*](#) (p. 104). Crossway Books.

Now, before I move forward into today's passage, you need to understand that not all productive work earns money. Money isn't the Biblical measurement of productivity—benefit to others is! For instance, my wife serving our family as a full-time stay-at-home mom who manages our household doesn't produce more money for our bank account, but it does maximize the effectiveness of the money in our bank account and maximizes something bigger than money—the quality and productivity of our time together with each other, the church, and our community! My wife's labor in our family and home helps equip me and my kids for what we are supposed to be doing. What she does makes a massive difference in what we are supposed to be doing together as we lead our family and this church. In addition, she works to minister to others in the church and community, not just with the incredible gift of singing that God has given her, but also with her gift of encouraging and supporting others in their relationship with Christ and in the burdens of life. She earns a few dollars for singing, but like most people, she doesn't receive a dime for the love and service she provides to Venture and our community as a follower of Christ. Nonetheless, I can't effectively lead this ministry without her laboring in the cause of Christ with me, nor would I want to!

God doesn't measure production by dollars; He measures it by how it demonstrates and impacts others with His love.

For instance, when I first began to pastor Venture, there was a man in our church named Ralph Goins. I've told his story many times over the years. Ralph had a disease that caused every joint in his body to gradually fuse together. It was a terrible and miserable disease. However, he refused to be unproductive. Every week, he wrote letters to the young singles in our church. He wrote letters of encouragement that included a lesson he had learned in his study of God's Word, as well as specific things he was praying for them as an individual. Eventually, the joints in his fingers were so severely affected by arthritis that he couldn't write anymore, so he started using a typewriter! He typed so many letters that his typewriter finally died ... so we bought him another one! Ralph was unrelenting in his work to encourage others, and he continued until the sad day when dementia finally took his mind from him. But until the day his mind failed him, Ralph refused to be unproductive—and what a remarkable level of productivity he achieved! What a testimony of what Paul wrote, that,

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

The gift and ability to be productive isn't just for people who are in physically tip-top shape, but for all who are in the body of Christ!

So, to summarize what we've talked about concerning the doctrine of work in the Bible, let me give you two quick statements to keep in mind as we get into the passage:

(1) God made us to be productive for ourselves and others, and that includes the local church.

- (2) Since God created us to be productive, there are physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences to ourselves and others when we aren't.

With that foundation in mind, let's look at today's passage in 2 Thessalonians:

6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. 13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. (2 Thessalonians 3:6-13)

Proposition: There are three lessons we can learn about Biblically productive work in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13.

The first lesson we can learn is that ...

- (1) Every Christian is called to a standard of productive excellence for others to repeat! (3:6-9)

A. 6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us,

1. We are going to dive deeper into verse 6 in a minute, but for now, I just want you to notice the phrase, **"the tradition that you received from us."** The tradition he's speaking of is specifically what he discusses in verses 7 through 9 and thus has to do with the tradition of productive excellence that Paul maintained in everything he and his team did.
2. Paul knew that everything in his life was linked to his calling as a child of God to labor with Christ in His cause! He understood that a lack of productive excellence in one area necessarily impacted every area; therefore, he reminded the church in Thessalonica to live out the standard he and his team set for them—**"For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us"**.

B. because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.

1. **"because we were not idle"** - "The word means "to be undisciplined" or "to live in a disorderly manner" and is used to describe those who do not fulfill their obligations. In this case, the obligation had to do with working for one's own food."²
2. **"nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it"**
 - a. "More likely Paul means that they did not ask for or receive free gifts of food from the church but went to the shops and bought what they needed. It should be needless to say that this does not mean that the missionaries rigidly refused to accept hospitality when they were offered it."³
 - b. "They did not leech off others. Paul was not saying that they never accepted a gift or a meal from others, but that they were self-supporting. They earned the bread they ate (cf. v. 12). In fact, they **worked** long and hard so as not to be a financial **burden to any of** the Thessalonians (cf. 1 Thes. 2:9).⁴
3. **"but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you"**
 - a. **"night and day"** This is the Jewish order of time (cf. Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). This is an idiom meaning "worked full time," not literally 24 hours a day."⁵
 - b. "The messengers of the gospel managed to support themselves both by their own labors (v. 8b) and by means of the offerings sent to them by the Philippian church (Phil. 4:15–16). By these means they avoided eating anyone's bread *without paying for it*."⁶
4. **"with labor and hardship we kept working"** To the Greeks manual labor was for slaves only, but the Bible affirms work as from God. In Genesis work is both before the Fall and after (cf. Gen. 2:15; 3:19; Exod. 31:3; 35:35; Deut.

² Green, G. L. (2002). [*The letters to the Thessalonians*](#) (pp. 346–347). W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

³ Marshall, I. H. (1994). [2 Thessalonians](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1290). Inter-Varsity Press.

⁴ Constable, T. L. (1985). [2 Thessalonians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 723). Victor Books.

⁵ Utley, R. J. (1997). [Paul's First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians](#): Vol. Volume 11 (p. 144). Bible Lessons International.

⁶ Green, G. L. (2002). [The letters to the Thessalonians](#) (p. 347). W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

5:13; Isa. 54:16). The concept of working for one's own needs is crucial to this context. Some believers had rejected work because they assumed the Second Coming was near.⁷

C. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

1. "It was not because we do not have that right"

- a. "In the Greco-Roman world many traveling tricksters and con-men preyed upon people. Paul had often been accused of preaching for money. Being sensitive to this charge, he seldom took money from those who heard him preach."⁸
- b. "There was a danger that the Thessalonians might think that because he gave his services free of charge, this should be the pattern for all future ministers. This could happen through the mean disposition of people. Paul, anticipating this danger, taught that he did have the right to receive payment for his preaching, so that other preachers would not be expected to preach for nothing in the future. Paul wanted to expose those who are so ready to grumble about money being paid to ministers, even though they themselves make no financial contribution to that cause."⁹
- c. "Paul did teach elsewhere that to receive financial support for Christian service was an acceptable practice, although he did not make use of this privilege (v. 9; 1 Cor. 9:7–14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17–18; cf. Matt. 10:10). On the other hand, he raised his voice against those who engaged in ministry simply for financial gain (Acts 20:33; 1 Tim. 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7; and see 1 Tim. 6:9–10; Heb. 13:5; 1 Pet. 5:2; 2 Pet. 2:3) ... Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 9:1–18 that the apostles did have the *right* to receive their support from the churches (1 Cor. 9:4, 6, 12), basing his argument on the common norms of labor and salary (1 Cor. 9:7), the Law (1 Cor. 9:9–10), the practice in the temple (1 Cor. 9:13), and the teaching of the Lord Jesus himself (1 Cor. 9:14)."¹⁰
- d. Paul was affirming the concept that believers should support their leaders (cf. 1 Cor. 9:4–17; Gal. 6:6). However, in this specific situation he

⁷ Utley, R. J. (1997). [*Paul's First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*](#): Vol. Volume 11 (p. 144). Bible Lessons International.

⁸ Utley, R. J. (1997). [*Paul's First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*](#): Vol. Volume 11 (p. 144). Bible Lessons International.

⁹ Calvin, J. (1999). [*1, 2 Thessalonians*](#) (p. 105). Crossway Books.

¹⁰ Green, G. L. (2002). [*The letters to the Thessalonians*](#) (p. 347-348). W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.

acted (1) to set an example for those who had quit working and (2) to avoid possible criticism.¹¹

2. “but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.”

- a. “They were to imitate behavior as well as to believe teaching. Paul and his associates were never lazy loafers.”¹²
- b. “The apostles lived this way to give their converts an example (*typon*; cf. 1 Thes. 1:7) of what it means to sacrifice for the good of others. The apostles had every **right** to receive physical **help** for spiritual ministry (cf. 1 Cor. 9:3–14; 1 Tim. 5:18). But they chose to forego this right in order to teach the importance of self-sacrificing love and industry. Paul did not imply that this right should always be sacrificed; he taught elsewhere that it is legitimate, that those who are taught should support their teachers (Gal. 6:6). His point here was that Christians generally should not expect other people to take care of them but should support themselves as much as possible.”¹³

- D. Now, to put this all into proper context, it’s important to remember that Paul didn’t serve as an Elder (Pastor) of a local church. He was an Apostle and an evangelist who planted local churches. Paul had no wife or children to support and no plans to establish roots in a single location, where he could live out his life. He was fully committed to spending his life doing one thing—building a team of people who could go with him from one unreached place to the next, planting churches, and helping him stay in touch with and resource the churches he had planted, so they could continue growing in health and participation in the mission of Christ.
- E. Therefore, every time he planted a church, he intentionally raised up others to pastor it, because he intended to leave and plant another one. This also meant he needed a way to supply his physical needs that could work wherever he went; thus, Paul put his skills to use as a tent maker (Acts 18:1-4). This approach to meeting his needs also provided him with direct, relevant, and highly practical relational access to the lost world, and as such, an immediate platform to infuse the Gospel into places that didn’t have it yet.
- F. However, the point Paul is making here is not about his productivity in the marketplace or ministry, but rather the standard of productivity he set for himself in everything and why he set it. As productive as his methods were for

¹¹ Utley, R. J. (1997). [*Paul's First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*](#): Vol. Volume 11 (p. 144). Bible Lessons International.

¹² Constable, T. L. (1985). [2 Thessalonians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 723). Victor Books.

¹³ Constable, T. L. (1985). [2 Thessalonians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 723). Victor Books.

financially providing for himself, the point wasn't in the ability to provide for himself, but in why. Providing for himself maximized the productivity of the work God had called him to do! Paul did the work that produced the best results in what God had called and gifted him to do. He did his work to the **fullest**! To the best of his ability, he **subdued** and had **dominion** over the work God called him to do, that is, to accomplish the mission Christ gave him to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. That ethos, that high standard of productivity, is what Paul was telling the church in Thessalonica to imitate. Make no room in your life for laziness. Never tolerate jankiness in what God has told you to do. Do everything God has put in front of you to the fullest! Own it and have dominion over it!

The second lesson we can learn is that ...

(2) In the body of Christ (the local church), unproductive people are supposed to be confronted and led to repentance. (3:6, 10-12)

- A. **6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ... 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.**
- B. Next Sunday, I'll be at Venture's Lincolnton campus to worship Jesus, hang out a little, and meet the new folks who have gotten plugged in over the last few months. It's so exciting what God is doing up there! As such, Keith Zachary is preaching our final passage in 2 Thessalonians, and it just so happens to deal with how this should be done. So, I'm going to leave most of this to him and only point out a few things that relate to what we're discussing today.
- C. Most scholars believe the specific people Paul is referencing here are those who had decided to quit their jobs because they believed Jesus was getting ready to come back, or who had even bought into the false teaching that Jesus had already come back. Either way, they were somehow using Jesus as their reason not to work, all while expecting everybody else who was working to provide food and shelter for them! To this, Paul says, 'Let them go hungry!' The hypocritical, unethical insanity of being able to work but choosing not to, all while expecting other people to supply your needs, has no place in the Christian church!
- D. When he writes of those "**walking in idleness**" and "**not willing to work**," he's not speaking of those who are physically unable to work, but rather of those who could do something to be productive but instead choose not to do so. He's speaking of those able-bodied people who choose to spend their energy doing things that provide no benefit to anybody and possibly not even to themselves!

Notice that “walking in idleness” is an action. It’s expending energy doing something that accomplishes nothing productive; nothing that helps anybody else, and as such takes from the system while putting nothing in it!

- E. Specifically, instead of spending their time and energy on productive things that put food on their tables and help others do the same, they instead spend their energy being “**busybodies**.”
1. “This is a play in the Greek text on the word “work”—“not working (*epgazomenous*) but working around (*periergazomenous*).” Their “**work**” **had become interfering with everyone else’s business (work)**. Paul uses the term “work” often in this chapter (cf. 3:8, 10, 11, 12 and 1 Thess. 4:11).¹⁴
 2. “They were **busybodies** instead of being **busy**. Instead of tending to their own business of earning a living they were meddling in the business of others (cf. 1 Tim. 5:13).”¹⁵
- F. Five hundred years ago, Calvin wrote about something of those who, in his day, would be labeled as “**busybodies**,” “**walking in idleness**,” and “**not willing to work**.” It is still surprisingly relevant 500 years later!

Note: “It should also be noted that there are a variety of ways of working. Whoever helps society in general, through his work, through bringing up a family, through the administration of public or private affairs, by counseling, or teaching, or working in any other way, is not to be numbered with the idle. Paul censures those lazy drones who lived off other people’s labor, while they contributed nothing to help the human race ... We observe that those who have nothing to do are more worn out doing nothing than they would be if they lived active lives. Wherever they go, they appear to be tired. They collect all kinds of information and then spread gossip in all their conversations. You would think they bore the weight of governing a country on their shoulders. Because this condition has such a negative effect on society, Paul told the Thessalonians they should not encourage idleness in anyone.”¹⁶

The third lesson we can learn is ...

- (3) Don’t allow other people’s laziness and complacency to be your reason to do the same! (3:13)

¹⁴ Utley, R. J. (1997). *Paul’s First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*: Vol. Volume 11 (p. 145). Bible Lessons International.

¹⁵ Constable, T. L. (1985). *2 Thessalonians*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 723). Victor Books.

¹⁶ Calvin, J. (1999). *1, 2 Thessalonians* (p. 106-107). Crossway Books.

- A. 13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.**
- B.** To do “good” literally means to do something morally productive. Therefore, to work hard at supplying your own needs and those of others, especially when that includes your spiritual needs and those of others, is as basic a definition of doing good as it gets. Paul tells us to never grow weary in doing that. Seems obvious, right? So, why would Paul feel the need to remind us of that?
- C.** It can’t be missed that he writes this right after addressing people in the church who refused to do anything good, that is, anything morally productive. Those kinds of people are exhausting. They take from the system without ever putting anything back, except for excuses for why they only take, which ironically robs the system of even more energy and motivation.
- D.** When you are working your butt off trying to do everything with excellence but have to bear the weight created by people in the system who refuse to hold themselves to the standard of excellence that’s needed in that system, then it starts making you feel like you’re working in vain! No matter how hard you work, you can’t overcome the drag on the system created by the people who refuse to do the same.
- E.** For instance, if you are constantly having to work harder at work because someone on your team refuses to put in the effort to produce the level of excellence your company needs to be successful, you could find yourself justifying not working as hard yourself or finding employment elsewhere.
- F.** If you’re trying to bring life and joy to your marriage but your spouse refuses to do the same, you can start feeling like the work you’re doing to bring life and joy to the marriage is pointless, and as such, give up on doing the good you’re doing.
- G.** The same is true in the work of the church! It can become extremely exhausting and confusing if you sign up to help others who seem to be complacent, nonchalant or even lazy with tasks involved with doing ministry that directly impact people’s faith in Christ, the health of marriages, people’s sense of purpose and direction, the spiritual health and future of children and teenagers, and the list goes on and on of eternally meaningful things the church has been blessed to get to do for others.
- H.** It can really get discouraging if you’re serving in a ministry in a church that has other volunteers or worse, a paid staff member or pastor, who isn’t in it to win it in the cause of Christ; who isn’t busting their butt to do the things with the level excellence and tenacity that the cause of Christ deserves; the level of excellence and tenacity necessary to be a true movement of the Gospel in your community and around the world that’s changing lives.

- I.** It can be extremely discouraging to be part of a church that isn't fully committed to the eternally winning effort and work that the Holy Spirit has empowered Christ's church to do, if we will only labor with Him to accomplish it. God isn't lazy or nonchalant in His work in us, and so we can't justify being lazy or nonchalant in our labor with Him to bring His life to others either!
- J.** If you have a life group leader who inconsistently does their job at leading the life group you're in, you might get discouraged from being in the group, which then disconnects you from the body and the command to be a part of the "one another." After all, what good did it do you to be a part of the "one another's" if the "one another's" never did anything, or the meetings were never organized with any purpose to actually get into God's Word and encourage one another in the faith?
- K.** If you have a pastor or Life Group coach who inconsistently fulfills their role of equipping you as a life group leader, you may become discouraged from leading your group, which in turn discourages people from participating, which then disconnects them from the opportunity that comes from living in community with other believers!
- L.** We could go on for hours listing the ways that lazy, nonchalant, janky attitudes discourage people away from the body of Christ and consequently from their own spiritual prosperity.
- M.** Therefore, Paul says to all who may end up being affected by another person's laziness or nonchalant jankiness in the body of Christ, "don't let them be your excuse to do the same!" Jesus suffered hell on a cross for you to have His life, don't let somebody's lazy, janky, nonchalant, complacent attitude that's too immature to put their hands to the plow and do the work of Christ with excellence be the reason you don't!
- N.** Don't follow the leadership of the lazy; follow the leadership of Jesus!
- O.** Don't add to the problem, be the solution!
- P.** Don't add to the momentum of complacency and laziness in the body of Christ. Be a leader who bears the burden of setting the example of what's good and right, who spends their life bringing His life to others, regardless of who isn't willing to do the same!
- Q.** But also, as we saw in the previous verses and will learn more about next week, don't be afraid to confront the people whose lazy, nonchalant, and janky approach to things is draining you and the entire system that's meant to bring life to people. When we fail to confront those who drain the system, we ourselves are failing to do the work we are called to do. We are being lazy, nonchalant, and janky ourselves! Come back next week to learn how to do that.

So, let me put all of this together in one challenge.

Challenge: Whether it's in your personal walk with Christ, or in context to your family, friends, local church, or job, identify where your complacency, laziness, or jankiness is draining the system instead of blessing it. Confess it to those affected by it, be honest about what you're actually putting your time and energy into, and invite the people affected by it to hold you accountable to a Biblical standard of production.

There are a myriad of reasons why you could be complacent, lazy or janky in areas of your life that you know God has called you into, so the first steps are to be honest about it, not blaming anybody but yourself, owning the reasons for it and inviting others to help you to stop being a drain on the system and instead be a producer in it.

It could be something as simple as being hooked on social media so bad that it's robbing you of the time you need to spend on the productive things you know you need to do.

It's possible that you simply lack the personal discipline to avoid being lazy. You settle for janky because you need the moral compass fixed inside of you that says leaving people with janky is somehow showing God's love to them?

It could be that you are so spiritually dead inside that you just don't care about the things God cares about the most—loving Him and the people he has put in your life!

So, start by being honest about the areas where God has called you, and where complacency, laziness, and/or jankiness are the products of your existence. Be honest with God and others about why, and invite them to help you change.