

# Evotional

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> August 2007 (am).  
**Speaker:** Neil Durling.  
**Message title:** “Busy but not busybodies.”



## **Bible passage: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18:**

*This passage is too long for this page.*

### **The message in brief:**

Paul writes this letter to a group of Christians who are divided by the timing of the Second Coming. Some are working hard whilst others are basically saying, “Sit back and relax, Jesus will soon be here!” In this third chapter Paul addresses both groups:

#### **Keep away from idle Christians (6-10):**

He commands those who are working hard to keep away (“tie up your sails”) from “idle/disorderly” Christians. He then reminds them of his good example in which he worked hard and ignored his “rights/freedoms” as an Apostle (7-9). He could have expected to be looked after so that he could just share the gospel but he rolled up his sleeves and made tents as well as sharing Jesus with others.

“Ignore the idle person” (10) says Paul. “If he doesn’t want to work, don’t let him eat.” Paul is writing here about those who deliberately choose to not work; not about those who are unable to work. He was always sympathetic for those in need (2 Corinthians 8-9, Romans 15:26-29 and Galatians 2:10).

Some of us may be thinking: “I don’t have a job, this sermon doesn’t apply to me.” The dictionary definition for work is: *The application of mental or physical effort to a purpose.* Therefore, we all work and this passage should be a challenge and encouragement to us all.

#### **What are idle Christians like (11-13)?**

Paul writes that idle Christians are not busy but busybodies (“busybody” can also be translated as “gossip”) like a wasp that flies around irritating and distracting people but not getting anything done themselves. Paul says they are not “working” but “working around”. They are causing a stir by telling everyone else to sit back and relax. They are not “working quietly” as Paul had instructed in his earlier letter (1 Thessalonians 4:11).

He offers them a positive challenge: Do some work (12); get on with living the Christian life. And to those already doing this he encourages them to not become “weary/flag” of doing the right and fair thing (13).

Whilst preparing this sermon I realised the title is wrong (Busy but not busybodies). Paul tells us to not be busybodies but he doesn’t tell us to be busy. We all need rest, that’s why God gave us the Sabbath.

#### **Why keep away from idle Christians (14-15)?**

Paul says that idlers must be rebuked. “Do not associate with him/don’t mix yourself up with him”. Paul is hoping that these people who won’t change and are a strain on others will be rebuked in a loving way so as to shame them into changing their ways. However, Paul reminds them that they are still their brothers not enemies.

Christianity’s growth, in large part, is due to the character of its disciples. You may be the only picture of Jesus that others you work with see. Is that picture a good one?

### **Question:**

How do you show that you are a Christian in your workplace?

### **A prayer:**

Father God,

Please protect me from an idle/disorderly life where I am busybody/gossip. May I shine for Jesus in my work.  
Amen.