

SEPARATE FROM AN ERRING BROTHER WITH LOVE

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Do not beg, but work for your food, so you can be an example by a godly, useful life.

Suggestion: The teacher's lesson will highlight important truths in this week's lesson. After teaching, give your class next week's student lesson so they can prepare and share answers in class next week.

Introduction: Paul received a report from Timothy about the church in Thessalonica that it was sound in their faith, but they had some members that did not work for their food, but begged for it from others. He told them, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Chapter 3 shows how a church should discipline members to maintain purity in doctrine, a good testimony before unbelievers and unity in the church. Today's tolerance of false doctrine and worldly lifestyles has weakened the testimony of God's word in the lives of many church members. They have lost that Christian distinctive of pure and holy living. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." Therefore, we must "purge out the old leaven" (1 Cor 5:6-7).

What requests for prayer did Paul give to the believers in Thessalonica? 3:2-3

Paul gave three requests for prayer that all church workers still need. First, he asked that the Word of the Lord might have "free course," that is, might spread rapidly. Second, he requested that they ask for the Word to be honored or glorified. This implied that the hearts of people be prepared to receive the Gospel message. Third, he asked that he and his partners might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men. The Jewish unbelievers in Corinth opposed his message that Christ was their Messiah. They tried to stir up the Gentiles against them, but failed. God answered the believers' prayers and Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half.

How was the faithfulness of the Lord a blessing to Paul? 3:3-4

Paul knew the Lord would establish and guard the believers that had put their trust in Christ for salvation. Satan could not bring them back into his kingdom of darkness. He also knew the Lord would give them the power to obey what he commanded them to do (cf Phil 2:12-13).

How did Paul pray for the believers in Thessalonica? 3:5

Paul prayed that their hearts would be filled with the love of God, that they would love those that persecuted them and not become bitter. This would be a powerful testimony of the grace of God in their lives. He also prayed for them to patiently wait for Christ's return (1 Th 1:3, 10).

How did Paul instruct the church in Thessalonica to treat disorderly believers? 3:6-15

Paul summarized the solution to this problem in 3:6. There were believers that did not work because they thought Jesus was returning soon. They needed to eat, so they begged for food from other believers. Paul commanded the church "in the name of the Lord" for his authority to "withdraw . . . from every brother that walks disorderly." In his first letter, Paul told the church to admonish such a person (5:14), but this failed. Now they were to be disciplined, but not dismissed from the church. Instead, no one was to give them food that they be ashamed.

Paul set the standard for self-support and expected others to do the same. He did not ask these believers to support him and his partners. He worked to pay for their food and lodging. If they did not work, they should not eat. We, too, must back our exhortations by our example.

The disorderly walk was manifested in two ways: (1) they failed to work and be productive; (2) they meddled in the affairs of others. Even though such a believer was disciplined, he was still to be treated as a brother. The purpose of discipline is to win a brother back to full fellowship.