

- As I have said many times, when people are involved...problems are almost inevitable. The church in Thessalonica was highly regarded by the Apostle Paul. His first letter to these brethren was highly complimentary. He acknowledged their great work, yet encouraged them to excel still more. Even with all of their positives, they were still people and they had to deal with some difficulties.
- This brings us to Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians and specifically chapter 3. Preceding this chapter is the difficult chapter 2. Much has been said about this chapter in reference to what is discussing whether the final judgement or the judgement that would come upon Jerusalem in AD70. Some of this we just don't know because we were not present for their personal discussions (**2:5**). Personally, I believe there is a strong case for the judgement on Jerusalem from a logical and Scriptural perspective based upon the similarities from the first part of **Matthew 24**, but that discussion is not the focus of our study. Instead, we want to focus on one of the by products of the teaching that necessitated **II Thessalonians 2** to be written. It seems as if there were some who were not living according to the standard that had been given to them from the Apostles and particularly Paul. (**3:6**) Because of these individuals not living according to this standard, Paul has to instruct the faithful brethren as to how they should deal with them. This text gives us a great blueprint for how we should, therefore, deal with our brethren who might be stepping out of the standard of Christ. This evening, let's consider the text of **II Thessalonians 3:6-15** and how we should deal with the unruly.

### **Paul's Instructions to Dealing with the Unruly**

#### **I. Don't be influenced by the unruly brother. (vv.6-13)**

- A. These unruly brethren were not working as they ought to have been. Instead, they were living undisciplined lives, acting like busybodies, and being a burden to the rest of the church. (**vv.6,8,11**)
  1. It is thought that they were living these lives because they anticipated the day of the Lord to be soon.
  2. Their thoughts might have been along the lines of "hey, if life is about to change or if the judgement is coming, then why should I worry about working?"
  3. Hardly is there a greater discouragement to help the true needy than to have those who are able begging when they could and should be working.
- B. Paul strongly rebukes these idle and lazy brethren... "*If you don't work, then you won't eat!*" (**v.10**)
- C. Paul is able to do so because he worked to provide for himself so that he wouldn't be a burden to these brethren. He had set the proper example, but these wayward brethren were not willing to follow. (**vv.7-9**)
- D. They were to keep away from these brethren who were living unruly lives.
  1. The point of this admonition was so that the faithful brethren would not be influenced by their sinful brothers' behavior.
  2. The Apostle Paul recognized the influential nature of sin. This was one of his warnings to the Corinthians concerning the brother who was involved in sin within their congregation. (**I Cor. 5:6,7**)
  3. This foolishness of these brethren did not need to spread throughout the entire congregation. This sinful leaven did not need to leaven the entire church.

#### **II. Make note of and do not associate with the unruly brother. (v.14)**

- A. This noting was to make it known that this brother is in sin and he is not to enjoy blessings of fellowship with those who were remaining faithful.
  1. This is not a kicking out of the church. Any individual is more than welcome within the assemblies of the Lord's churches.
  2. But this action is a noticeable change in the relationship between the faithful members of the church and the one who is persisting to participate in sin.
  3. No longer should the unfaithful enjoy the blessings of fellowship because fellowship can no longer be had. The light cannot associate with those in darkness. (**I John 1:6,7**)
  4. How is this put into practice? The close association is no longer there. Paul says that the faithful shouldn't even enjoy a meal with the Christian who is living in sin. (**I Cor. 5:11**) The interaction should be solely for the purpose of restoration.

- B. The reason for this disassociation is not for the purpose of punishment but it is so the individual in sin will recognize that his or her actions are not acceptable.
1. The individual is to be put to shame because of this disassociation in hopes of him or her repenting of the sin.
  2. If their closest friends and family will not spend time with them then there really must be something wrong.
  3. This might also be one reason why disassociation and disfellowshipping doesn't work as God intended for it to do. When that tight relationship isn't there then nothing changes and nothing is missed.

### **III. Do not see him as an enemy, but admonish & love him like a brother. (v.15)**

- A. While taking away fellowship and association was necessary for the Thessalonians, they were not to treat their unfaithful as enemies. They were still to love them and admonish them in hopes of them coming back to the truth.
1. We must always keep in mind that there is a soul hanging in the balance when we are dealing with a brother or sister who is in sin. Therefore, we should hope and pray for the unfaithful brother's repentance and not their demise.
  2. We also must remember that we are not perfect and that we are susceptible to sin, as well. (**Gal. 6:1**)
  3. Keeping these 2 things in mind should help govern the way we approach our brethren who are caught up in sin. We should love them!
  4. But love for them and their souls should bring us to the point where we are willing to speak to them about their sin in hopes of encouraging them to repent and come back to the faith they had before.
- B. If we forget to love, then we are severely hurting our chances of bringing the unfaithful to repentance.
1. Without love, this process has little chance of working.
  2. The Christian in sin desperately needs to know that there are people who love and are concerned for his or her soul.
  3. If they feel as if the admonishment comes from any other place than a place of love, then there is a good chance that the person or persons will have a negative response.
  4. We can a great responsibility to our unfaithful brethren and may it not be said that we contribute to their continued unfaithfulness. Let's be a positive influence in our approach and not a negative.

Even within good and strong congregations there will be time when brethren get caught up in sin. When that happens, we as faithful and loving brother and sisters must do our part to help encourage and admonish the unfaithful to come back and repent of their sins. The responsibility is great and may we always treat it as such. May God help us to do our part restoring the unruly back to faithful service.