

1 Timothy 5:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

Analysis

And withal they learn to be idle (ἄμα δὲ καὶ ἀργαὶ μανθάνουσιν, hama de kai argai manthanousin)—'at the same time they learn to be lazy.' Argos means idle, lazy, inactive. Young widows on church support with no household to manage can develop bad habits. **Wandering about from house to house** (περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας, perierchomenai tas oikias)—'going around from house to house.'

And not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies (οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀργαὶ ἀλλὰ καὶ φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, ou monon de argai alla kai phlyaroi kai periergoi)—'not only idle but also gossips and busybodies.' Phlyaros means gossip, babbler. Periergos means busybody, meddler, one who pries into others' affairs. **Speaking things which they ought not** (λαλοῦσαι τὰ μὴ δέοντα, lalousai ta mē deonta)—'saying things they should not.'

Idleness breeds mischief. Young widows with time and no responsibility can fall into gossip, meddling, and inappropriate speech—destructive to church unity and their own character. Paul's solution: remarriage and household management (5:14).

Historical Context

In ancient households, women's work was constant—spinning, weaving, cooking, childcare, managing servants. Widows on church support but without family

responsibilities had unusual leisure. Without purposeful activity, some fell into the sins of gossip and meddling that damage community. Paul's solution is renewed purpose through marriage and family.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does idleness lead to gossip, meddling, and inappropriate speech?
2. What godly alternatives to idleness should widows (or anyone with free time) pursue?
3. Why is purposeful work and responsibility important for spiritual health?

Interlinear Text

ἄμα	δὲ	καὶ	ἀργαὶ	μανθάνουσιν	περιερχόμεναι	τὰ
withal	And	also	idle	they learn	wandering about	things which
G260	G1161	G2532	G692	G3129	G4022	G3588
οἰκίας	οὐ	μόνον	δὲ	ἀργαὶ	ἀλλὰ	καὶ
from house to house	not	only	And	idle	but	also
G3614	G3756	G3440	G1161	G692	G235	G2532
καὶ	περίεργοι	λαλοῦσαι	τὰ	μὴ	δέοντα	
also	busybodies	speaking	things which	not	they ought	
G2532	G4021	G2980	G3588	G3361	G1163	

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 20:19 (Parallel theme): He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Acts 20:30 (Kingdom): Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Proverbs 31:27 (Parallel theme): She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Acts 20:20 (Parallel theme): And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

Luke 10:7 (Kingdom): And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

Leviticus 19:16 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

Titus 1:11 (Parallel theme): Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

James 3:10 (Parallel theme): Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

1 Peter 4:15 (Parallel theme): But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

3 John 1:10 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.