

2 Thessalonians 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

Analysis

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies—**we hear** (akouomen, ἀκούομεν) indicates reports reaching Paul. **Some which walk among you disorderly** (ataktōs peripatountas, ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντας, 'living out of rank')—they're present but unproductive. **Working not at all** (mēden ergazomenous, μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους)—absolute idleness.

But are busybodies (alla periergazomenous, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους)—a wordplay: not working (ergazomenous) but over-working (periergazomenous) in others' business. Idle hands meddle; those refusing productive labor become gossips and troublemakers. Refusing assigned work while doing unauthorized work doubles the disorder.

Historical Context

In small house churches, idle members were conspicuous. Without employment, they attended every gathering, involved themselves in everyone's affairs, and consumed resources without contributing. This damaged the church's reputation among working-class neighbors who viewed Christians as lazy.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you guard against becoming a busybody when you have idle time?
2. What legitimate work might you be avoiding while meddling in matters outside your responsibility?
3. How does productive labor protect against gossip and meddling in others' affairs?

Interlinear Text

ἀκούομεν	γάρ	τινας	περιπατοῦντας	ἐν	ὑμῖν
we hear	For	that there are some	which walk	among	you
G191	G1063	G5100	G4043	G1722	G5213
ἀτάκτως	μηδὲν	ἐργαζομένους	ἀλλὰ	περιεργαζομένους·	
disorderly	not at all	working	but	are busybodies	
G814	G3367	G2038	G235	G4020	

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 5:13 (Kingdom): 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.

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.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (Parallel theme): Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

1 Thessalonians 4:11 (Parallel theme): And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

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