

2 Thessalonians 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Analysis

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us—Not because we have not power (οὐχ hoti ouk echomen exousian, οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν)—Paul had apostolic exousia (ἐξουσία, authority/right) to receive financial support (1 Cor. 9:4-14). He voluntarily waived this right.

Purpose: **to make ourselves an ensample** (typon, τύπον, pattern/model) **unto you to follow us** (mimēsthai hēmas, μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς). Renouncing rights for others' benefit models Christlike servanthood. Paul could demand support but chose sacrifice to provide an imitable pattern. Christian liberty includes the freedom to limit freedom for love's sake.

Historical Context

The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) recognized Paul's apostolic authority, which included financial support rights. Paul exercised apostolic privilege by renouncing it—a paradoxical power display. By working, he preemptively silenced accusations of greed common against traveling teachers.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What legitimate rights might God be calling you to renounce for others' spiritual benefit?
2. How does voluntarily accepting hardship model Christian discipleship more powerfully than demanding privileges?
3. Whose spiritual formation are you actively considering when making personal lifestyle choices?

Interlinear Text

οὐκ	ὅτι	οὐκ	ἔχομεν	ἔξουσίαν	ἀλλ'	ἴνα	ἐαυτοὺς
Not	because	Not	we have	power	but	to	ourselves
G3756	G3754	G3756	G2192	G1849	G235	G2443	G1438
τύπον	δῶμεν	ὑμῖν	εἰς	τὸ	μιμεῖσθαι	ἡμᾶς	
an ensample	make	unto you	to	G3588	follow	us	
G5179	G1325	G5213	G1519		G3401		G2248

Additional Cross-References

2 Thessalonians 3:7 (Parallel theme): For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

1 Thessalonians 2:6 (Parallel theme): Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

Galatians 6:6 (Parallel theme): Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.