

# Don't Quit Your Day Job (God @ Work): Git 'Er Done

Reconnect – April 11, 2010

**Text:** II Thessalonians 3:6-13; Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

**Key Thought:** Hard work done well honours God and shows that He is at work in us.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this command in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stay away from all believers who live idle lives and don't follow the tradition they received from us. For you know that you ought to imitate us. We were not idle when we were with you. We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked hard day and night so we would not be a burden to any of you. We certainly had the right to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow. Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: "Those unwilling to work will not get to eat." Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people's business. We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and work to earn their own living. As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good. 2 Thess. 3:6-13, NLT

## Pre-Intro: Manic Monday (the Bangles – audio)

### Intro: Working the system

- "Just another manic Monday" – I think we've all had one of those – although back when I was a pro minister, it was "Just another manic Sunday"
- Work is a funny thing – it's such a big part of our lives, but at the same time, it seems to be something that we will at times go to any length to avoid – there's just something about us, no matter what we do, that seems to look for an excuse to avoid it – to "work the system"
- Like people at a certain large company in Denmark right now (read [National Post](#) article)

## Danes told to limit beer to lunch break

*Kenyon Wallace, National Post; With Files From Reuters Published: Friday, April 09, 2010*

**Hundreds of warehouse workers and drivers at Danish brewer Carlsberg halted work for a second day yesterday to protest a company decision to limit beer drinking at work to lunch breaks.**

**Under the Copenhagen-based company's old policy, workers were free to help themselves to beer from coolers and refrigerators at any time during the workday. But as of April 1, workers at the world's fourth-largest brewery are allowed to drink beer in the canteen only during lunch breaks.**

**"Previously, there has been free beer, water and soft drinks everywhere," said Carlsberg spokesman Jens Bekke. "Yesterday, beers were removed from all refrigerators. The only place you can get a beer in future is in the canteen, at lunch." Mr. Bekke said the strike is motivated by a perceived unfairness whereby company truck drivers retain their right to drink three beers a day while on the job -- outside of lunch hours--whereas warehouse workers do not. "Because of that, the warehouse staff went on strike yesterday, with other staff striking in sympathy," he said. A previous attempt by management to take away drivers' rights to three beers a day failed... He stressed that being drunk at work was not acceptable and the company expects its workers to be responsible in their consumption of alcohol on the job.**

- Talk about Europe being a different world...! And they're drivers...!

## Getting in the way

- Sometimes, depending on the day, we'll let just about anything get in the way of an honest day's work

### Q: What are some excuses that people give for not giving their best on a given day?

(It was a bad day – or someone wasn't there – or at some point we decided that tomorrow would be better)

- Let's face it – all of us have off days – but there are some people who seem to have a lot more days where they're "off" even though they're "on" – and everyone else has to cover for them

### Paul's take on work:

- That's not actually a new development in us as people – we've been like that since recorded history began – we look for short cuts
- But there's something that can happen in us when God starts to take over – because having God move into the centre of who we are starts to change us – and He can reorient our lives at work, too
- Paul's in the middle of a society that has become more and more decadent – the Roman Empire at its height already had elements within it that would destroy it – people wanted more and more and were willing to do less and less (sound familiar?)
- And it's in the middle of this sort of culture that he comes, bringing a new message of a God who loves them and has done something incredible so that they can be changed, forgiven, set free, given purpose
- It's a message that starts to turn communities upside down – it provokes civil and labour unrest – because not only are these Christians starting to take life seriously (including their work) but they're also taking care of each other – they're living outward-focused lives, and it's incredibly attractive to people trapped in the blah
- Paul would go into a city, start a church, train people, and then head on with a group to the next larger centre – he'd then follow up and keep in touch with his churches through messengers, letters and visits
- But one of the places where this system of life together was put in place, things were starting to fall apart – people were falling back into old habits and traps – and "working the system"
- Paul hears about it, and it drives him nuts (this is a guy who is on the edge of workaholism, BTW)
- And this is what he writes:

**And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this command in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stay away from all believers who live idle lives and don't follow the tradition they received from us. For you know that you ought to imitate us. We were not idle when we were with you. We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked hard day and night so we would not be a burden to any of you. We certainly had the right to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow. Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: "Those unwilling to work will not get to eat."**

**Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people's business. We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and work to earn their own living. As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good.**

**2 Thess 3:6-13, NLT**

## **Work – a dirty word?**

**Q: Word association – what first comes to mind when you hear the word “work”?**

Upbringing

**Q: What have you seen, with regards to work attitudes? Who taught you your “workitude”? What was the attitude towards work in your parents when you were growing up?**

Experience

Society – reaction towards workaholism, selfishness, pursuit of money over all else – table turned to slackerism, get rich quick, shortcuts, lotteries, scams, etc.

**Q: “Everybody wants to get paid” – what are ways to NOT have to work?**

Distractions

“We are often so caught up in our activities that we tend to worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship” – Charles Swindoll

**Q: What’s out there to take up our time?**

Examples of others in society / stigmas

- Stigma around work – reaction to workaholism – working the system
- We take dignity away from people when we don’t give them a role, a place to contribute
- Our society today has taken away the value of work from people – where now you don’t have to in essence, do anything and you can still be cared for – but it robs people of their dignity and a sense of purpose – a person sweeping a street or doing data entry or investigating a crime or negotiating deals or answering phones can still do it well
- People complain about “jobs being taken” – and yet, they are too proud to take those jobs in the first place – the work ethic of those new to our country often puts the work habits of those of us who grew up here, to shame

**Q: Is it fashionable to work hard today? In your opinion, why or why not?**

## **Enough theories: work up close**

**Q: What’s the toughest work you’ve ever done? The hardest job you’ve ever had?**

- Generally, whatever we do, we have a choice as to how well we do it / how hard we work at it
- It might impact how much we get paid, it might affect our relationship with our boss and coworkers – but we are in the driver’s seat (in many cases)
- Whether we cut corners, sweep stuff under the rug, take shortcuts – it’s up to us, and some things we only know

**Q: Think about a slacker you’ve worked with – someone who didn’t do much of anything – what did you think of them? How were they to work with? (A “Wally”)**

## **The dignity of work**

- Enough with the baggage – let’s talk about the positive side of work – the dignity of work
- God creates work – it’s part of his perfection, not part of the fall – the fall affects our return on our work, but when things are perfect, there is work to be done – Adam the gardener, Eve the coach
- People think about heaven as being wings and harps – but if God’s perfection at the end of time is “Eden 2.0”, then there will be work there – but the good kind

### **Q: What are the benefits of work? What does it do for us?**

(physical, mental, emotional, good feelings of accomplishment, purpose, responsibility, benefit of wages, learning/stimulation, challenges, rewards)

- The feeling you have from a job well done is closer to heaven than you and I and society realize

### **Paul's problem in Thessalonica – slackers**

- Apostle Paul – the guy worked hard – the hardest working gum – two jobs, man! Preacher by day – tentmaker by night – he spoke, he wrote, he travelled, he kicked butt and took names, he debated, he got thrown out of town, he picked himself up and got back going again
- “Work or you don’t eat” – I Thessalonians – because Christians were turning into slackers – living in a communal environment, where everything was shared, and they were going under the radar
- If everyone pulls their weight, community works – if people don’t, it starts to unravel into factions and name pointing and greed and selfishness and all the rest

### **Motivation – how do we work harder (and smarter)?**

#### **Q: What's your secret for persevering?**

**Talk to me about someone you work with that works hard – or – tell me about someone you worked with before that was a really hard worker – what was your opinion of them?**

Under the radar – witness – if you slack, everyone else has to pick up the slack for you – it erodes the foundation of your witness, because it's seen as a lack of character – on the other hand, no-one's perfect, but it's better to be flawed and hard working, than flawed and lazy

**What's your motivation? What motivates you to do your best? What conditions do you work best under? What gets in your way? When do you NOT want to work hard and do your best?**

**Some people work for money, others for pride... what else? Job well done? Recognition? Time off? Bonuses? Being part of a team, being needed? Mattering?**

#### **Key Thought:**

**Hard work done well honours God and shows that He is at work in us.**

So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him? God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him. But if a sinner becomes wealthy, God takes the wealth away and gives it to those who please him. This, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

(Ecclesiastes 2:24-26, NLT)

**Work as witness – day in, day out – in its proper place, redeemed, honourable**