

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

“Doing Good to Others”

November 13, 2016

We have heard the phrase “Tough Love.” Today we see in our text an example of the phrase “Tough Love.” Our text tells us to avoid those who are idle because they are unwilling to work. God is not asking us to lose our connection with them, but we are to avoid them in hopes that they will realize that they need to change their ways. More importantly we hope that this will renew their desire to have a connection with our God because God does not like idle hands which for some make them idle gossips or busybodies.

I remember one boy whose father was a bank president. For forty two years he lived in the bedroom of his father’s house. For forty two years they brought him food, drink, and clothes to his room and endured his rebellious nature because he refused to leave the room. When the parents died, then he became someone else’s problem. By then no one wanted to have anything to do with him. So the mental health authorities were called in. They should have been called years earlier, but pride keeps us from calling for help.

I see the same thing happening to those addicted to drugs. They may or may not live in the home, but they steal and beg and borrow to feed their drug habit. Many drug users break up the marriages of their parents. All drug users break up

the relationships with family and friends in their drive to get their habit fed. The drug addicts are no different than the idle in our text. All are selfish and self-centered. Some can seem like such sweet people, needy people, but they are selfish and self-centered in their quest for drugs or support.

In “tough love” we maintain our connection with them, but we separate from them. We change the locks on the doors and if necessary put bars on the windows to keep them out. We call the police when they steal from us or come where they are no longer welcome. We have them evicted from our homes and from their inheritance. I knew one addict who could not wait for his mom to die so that he could get his inheritance. He died first. There are enough places in our society for them to get help. Give them the names and phone numbers where they can find help. That is all that you give them because by this time you have tried to help and they refused to change. Then get help to support your emotional journey that never seems to end. Get help to deal with your guilt because often you blame yourself for them living off of you or turning to drugs.

When we detach from them, keep in touch where possible and wait for signs of change. When they can't get money or things to sell from us, they will go where they can feed their habit. We are not responsible for their choices. We are not responsible for the crowd they run with. They have to stop running with that crowd because it is poisoning them. You can't listen when they tell you that bad people

are going to kill them if they don't come up with the money. You have to give them over to death if they chose to walk that road. In fact addiction is already a death sentence and we don't know when it will occur. Do not bail them out from jail after their latest problem. Instead hand them the numbers where they can get help for their addiction. It is the same way with those who are lazy and feeding off of those around them. Hand them the numbers where they can get help and wait for change. Of course the problem is that they have replaced God with the drugs and a wasteful life.

What of those who don't have the ability to work? The physical, mental, or emotional condition of their bodies make it impossible for them to work. If we find ourselves in this condition as some in their old age can find themselves in this condition, then appreciate those who help us. We can smile at strangers and family and friends. We can keep our relationship with God strong. We can encourage the love of God wherever we find His love in others. As our text says we can never tire of doing good. We can be role models for Christ even when we can't work.

As a role model for Christ we are more willing to show the undeserved grace and mercy of our Lord to those in need of it. "Tough Love" can seem like a hard way to show undeserved grace and mercy. However when we consider all the pain and the disruption in our lives that occur because someone refuses to work or is consumed by the drug habit, then we can see that "Tough Love" is the only way

for them to find the healing we hope that they will have. Presently they are refusing that love and therefore we must accept this state of things. Therefore live in His undeserved grace and mercy as we struggle with our own guilt.

God is willing to forgive everything when people repent and work on change. The blessing is that God knows when we are truly repentant. Often we don't know when our loved ones are truly repentant and so we must wait for change to take place and encourage that change and be prepared for them to fall back into laziness or drugs. This will compound our hurt and pain, but in Christ we find healing. Likewise we have our own guilt to deal with. The lazy and the addict are great at guiltting us to get their way. We too must live in his undeserved grace and mercy. As so many who have gotten raw deals in life have shown us, we can be hurt by others or life and still make good choices that glorify our God. The lazy and the addict made wrong choices and in Christ they can find forgiveness.

We are not responsible for their choices. Therefore, acknowledge we can't fix them. Only they can fix themselves by seeking professional help who will help them learn to say NO! Finally develop selective hearing which doesn't listen to their emotional manipulation to get money for drugs. They may even want a down payment on an apartment which ends up in drugs. They may tell you the story that they owe dealers a lot of money and the dealers are threatening to kill them. I heard of one addict that wanted the college money saved for him so he could go to

college. Of course most of the money would go to drugs. They are manipulating you. Instead live in Christ's undeserved grace and mercy. In Christ, we will find our peace in the midst of the turmoil created by the addict. Amen.