

# Lazy or Loving?

**MAIN POINT:** Being lazy is a bad witness; God will give us the attitude and ability to work hard so we can be good witnesses for Him.

**PASSAGES:** 1 THESSALONIANS 4:11, 12; 2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13

**KEY VERSE:** "... do your own work. If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you..." 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

## PRE-CLASS CHECKLIST:

Pray with the other teachers for the day's lesson.

Activity Stations – Materials provided in the shared supply bag:

- Magazines
- Paper w/key verse & title, 1/student
- Scissors
- Markers, crayons
- Glue sticks
- Jenga game
- Box of toothpicks

Object Lesson

- Divide the food into the styrofoam bowls for the Trail Mix assembly line.
- After most of the children have arrived, choose 1 child for each assembly line to be the "goof-offs."

- Raisins, 16 oz./class
- Pretzel sticks 16 oz./class
- Chocolate chips, 12 oz./class
- Sunflower seeds, 16 oz./class
- Sandwich bags w/twist ties, 1/student
- Plastic gloves, 16/class
- Grocery bags, 6/room
- Styrofoam bowls, 16/room

Music

- Rap song, 1 set of lyrics/student

Optional activity

- Velcro
- Styrofoam balls, 6/room
- Small Frisbees, 6/room

## **Background Information / Teacher Helps**

We, like the Thessalonians, know that Christ is going to return. However, God's word teaches that we are not to focus on Christ's return to the point that we do nothing while here on earth. Some in the Thessalonian church seem to have been doing just that. They were lazy, not working to support themselves, mooching off others, and meddling in each others' lives, all the while supposedly awaiting Christ's return (2 Thess. 3:11). Paul admonished them for their laziness and emphatically stated, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us... For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat... And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame" (2 Thess. 3:6, 10, 14 (NASB)).

"It is helpful to remember that God had ordained work before the Fall of man. Adam, when he was created, was given a job to do right from the beginning. God gave him a commission to till and to keep the garden, also to name the animals. He had to work to do that. God gave man a beautiful earth filled with wonderful resources which we have been using up rapidly through all the centuries since. But we are still discovering new things that he has hidden in his cupboard for man to live on. One of the blessings was that man should work. 'Six days shalt thou labor,' God had said, 'and on the seventh shall be a day of rest,' {cf, Exod 20:9-10 KJV}. Work, then, is part of what the Scripture calls the image of God in man. God is a worker. He has devised marvelous things in a universe that is filled with mysteries and marvels; intricate, involved complexities that we are only now beginning to unravel. With all our modern technological advance, we are merely dabbling in the shallows of the great wonders that God has packed into the universe around us, all designed by the working mind of the Creator. Since man is made in the image of God, it means there are abilities, resources, and possibilities within him that need to be put to work. In doing so, man will find a sense of fulfillment for himself.

"... Some of you may say, 'That may be true for your work, but my work is very humdrum and routine. I do the same old things over and over, and I get so tired of it.' There is work like that, but the answer of Scripture to that situation is, 'whatsoever you do in word or deed, do to the glory of God' {cf, Col 3:17 KJV}, i.e., offer it as unto Jesus. Even routine work can become very acceptable if you are concerned to do it as unto the Lord; every product that you turn out or every pull of the handle that you are responsible for, is done as unto the Lord; it is something he has asked you to do. That is the Christian philosophy of work. By means of that, we can transform even humdrum work into that which is meaningful and worthwhile....

"What is it about working that the apostle (and the Lord himself) sees as so valuable that he would take all this time to deal with it? It is becoming clear from this that work is divinely intended to give us a sense of self-worth. When you are working, you feel like you are accomplishing something. When you are laid off and are unable to work, you feel out of sorts and unable to function as you were intended. It is disturbing and

psychologically upsetting to be without work. It is really a testimony to the fact that God made us to work. Work, therefore, is not a curse. It is a very valuable thing because it gives us a sense of meaning for our lives.”<sup>1</sup>

As witnesses to the world, God makes it clear that we are to work diligently to provide for ourselves and our families (see 2 Thes. 3:7-12). “Even "outsiders," so called because they have no connection with Christ and hence are outside the family of God--cf. 1Cor 5:12, 13; Col 4:5; 1Tim 3:7--recognize winsome conduct. On the other hand, they are repelled by those who do not carry their share of social responsibility.”<sup>2</sup> And thus by our actions our voice carries no influence.

In Ephesians 4:28 God also makes it clear that if we work hard we'll have enough to give to others.

**Additional reading: Daniel 6:4; Proverbs 10:26, 12:24; Hebrews 6:9-12.**

---

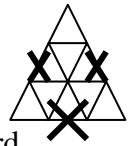
<sup>1</sup> IS WORK A CURSE? by Ray C. Stedman, <http://www.pbc.org/dp/stedman/thessalonians/4100.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary New Testament*, Zondervan Reference Software, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

## LESSON PLAN

### ACTIVITY STATION:

- **Craft – Collage**  
**Instructions:** Give each student a paper with the key verse. Have students think of some of the jobs they do now and what they want to do when they grow up. Look through magazines to find pictures that could represent some work they do now or a job they want to do when they grow up. (A bed could represent their job of making their bed. Dishes could represent washing dishes. A hammer could represent carpentry. A ruler or book could represent a teacher. A calculator could represent an accountant, etc.) Have them cut out the pictures and glue them on the paper.
- **Construction** – Build a structure that is sturdy using the Jenga blocks.
- **Mind Challenge** – Use 18 toothpicks to make 9 equal-sided triangles. Remove 3 toothpicks to make 6 equal-sided triangles.
- **Work** – While working on these activities, discuss the satisfaction and result of hard work, what happens at the times they want to quit but choose to keep working hard, etc.



### OBJECT LESSON – Trail Mix Assembly Line

**Goal:** To illustrate that laziness affects others.

**Instructions:** Before you start, quietly tell the “goof offs” that you would like them to be a *secret* part of the assembly line. As they do their job on the assembly line, you will tap them on the shoulder. At that point they should stop doing their job. Remind them to keep this a secret because you want to see what the other kids will do when they have a lazy person in their assembly line.

Divide the class into groups of 6 children each. Form assembly lines at the tables, using both sides of one or more tables as needed. Set up 6 stations for each assembly line: station #1 – 6 sandwich bags; station #2 – a plastic glove & a bowl with raisins; station #3 – a plastic glove & a bowl with sunflower seeds; station #4 – a plastic glove & a bowl with pretzel sticks; station #5 – a plastic glove & a bowl with chocolate chips and station #6 – the twist ties & a grocery bag.

Place each child at a station. Stations #2-5 will put the plastic glove on the hand with which they will pick up the food. Station #1 worker will grab a sandwich bag and hand it to the worker at Station #2. Station #2 worker will put a few raisins in the bag and hand it to the worker at Station #3. Station #3 worker will add some sunflower seeds and hand it to the worker at Station #4. Station #4 worker will add some pretzel sticks and hand it to the worker at Station #5. Station #5 worker will add some chocolate chips and hand it to worker at Station #6. Station #6 worker will close the bag with a twist tie and put it in the grocery bag. You might want to have a practice run so the children are clear about their jobs. After the 3rd bag in each line is started,

tap the "goof-offs" on the shoulder to stop doing their jobs. Note the response of the others.

### **Introduction**

We're going to begin this class with a fun activity. We're going to have an assembly line. Each of you will have a job to do on the assembly line. You have three minutes to get all 6 bags completely through the assembly line and into the grocery bag. If you complete the job within the three minutes, each of you will have a bag of trail mix for a snack.

### **Debrief**

So what do you guys think about the person on the assembly line who didn't do his job? Did it make you mad that he wasn't doing his job? Did it frustrate you that the work wasn't getting done? Did you have to work harder to make up the work that person didn't do? We asked a person in each of your assembly lines to quit working so you could see what it would be like for someone to be lazy and not do their work.

Do you think God cares about how we do our jobs or our schoolwork? Why? What do you believe God thinks when people don't do their jobs. (He still loves them, but He knows it is harmful to them and others when they don't do their jobs.)

**Transition:** If all of your bags are not completed you can finish them now. When you are done you can each grab a bag of trail mix and a Bible, come sit down and eat it while we have our lesson.

## **LESSON**

Open your Bibles to **1 Thessalonians 4**. Some of the people in the Thessalonian church were bad examples to people who didn't know Jesus because they had a lazy attitude. As we've learned in the past few weeks, they knew Jesus would come back to earth. Some of them believed that since Jesus would probably be back any day, they could just hang around and wait for His return. They didn't think they needed to work. Paul told them they were wrong. He reminded them that he worked very hard when he was with them so he would be an example to them. Our key verse is, "**... do your own work. If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you...**" (**1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**). Respect means to value or look up to. As other people watch us work hard they will look up to us. But if we are lazy do you think they will say, "Wow, they're cool. I want to be just like them?" No, they won't. Do you know any lazy people? Do you look up to them? Do you want to be like them? So, if we decide to be a good example by working hard in all things, others may take notice and give us a chance to tell them about Jesus.

Another good thing about people who are hard workers is that they often have extra time and money to share, which brings them a lot of joy. So if you work hard, you'll be able to help others which might give you a chance to tell them that God is the one who helps you to work hard and that you work hard because you love God.

*Do you know that God sent Jesus to this earth to do very important work? Think about His work on the cross. His death on the cross was totally for us. He could have decided it was too hard. But because He loved God and us He died on the cross. On the cross, Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sins. Did His death pay for everyone's sins? (Yes.) So does this mean that everyone is going to heaven? (No.) How can we know that His death counts for our sins? (Tell Him you know you sin and need forgiveness and ask that His death on the cross count for your sins.) Jesus' death on the cross can take away your sins. If you want to be forgiven once for all time, tell God you want Jesus' work on the cross to pay for your sins so you can be His friend.*

**Transition:** We can be very glad that Jesus worked hard and wasn't lazy. Let's break into small groups to talk about choices we make to work hard or to be lazy.

## SMALL GROUP

Do you think God cares about how we do our jobs at home or our schoolwork? Why? It's easy for us to see that the Thessalonians were lazy. But what about us? It's not always so easy to see or to admit, is it?

Can you think of some times when you have chosen to be lazy? (Teachers come up with age-appropriate example to get them started. Possible example... your birthday is coming in a week. You decide that you are so special you don't need to keep your room picked up or do your jobs. You think your mom or dad can do those things and they will probably think they should because it is almost your birthday and they can't get mad at you. Do you think this would be like the people in the Thessalonian church who were waiting for Jesus to return? They were waiting for something very special to happen and they decided that they didn't need to do their work. They didn't care how their attitude affected other people.)

What is our key verse? "... **do your own work. If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you...**" (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). Why do you think it's important that people who don't know Jesus will respect us?

Let's **pray**. *If you have never asked for Jesus' death to count for your sins, you can do that out loud or quietly to God as we pray.* Those of us who have done that can ask God to remind us that we are examples to others when we choose to work hard. We can thank God that He will use us as examples for Him as He helps us to work hard.

**Transition:** Let's try our hand at doing a rap.

## MUSIC

**Instructions:** Divide the class into 3 groups to learn and rehearse one of the four verses of the attached rap song. The teachers will do the first verse to illustrate. They can use hand motions, make up a simple step, etc. When they are finished, each group will perform their part for the class.

## OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

### Game – Crocodile Crawl<sup>3</sup>

**Instructions:** Place Velcro strips at opposite ends of the playing area. Scatter the balls and small Frisbees between the Velcro strips. Divide the children into 3 groups and line up single file behind the starting line. The first person in each line is the crocodile's head. Players will squat and hold the shoulders of the person in front of them. The crocodiles want to go for a swim in the swamp at the finish line, but first they have to do their work. They must pick up 2 balls and 2 Frisbees on their way to the swamp. Any part of the crocodile can do the pick up as they "crawl" along. When the "crocodile" gets to the swamp on the other side of the finish line, it sits down in the swamp. Form new crocodiles and play again.

---

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Susan L. Lingo, *Instant Games for Children's Ministry*, © 1995 Susan L. Lingo, Group Publishing, Inc., p. 38

***When I work hard I show that I love God... I am an example of Christ.***

"... do your own work. If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you..." 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

## Rap Song Lyrics

I show I'm a Christian  
When I work real hard.  
I don't sit around  
Like a big lump of lard.

I work with my hands  
And earn my own bread,  
I don't goof off  
I work hard instead.

When I'm in school,  
I work hard all week.  
Other kids say,  
"You're some kind of freak!"

But I say, "No way!  
With my hard work,  
I'll honor God  
And not be a jerk!"

## LESSON OUTLINE

### I. OBJECT LESSON – large group format

#### A) Trail Mix Assembly Line

- 1) Goal: To illustrate that laziness affects others.
- 2) Was it frustrating when that person stopped working?
- 3) Did you have to work harder to make up the work that person didn't do?
- 4) We asked a person in each of your assembly lines to quit working so you could see what it would be like for someone to be lazy and not do their work.

B) Transition: If all of your bags are not completed you can finish them now. When you are done sit down and eat it while we have our lesson.

### II. LESSON – large group format

- A) Some people in the Thessalonian church were bad examples because they had a lazy attitude.
- B) They knew Jesus would come back to earth. So they didn't think they needed to work.
- C) Paul told them they were wrong. Our key verse is, "... do your own work. If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).
  - 1) Respect means to value or look up to. As other people watch us work hard they will look up to us.
  - 2) But what if we are lazy?
  - 3) So, if we decide to be a good example by working hard in all things, others may take notice and give us a chance to tell them about Jesus.
- D) People who are hard workers often have extra time and money to share, which brings them a lot of joy.

E) If you work hard, you'll be able to help others which might give you a chance to tell them that God is the one who helps you to work hard and that you work hard because you love God.

F) *God sent Jesus to this earth to do very important work? His death on the cross was for us. He could have decided it was too hard. But because He loved God and us He died on the cross.*

G) Transition: We can be very glad that Jesus worked hard and wasn't lazy. Let's break into small groups to talk about choices we make to work hard or to be lazy.

### III. SMALL GROUP – small group format

- A) Do you think God cares about how we do our jobs at home or our schoolwork? Why?
- B) Can you think of some times when you have chosen to be lazy?
- C) **"... do your own work. If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).** Why do you think it's important that people who don't know Jesus will respect us?
- D) Let's **pray**.
- E) **Transition:** Let's try our hand at singing our key verse.

### IV. MUSIC – small group format Rap

### V. OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- A) **Game – Crocodile Crawl**

