

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: "Make it your ambition to... work with your hands... so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders" 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:

- 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

Lesson

Small Group

Optional Activity

- Before class, inflate balloons and stuff in bag.

- Ten 11" balloons
- Large garbage bag
- Twist tie

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.”¹

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.”² 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.

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

² *Expositor’s Bible Commentary New Testament*, Zondervan Reference Software, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY STATIONS:

- **Work**
Instructions: 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.
- **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.



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 make an assembly line. Each of you will have a job to do. You have 3 minutes to get all 6 bags

completely through the assembly line and into the grocery bag. If you complete the job within the 3 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? (Allow some time for responses.) 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.)

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

Listen while I read **2 Thessalonians 3:7-13**. In this passage Paul told the Thessalonians that there should be no slacking off or bumming food from others. He told them to be examples of hard-working, responsible people. In **1 Thessalonians 2:9** Paul says, "Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you." Here Paul gives us the example of his own life to show us how we can remember that Christ will return and yet still be responsible in this world.

The Thessalonians were bad witnesses to the watching world. They had a lazy attitude. As we've learned in the past few weeks, they knew Christ would return. Some of them believed that since Jesus would probably be back any day, they didn't need to work. Turn to **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**. This is our key verse. "**Make it your ambition to... work with your hands, ... so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders...**" As others watch us work hard they will look up to us and may respect what we have to say about Jesus.

On the other hand, can you imagine someone who would look at a lazy person and think, "Wow, they're cool. I want to be just like them?" Do you know any lazy people? Do you respect them? So, one way to have an impact on others is to be a good example by working hard.

Not only do hard workers have the respect of others so they will be heard when they talk about Christ, but they also generally have extra to give away to those in need. Hard workers regularly get the opportunity to share their time, insight, money, and possessions with others. In school, you can be lazy, get behind in your work, and consequently, struggle. If you're this way, you'll have virtually nothing to give to other struggling students. But if you work hard, you'll be able to help others. Why? Because you've studied, done the homework, kept up. You're in a position to help others and to tell them about the love of Christ. This gives us a chance to tell people that we work hard because we love God and that God is the one who helps us to work hard.

What was the most important work that Jesus came to do? (He came to die on the cross.) Think about His work on the cross. His death on the cross was completely for us. He could have blown it off because He decided it was too hard. But out of love for the Father and us He went to the cross. Who would like to tell us what His death on the cross has to do with us? (On the cross, Jesus paid 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 and remove the guilt. If you want to be forgiven once for all, tell God you want Jesus' work on the cross to pay for your sins so that you can have this relationship with Him through Christ.

Transition: Let's break into small groups to see how this applies to our lives and to pray.

SMALL GROUP

When we look at the Thessalonians, it's easy for us to see their laziness. It's often harder to see or be honest about our own laziness. Let's think of some times when we might choose to be lazy.

- Do you think God cares about how we do our jobs or our schoolwork? Why?
- What do you believe God thinks about us when we don't do our jobs?
- It's the week before Christmas Break and you have lots of planning to do for your time off. You have a test on Wednesday and 2 projects due on Friday. Do you buckle down, study for the test and work hard to get your projects completed or do decide to blow the work off and spend the week planning the fun for your vacation? What happens if you chose to plan your vacation rather than study for your test and do your projects?
- 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, that they will probably think they should because it is almost your birthday and they can't get mad at you. How do you think our key verse might apply to this situation? **"Make it your ambition to... work with your hands, ... so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12).**

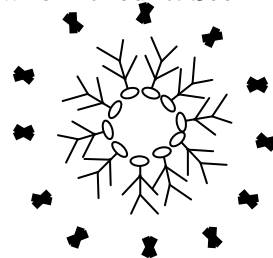
- You love playing soccer and you're really good at it, but you HATE going to those practices. How might your decision to go or not go to practice affect your team?
- Has someone who was willing to work hard ever impacted you? How were impacted? Does that motivate you to want to be a good example to others? If you knew you could influence someone who needs to know Jesus if you were willing to go the extra mile, would you be willing to do that?

Let's **pray**. *If you have never accepted Christ's death for your sins, you can do that aloud or quietly to God as we pray.* Those of us who are Christians 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 witnesses for Him as He strengthens us to work hard.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Game: Garbage Bag Ball ³

Instructions: Fill a large plastic garbage bag with blown-up balloons and tie it with a twist-tie. You now have a "garbage-bag ball." All but ten of the kids form a large circle on their knees. The ten kids then form a pinwheel in the center of the circle, lying on their backs, heads toward the center. Everyone should have their shoes off for best results. The garbage-bag ball is then tossed into the circle. The object is for the kids on their backs to kick or hit the ball out of the circle, over the heads of the kids in the outer circle. The outer circle tries to keep it in play. Play for as long as you wish or try this variation: if the ball is kicked over a player's head in the outer circle, then he must take the place of the person in the inner circle who kicked it! *See diagram.*



³ *Great Games for 4th-6th Graders*, Youth Specialties, page 48.

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: sit down and eat 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) 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) Homework Example
- F) 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.

G) *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.*

H) 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? What does he think when we don't do our jobs?
- B) It's the week before Christmas Break what do you do? H.W. or planning?
- C) Your birthday is coming in a week, do you clean your room? How does our key verse might apply to this situation? **"Make it your ambition to... work with your hands, ... so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12).**
- D) You love soccer but hate practices? How do you affect the team?
- E) Has someone who was willing to work hard ever impacted you? How were impacted? Does that motivate you? If you knew you could influence someone who needs to know Jesus if you were willing to go the extra mile, would you be willing to do that?
- F) Let's Pray

IV. OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Game: Garbage Bag Ball

OASIS ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM FEEDBACK FORM

Name: _____

Unit #: _____ Lesson #: _____

Classroom: _____

1. Is the main point of this lesson stated in a simple and clear way?

2. Is the information in this lesson simple enough to understand and communicate to the children?

3. Was the application of the main point age-appropriate?

4. Was the outline of the lesson clear and easy to follow?

5. What should be changed about or added to the format, content, teacher preparation of this lesson?

6. Did the lesson challenge the children to think or learn? If so, in what way?