

A Christian's Ambition

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Many in the world see ambition as a desirable trait. It is the attitude that drives one to continue progressing, advancing, and improving. Generally, it is necessary if one is to enjoy any degree of success or prosperity. Christians are to be ambitious, but the focus of our ambition will differ from the world. Paul told the Thessalonians what their ambition was to be, and it should be ours as well.

Lead a Quiet Life

- Definition – “said of those who are not running hither or thither but stay at home and mind their business” (Thayer)
- How to “lead a quiet life” – do not let the world distract you from service to God (2 Thessalonians 3:12; cf. Luke 8:14-15); remember your place before God (1 Timothy 2:12; cf. 2 Timothy 2:3-4)

Attend to Your Own Business

- Common phrase (mind your own business) – do what you are responsible to do without regard to others; does not mean we ignore the needs of others (Galatians 6:10, 1); but we cannot focus on the faults of others and ignore our own (Matthew 7:1-5)
- We must not be busybodies (2 Thessalonians 3:11; Proverbs 26:17) – difference between concern/help and meddling

Work with Your Hands

- God expects His people who are able to work to do so (2 Thessalonians 3:6-10) – we are to be diligent in our labors (Colossians 3:23; Ecclesiastes 9:10)
- Of course, we are to put spiritual things first (Matthew 6:19-21, 31-34) – but we cannot ignore our earthly responsibilities (1 Timothy 5:8)

Follow the Lord's Commandments

- Paul said, “Just as we commanded you” – specifically talking about the preceding instructions; in principle, this applies to our obedience to all that has been commanded us in God's word
- We are to obey the Lord (Luke 6:46), as well as the apostles' words (1 Thessalonians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 14:37) – we are to be “doers of the word” (James 1:22)

Behave Properly Toward Outsiders

- We must lead a quiet life and attend to our own business, but we cannot ignore the world around us – we are to be an example to others (1 Peter 2:12)
- Failure to do this will cause others to speak evil of God, the church, and the word (2 Corinthians 6:3)

Not Be in Any Need

- Worldly ambition seeks an abundance of wealth, success, influence, etc. – we strive to not be in need; does not mean we do the minimum to get by (Ephesians 4:28; Ecclesiastes 11:6), but our goal is not simply the accumulation of wealth; if anything, we strive for the freedom and ability to do good (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
- But if we do find ourselves in need, we must be content (Philippians 4:11-13) – not become bitter or blame God

Conclusion

- There is nothing wrong with being successful or prosperous – but our primary ambition as Christians must be directed toward these things
- Let us be sure our priorities are in order so that our ambitions are focused on the things of God