



## Biblical Authority for Separation: Slackers, 2 Thess 3:14-15; Influence from the Dark Side: Placing Your Bodies under Orders to God, Rom 12:1

**2 Thessalonians 3:6** - Now we command you, fellow believers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you separate yourselves from [ **στέλλω, plus από stellō apo: to withdraw from; shrink back** ] every believer that is a slacker [ **ἀτάκτως περιπατέω, ataktōs peripateō** ] which is not according to the tradition which he received from us.

- (3) The translation “slacker” needs some explanation. The Greek word **ἀτάκτως, ataktōs** reveals the concept:

**Friedrich, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 8:47:**

**ἀτάκτως, ataktōs.** “Disordered,” in Josephus often in a military sense, e.g., disorderly retreat; unbridled, irrational, unseemly; without order or plan; without law or order; to roam about in a disorderly fashion. *Atakteō* [the verb form] means “to set oneself outside the order,” “to evade one’s obligations,” “not to fulfill one’s divinely appointed duties”; often military: “to act without discipline,” “to act irresponsibly”; “to evade work which is ordered.”

Non-Christian examples show that the word group is well-known and important and that it relates to several spheres but especially to that of human conduct, both ethical on the one side and political in the broader sense on the other. In both it characterizes a man as one who sets himself outside the necessary and given order. In 2 Thessalonians 3 one might easily conclude from verse 7 that the primary reference of the group is to laziness. But outside Christianity the verb, when applied to work, does not in the first instance lay emphasis on sloth but rather on an irresponsible attitude to the obligation to work. (Some) with their aloofness from working for their keep are outside the civil order, which applies to Christians too. An undisciplined life in the secular sphere contradicts the direction under which the Christian stands.

- (4) When this “disorder” is then combined with the next word, **περιπατέω, peripateō**, we find that this is a disposition, a behavior pattern, a character trait, and a lifestyle.
- (5) *Peripateō* is used especially in the epistles of Paul for the walk of life. He points out in verse 11 that there are certain ones in the church at Thessalonica who “are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.”
- (6) The believer is mandated to separate from such people in:

**2 Thessalonians 3:14** - If anyone does not obey our instruction through this epistle, make a mental note [ **σημειώω, sēmeiōō** ] of that person and have no social relationship [ **μή συναναμίγνυμι, mē sunanamignumi** ] with him for the purpose that he may receive shame.

- (7) The word **σημειώω, sēmeiōō**, is a mandate to make a mental note of those who are involved in the lifestyle of a slacker and to avoid them in social situations.
- (8) This is brought out by the present middle imperatival infinitive of **συναναμίγνυμι, sunanamignumi** which means literally “to mix with.” It refers to having fellowship or keeping company with someone. However, it is accompanied by the negative **μή, mē** which negates the idea and thus it becomes a command to separate from such people.
- (9) This separation must be sophisticated. You cannot do this while harboring hostility or casting judgment.



- (10) Avoiding this person must be done in such a way that does not cause you to enter into mental attitude sins but rather protects your soul from that person's influence or tactics.
- (11) The correction of this person's behavior must be managed by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the pastor, as is indicated by:

**2 Thessalonians 3:15 -** Do not regard that person as an enemy but admonish him as a fellow believer.

5. Influence from the Dark Side Requires Separation

- (1) To remain under the influence of those who are led by cosmic thinking will lead to an arrogant over-emphasis of self:

**Romans 12:1 -** I urge you therefore fellow believers by the mercies of God to present your bodies under orders [ παρίστημι, *paristēmi* ] as a living holy sacrifice. This is well-pleasing to God—our rational [ λογικός, *logikos* ] spiritual worship [ λατρεία, *latreia* ].

- (2) The key word in this verse is the aorist active imperative of παρίστημι, *paristēmi* which is translated “place under orders.”
- (3) This verb was in the military vocabulary of the Classical Greek writers. For example, a soldier was to place himself under orders to one of superior rank.
- (4) Polybius uses this word to describe a military maneuver: “He set the cavalry on both wings.” Aristophanes's use is “to be on hand” and Demosthenes's is “to stand by.”
- (5) In this context the believer is to place himself under orders to God as a good soldier for Christ:

aorist: Constantive; a succession of events gathered into a single whole that contemplates the action of the verb in its entirety. To do this the believer must be in fellowship and filled with the Holy Spirit.

active: Spirit-filled believers who are engaged in the double-column advance are commanded to produce the action of the verb.

imperative: The believer's obligation is spiritual growth through inculcation of biblical truth.

- (6) These believers are to present their bodies as “living holy sacrifices” that are “well-pleasing to God.” The only way that our bodies can be presented as well-pleasing to God is in status-quo spirituality which is established by means of rebound and the resultant filling of the Holy Spirit.
- (7) This sacrifice is described as worship that is rational: **λογικός, *logikos***. Such worship can only be accomplished by using the two power options.