

## We'll Work Till Jesus Comes; The Sin of Idleness

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

2 Thessalonians 3:6–15<sub>(NKJV)</sub>

<sup>6</sup> But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; <sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, <sup>9</sup> not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. <sup>11</sup> For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

<sup>13</sup> But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good. <sup>14</sup> And if anyone does not obey our word

in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. <sup>15</sup> Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

### **Introduction:**

It could be said that one of the most pervasive trends in the American culture, both inside the c and outside, is the growing desire to be idle. In fact, it could be said that idleness has become an idol in our culture.

Much of what we do at work is for the goal of reaching that point where we can stop and be idle. Even when we are at work, more and more time is spent in idleness.

According to one article, research found that “Workers across the country are spending far too much time doing nothing—and it's costing their companies \$100 billion annually. Research by Teresa Amabile and Andrew Brodsky. American Idle: Workers Spend Too Much Time Waiting for Something to Do

This growing idleness can also be clearly seen in the continuing rise of time that the average family spends watching TV.

“The thing that Americans do most often with their free time is not cooking or exercising or hiking or any other seemingly salutary activity. No,

Americans watch TV. That's the default the current move to even tinier screens has to be measured against.

In 1949-1950, American households were already watching 4 hours and 35 minutes of TV per day.<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/05/when-did-tv-watching-peak/561464/>

“According to the data compiled by Nielsen Media Research, an average American household spends a whopping 8 hrs 18 minutes a day in front of the television. Read on to know more on this interesting research.

This astonishing information was revealed through a survey undertaken by Nielsen Media Research company in 2010. The twist here is that, the survey speaks of American household and not individuals.

One more interesting fact about Americans and their love for television is that, in an American home, there are more TV sets than people! In the same survey report, Nielsen Media Research has revealed that there are 2.75 TV sets in every household, as opposed to 2.55 people per home. However, the research mostly takes into account the aggregated hours spent watching TV by a family and not a single

individual. When this statistics was calculated, it was revealed that an American individual spends about 4 hours, 35 minutes a day watching TV. Thus, they spend about 29 hours per week watching TV. As evident, this time is slightly less than a full-time job! Every month, they spend roughly 142 hours watching TV, which is almost double the time spent by individuals of other nations.

The survey has shown a rise of about 5 hours per week, when compared to previous years data. The number of television sets has also increased since then. As every member of the family has his or her own television set, they can now watch their favorite programs without having to share the remote control.  
<https://entertainism.com/how-much-tv-does-average-american-watch>

As a result,

According to an article titled,

**Couch potato nation: 3 in 4 U.S. teens don't get enough exercise**

Troubling new research reports that 75 percent of American teens aren't getting enough exercise. Notably, researchers from the University of Georgia say lack of exercise is especially common among teen girls.  
<https://www.studyfinds.org/teens-arent-exercising-enough/>

**Neil Postman, “Amusing ourselves to Death” wrote in the early 80s, that**

“We are by now well into a second generation of children for whom television has been their first and most accessible teacher and, for many, their most reliable companion and friend.”

Idleness is a serious problem, and coupled with a significant decline in the the protestant work ethic, many within the church live in sin and can hardly say that they are doing all things to the glory of God.

The word “idle” comes from the Greek word,

**ἀργός, ἡ, όν** (contr. fr. ἀεργος ‘without performance’, s. ἔργον;(work)

① pert. to being without anything to do, *unemployed, idle*

② pert. to being unwilling to work, *idle, lazy*

③ pert. to being unproductive, *useless, worthless*

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 128). University of Chicago Press.

Its used in

**Matthew 20:3** in the parable of the vineyard, and finding workers idle,

**I Tim 5:13**, of young widows, not being idle lest they fall into sin.

**Titus 1:12** (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”

To be clear, I am not talking about rest or the occasional time of recreation. I’m talking about an intentional and deliberate desire to be idle and not productive. The idle that can be the fruit laziness. The intention goal is to do as little as possible.

This can be active in the the since that you plan the time to be idle.

Or

It can be passive, in which you fall into the repeated pattern of just being unproductive and careless about the time God has allotted you.

Some of you sitting here today are going to be ashamed on Judgment day when you face Christ, and the most you can say about your life is, what was your favorite TV program, or video game. Your accomplishments in life will be a short list because you spent a large majority of it sleeping and being idle.

You will not have redeemed the time, You will will have wasted the time. Hours and hours, accumulating into years of wasted life.

— **John Piper, wrote in, Don't Waste Your Life**—  
 “You get one pass at life. That’s all. Only one. And the lasting measure of that life is Jesus Christ.”

“Desire that your life count for something great! Long for your life to have eternal significance. Want this! Don’t coast through life without a passion.”

— John Piper, Don't Waste Your Life—

## Scripture warns of **Idleness**

### **Ecclesiastes 10:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> Because of laziness the building decays,  
 And through **idleness** of hands the house leaks.

9170 שְׁפִלּוּת (šīp·lūt): n.fem.; ≡ Str 8220; TWOT 2445e—LN 42.41–42.50 **idleness**, inactivity, formally, lowering (of hands), i.e., a state or condition of not doing work or being diligent (Ecc 10:18+), see also domain LN 88.246–88.251 Swanson, J. (1997). In [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew \(Old Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

### **Proverbs 18:9 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> He who is slothful in his work

Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

### **Proverbs 6:6–12 (NKJV)**

- 6 Go to the ant, you sluggard!  
Consider her ways and be wise,
- 7 Which, having no captain,  
Overseer or ruler,
- 8 Provides her supplies in the summer,  
*And* gathers her food in the harvest.
- 9 How long will you slumber, O sluggard?  
When will you rise from your sleep?
- 10 A little sleep, a little slumber,  
A little folding of the hands to sleep—
- 11 So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler,  
And your need like an armed man.

### **1 Timothy 5:13–15 (NKJV)**

13 And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. 14 Therefore I desire that *the* younger *widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some have already turned aside after Satan.

We are living in a culture that has lost its mooring. We are adrift in a vast ocean of meaningless speculations of atheistic men. There is no meaning or purpose to what we do, other than the vast accumulation of things for personal gratification. The transcendent has been abandoned for a utilitarian mindset. What ever I can do to make might short, meaningless existent, on this rock careening thru the darkness of space, I will do. If that means I feel better doing nothing and living off other meaningless clumps of cells, then so be it. Who cares and who knows.

A society without a proper view of God is a society doomed for failure. In our culture 60 years ago, just the belief in God was a driving force for a better work ethic, but now with the rise of confessional and pragmatic atheism, that is disappearing fast.

In his 2 volume set entitled "Democracy in America", written in 1835 and 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville, worried that free, capitalist societies might develop so great a "taste for physical gratification" that citizens would be "carried away, and lose all self-restraint." Avidly seeking personal gain, they could "lose sight of the close connection which exists between the private fortune of each of them and the

prosperity of all” and ultimately undermine both democracy and prosperity.

The genius of America in the early nineteenth century, Tocqueville thought, was that it pursued “productive industry” without a descent into lethal materialism. Behind America’s balancing act, the pioneering French social thinker noted, lay a common set of civic virtues that celebrated not merely hard work but also thrift, integrity, self-reliance, and modesty—virtues that grew out of the pervasiveness of religion, which Tocqueville called “the first of [America’s] political institutions, . . . imparting morality” to American democracy and free markets. Some 75 years later, sociologist Max Weber dubbed the qualities that Tocqueville observed the “Protestant ethic” and considered them the cornerstone of successful capitalism.

<https://jackmillercenter.org/whatever-happened-to-the-work-ethic/>

Sadly, there is not a lot we can do about the work ethic of the lost. They have no God but themselves. But we can show what the God of the Bible does in transforming our work ethic because we are driven by a desire to glorify Him in all that we do. In the midst of lazy and idle employees and unproductive citizens, we can be that light shining on the hill in the darkness of idle sluggards.

Have you ever thought of your job like this before?  
It may be mundane but it reaches to the Heavens.

It may seem of little consequence but it displays  
the God of the Bible.

It may pay very little, but it supplies my need by  
God's providence.

I may wonder how I got stuck doing this job, but  
remember, it was ordained by God.

How you do what God has called you to do in  
your years of work on this planet will last for eternity  
in reward for you.

Don't diminish the smallest of details, when it is  
seen by the Great God of the Universe.

Listen to how the Word of God teaches us how to  
approach our work.

Ephesians 6:5–9 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your  
masters according to the flesh, with fear and  
trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; <sup>6</sup> not with  
eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants  
of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> with  
goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to  
men, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, he

will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

<sup>9</sup> And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

### What about the Retired men and women.

The older men and women have a responsibility to be instructors of the younger generation. This has been a sad failure of the church for decades. The Older retired community are often relegated to their own groups and separated from the young people. In our culture, at least for now, many of our Older seniors are able to be free from a Job that takes them away for 40 to 60 hours a week, which is nice, but that does not mean you retire from church work.

### **Leviticus 19:31–32 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> ‘Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I *am* the Lord your God.

<sup>32</sup> ‘You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I *am* the Lord.

### **Job 12:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> Wisdom *is* with aged men,

And with length of days, understanding.

**Psalms 71:17–18 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> O God, You have taught me from my youth;  
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

<sup>18</sup> Now also when *I am* old and gray-headed,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
Until I declare Your strength to *this* generation,  
Your power to everyone *who* is to come.

**Titus 2:1–5 (NKJV)**

**2** But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: <sup>2</sup> that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; <sup>3</sup> the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—<sup>4</sup> that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup> *to be* discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Review:

So this is no small matter. It is very displeasing to God for a Christian not to work and work well.

Laziness is a sin, Being a sluggard is a total disregard for the purpose you were created... to glorify God.

So in order to stress the importance of the severity of the sin of laziness and not working Paul gives six incentives to motivate those sinning to repent and get to work:

—Fellowship, Follow-ship, Food, Factions, Fallout, Family

## **1. Fellowship**

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

This by itself should be enough to move those believers to work.

Paul tells the church to withdraw and avoid any brother who is idle, or walks as a pattern of life as a lazy person who will not work.

This is in the 3rd step of church discipline according to Matthew 18.

## 1. Fellowship

## 2. Follow-ship. v. 7-9

**7** For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; **8** nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, **9** not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

**follow our example.** The Greek verb used in both instances is a form of the verb *mimeomai*;

**mimeomai: to imitate**

**Original Word:** μιμέομαι. **Present tense**

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** mimeomai

**Phonetic Spelling:** (mim-eh'-om-ahee)

**Definition:** to imitate

**Usage:** I imitate, follow.

Cognate: 3401 miméomai – to imitate, emulating a mentor or example. See 3402 (mimētēs).

the related noun is the source of the English word *mimic*

1. Fellowship
2. Follow-ship.

### 3. Food

**10** For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

This is a very simply and important command.

A man who is unwilling to work but prefers to be lazy and a sluggard and sponge off of others should not eat. NO free meals.

*Fellowship,*

*Follow-ship,*

*Food,*

### **4. Factions,**

<sup>11</sup> For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a **disorderly manner**, **not** working **at**

**all**, but are busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

### **disorderly manner**

#### **ataktós: disorderly**

**Original Word:** ἀτάκτως

**Part of Speech:** Adverb

**Transliteration:** ataktós

**Phonetic Spelling:** (at-ak'-toce)

**Definition:** disorderly

Cognate: 814 atáktōs – properly, disorderly ("breaking rank"); insubordinate to God's Word and hence fruitless (unproductive) – because lacking proper order (discipline). [See 813](#) (ataktos).

### **not working at all**

**médeis, médemia, méden: no one, nothing**

**Original Word:** μηδείς, μηδεμία, μηδέν

**Part of Speech:** Adjective

**Transliteration:** médeis, médemia, méden

**Phonetic Spelling:** (may-dice')

**Definition:** no one, nothing

3367 mēdeís (from [3361](#) /mē, "not a possibility" and [1520](#) /heís, "one") – properly, "no one, nothing" – literally, "not even one."

<sup>11</sup> For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not **working at all, but are busybodies.**

Paul says they were not *ergazomenous*, but *periergazomenous*; “not busy, but busybodies.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 308). Moody Press.

**Original Word:** περιεργάζομαι

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** periergazomai

**Phonetic Spelling:** (per-ee-er-gad'-zom-ahee)

**Definition:** to waste one's labor about (a thing)

**Usage:** I overdo, am a busybody, waste my labor about (a thing).

4020 periergázomai (from [4012](#) /perí, "all-around" and [2038](#) /ergázomai, "to work") – properly, work all-around, i.e. to meddle, going beyond proper boundaries (where a person doesn't belong); to fixate on what others are doing, instead of doing what the person himself is supposed to do (used only in 2 thes 3:11).

**88.243 περιεργάζομαι:** to meddle in the affairs of someone else—‘to be a busybody.’ μηδέν

ἐργαζομένους ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους ‘who do nothing but meddle in the affairs of others’ 2 Th 3:11. In some languages one may speak of a busybody as ‘one who puts his spoon in someone else’s cup’ or ‘one who always tells another how to buy and sell.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 767). United Bible Societies.

Not content with refusing to work productively, they used their unoccupied time to wander around interfering in the lives of others in the church (cf. 1 Tim. 5:13). The nonworkers were an irritant, creating disunity and discord by being a burden on those who did work. That was beginning to affect the loving harmony and effective witness of the assembly of faith.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 308). Moody Press.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk

properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

1 Peter 4:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

**12** Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

They were to settle down, stop meddling in other people's affairs, and begin leading an ordered life of quiet, consistent work. By so doing they would cease being a burden and become a blessing, thereby promoting harmony in the church.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 308). Moody Press.

—*Fellowship, Follow-ship, Food, Factions,*

## 5. Fallout

**13** But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.

Paul encouraged the rest of the **brethren** who were faithfully working **not to grow weary of doing good** (cf. Gal. 6:9).

### **kalopoieó: to do well**

**Original Word:** καλοποιέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** kalopoieó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (kal-op-oy-eh'-o)

**Definition:** to do well

**Usage:** I do well, act honorably, do what is right. 2569 kalopoiéō (from 2570 /kalós, "winsomely good" and 4160 /poiéō, "do, make") – properly, doing good that inspires others to rise up and also do what is noble (admirable), i.e provoking others to "act with holy affections." 2569 /kalopoiéō ("doing good that inspires") can only happen through faith ("God's inworked persuasion"). This term only occurs in 2 Thes 3:13.

The danger was that they would **grow weary** of the deadbeats and become indifferent to real needs. As noted above, God's people must not ignore their responsibility to care for those in need. David wrote, "The righteous is gracious and gives.... All day long he is gracious and lends" (Ps. 37:21, 26). In Psalm 41:1 he added, "How blessed is he who considers the helpless" (cf. Ps. 112:9). Solomon was also aware of the need to care for the poor: "He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses" (Prov. 28:27). In Isaiah 58:7, God commends those who "divide [their] bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (pp. 308–309). Moody Press.

**14** And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

## 1 Corinthians 5:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

Since this was the third time Paul had dealt with this issue, **anyone** who still refused to **obey** his **instruction in this letter** was being sinfully obstinate. Therefore, he commanded the rest of the assembly to take **special note of** such a **person**. He was to be marked out for serious attention—the rest of the congregation was **not to associate with him**. The strong double compound verb *sunanamignumi* (**associate with**) literally means, “to mix up together with.” The church individually and collectively was to withdraw fellowship from such persons and avoid them. They were probably to be denied the privilege of taking communion. Surely they were not to be allowed to participate in the love

feast, since feeding them a meal would condone and perpetuate their indolent behavior. The pressure of isolation was to be brought to bear on them to produce repentance.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (pp. 309–310). Moody Press.

**14** And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

**entrepó: to turn about, to reverence, to put to shame**

**Original Word:** ἔντρεπω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** entrepó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (en-trep'-o)

**Definition:** to turn about, to reverence, to put to shame

**Usage:** (a) I turn to confusion, put to shame, (b) mid: I reverence, regard.

1788 entrépō (from 1722 /en, "in" and trépō, "to turn") – properly in (a state of) turning, i.e. to turn one's attention to in a riveted ("locked-in") way. This term is also used of recoiling (turning away) in shame, at times of a "wholesome shame which

leads a man to consideration of his condition" (Berry).

—Fellowship, Follow-ship, Food, Factions, Fallout,

## 6. Family

**14** And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

**15** Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Since this is not yet the fourth and final stage of the discipline process, the faithful members of the assembly must **not regard** the one being disciplined **as an enemy** (cf. Matt. 18:17). Since he had not yet been put out of the fellowship (1 Cor. 5:2) and delivered to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20), the congregation was not yet to treat him “as a Gentile

and a tax collector” (Matt. 18:17), but to **admonish him as a brother.**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2002). [1 & 2 Thessalonians](#) (p. 310). Moody Press.

**noutheteó: to admonish, exhort**

**Original Word:** νοουθετέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** noutheteó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (noo-thet-eh'-o)

**Definition:** to admonish, exhort

**Usage:** I admonish, warn, counsel, exhort.

3560 nouthetéō (from [3563](#) /noús, "mind" and [5087](#) /títhēmi, "to place") – properly, to place the mind, i.e. reasoning with someone by warning (admonishing) them.

[3560](#) /nouthetéō ("admonish through instruction") especially appeals to the mind, supplying doctrinal and spiritual substance (content). This "exerts positive pressure" on someone's logic (reasoning), i.e. urging them to choose (turn to) God's best.

Jonathan Edward is know for a rigorous routine of work in his ministry of study and writing. His

preaching in the Great Awakening is what he is best known for. But that does not happen by chance. There is usually behind all great preaching, great discipline. And Jonathan Edwards was that man.

Edwards usually rose at four or five in the morning in order to spend thirteen hours in his study. In his only diary entry during his early years in Northampton he wrote, in January 1728, "I think Christ has recommended rising early in the morning, by his rising from the grave very early." The discipline was part of a constant, heroic effort to make his life a type of Christ. He began the day with private prayers followed by family prayers, by candlelight in winter. Each meal was accompanied by household devotions, and at the end of each day Sarah joined him in his study for prayers. Jonathan kept secret the rest of his daily devotional routine, following Jesus' command to pray in secret. Throughout the day, his goal was to remain constantly with a sense of living in the presence of God, as difficult as that might be. Often he added secret days of fasting and additional prayers.

His work was also a service to God in the many hours each day he devoted to study. As Daniel

Walker Howe has observed, if one is looking for the prototype of the work ethic in colonial America, it would be better to look to Edwards than Benjamin Franklin. As Edwards saw it, the discipline of work was part of his worship of God, an offering of his time to God. Moreover, huge amounts of work were directed towards knowing the ways of God. In addition to carefully crafting lengthy sermons each week, he was deeply engaged in biblical study, a daily activity that produced several major notebooks filled with his tiny writing. <https://pastoral-theology.com/2011/06/30/the-rigorous-discipline-of-jonathan-edwards/>

Being considered a leading minister in either of those historic revivals would be enough success for any one pastor's lifetime, but Edwards also authored several highly significant written works, including landmark books on revivalism, theology, missions, and philosophy. If you take a quick look at the lifetime collection of his written corpus, it is astonishing to realize that there are 26 full, printed volumes of his official Yale Works; in addition to another 47 digital-only volumes, for a total of 72. Side by side on a shelf, these would be wider than a grown man's arm-span. Not only that, but since Edwards had to use a feather and inkwell (the computer keyboard would not be invented for many

generations to come!) it is a wonder that one solitary man could be so impossibly productive.

We might ask: in the midst of leading a “normal” pastor’s life — *how in the world did Edwards have time to do all this!?*

## Time Management

We do know that Edwards was very particular about time from a young age, and the nineteen-year old prodigy had resolved very early on to, “never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.” In one 1723 *Diary* entry, he wrote, “Sabbath day, Jan. 6, at night. Much concerned about the improvement of precious time. Intend to live in continual mortification, without ceasing, and even to weary myself thereby, as long as I am in this world, and never to expect or desire any worldly ease or pleasure.” Later that May, he wrote again in his *Diary*, “Saturday night, May 11. I have been to blame, the month past, in not laying violence enough to my inclination, to force myself to a better improvement of time.”

It seems then, that Edwards was somewhat of a time management fanatic. His days were no longer than

anyone else's, and his years were fewer than many. From the earliest biographers, we read that his colleagues noted how Edwards maintained an incredible work ethic. One contemporary biographer, Samuel Hopkins, suggested that Edwards spent about thirteen hours per day in his study.[1] Pretty impressive if true, especially for a man of one wife, ten children, and a farm to manage too. Less flatteringly perhaps, Hopkins also tells us that "He was less acquainted with most of his temporal affairs than many of his neighbors, and seldom knew when and by whom his forage for winter was gathered in, or how many milk kine he had, whence his table was furnished, etc." [2] To say it less politely, he was totally clueless about his own household.

All this points to a man that modern terminology might label a "workaholic." Yet despite all of this, every testimony that we have from personal letters and contemporary observations from the people that knew him best indicate that Edwards had a truly sweet and tender relationship with his wife, and that his children both respected and loved him. In other words, his many duties as a pastor did not cause him to experience a breakdown in his most vital *nuclear* relationships. He loved his family and they

**loved him back.**<https://modernreformation.org/resource-library/web-exclusive-articles/jonathan-edwards-a-model-of-high-pastoral-productivity/>