Idleness or Ambition

What is idleness? This is a term that Pat had never really thought much about. Idleness? Never. Yet, this is exactly what she may be experiencing but in a unique way.

This recognition came after she met with her bible study group to consider the application of 2 Thessalonians 3: 7-9:

“7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. (2 Thessalonians 3: 7-9)”

As she relates to her study group member Joan, “Paul’s letter really made me think. His teaching in this passage focuses on believers both setting an example in how they orient their daily lives and staying true to their life in Christ. Idleness is surely not the same as laziness for me, but perhaps the opposite is true – I spend too much time committed to work. It may be taking me away from what the Lord may truly wish for me.”

Pat has been a university faculty member for the past ten years. She has committed what seems to be much of her adult waking hours on what she really loves - research. Contemplating new ideas and completing existing studies even when away from the university overshadows her personal life. Pat is the first to admit that ambition also drives her to pursue the goal of being a recognized scholar in her field with all the acclaim that comes with that achievement.

As she continues with Joan, “There is no question that ambition drives me. It has for as long as I can remember. However, I have now come to realize that it is one thing to be ambitious but another thing to be dominated by it.”

Pat is new to studying the scriptures as a believing adult. While having been brought up in a Christian family, she had never really studied the Bible at home or in the church the family attended. The group that she goes to with Joan is her first exposure to finding God’s word though scripture study.

She continues, “After all this time, I am finding it very difficult to consciously alter my professional life. What I really need is a lifestyle foundation to not necessarily replace ambition but provide more balance in my life. I really respect your insight in our bible study meetings. What biblical insight would you suggest to create the needed support for such a shift?”
Joan replies, “I agree your behavior is not the idleness that we normally think of from the 2 Thessalonians passage. But that leaves us with the problem of first defining your behavior in a scriptural setting. Given that understanding, our second objective must be to use scripture to redefine your lifestyle such that you are open to what the Lord wants for you.”

**ASSIGNMENT**

As Joan, what scriptures should she recommend for Pat to use in meeting this challenge? Based on those scriptures, what specifically would you suggest for her to remember as the foundation of the new lifestyle?
My Scriptural Research:

Group Scriptural Research:

Decisions / Recommendations:

Primary Scriptural References: