

## Proverbs: Laziness Vs. Diligence, 7/22/18

Sorry I'm late, I set my alarm in my office, but I hit snooze a few too many times...I have a few things I pulled off of the internet quickly...I ran out of time to prepare like I probably should have. Here's the thing, I had lots of big plans for this message, it was going to be great, powerful, lifechanging. But some things came up, some friends wanted to go to the beach, and when I got back...I got distracted with some other hobbies and never got around to it. I just wasn't feeling it. All that time in the sun, I just felt tired...and you know I'm just overworked so I decided I should catch up on my sleep, I deserve it (Yawn). I got to thinking, "You probably already know your Bibles, so why should I waste my time up here?" In fact, the more I think about it, I'm actually doing you a favor, now you can get out early and take an afternoon nap. So you should thank me!

For those of you just catching on, today's topic from our study in Proverbs is Laziness and Work Ethic. In many ways, I just gave you a portrait of what Proverbs says about the personification of laziness, what Solomon refers to about a dozen times- the Sluggard. Throughout the book of Proverbs we have seen two ways to live the way of the wise (living under the fear of the Lord) and the way of the fool (living by their own wisdom). Proverbs isn't trying to solve big mysteries of the universe, it's concerned about everyday life. We have looked at Our Speech, Decisions, this week- **how we approach work**, the way of wisdom or the way of the fool. Today we will see 2 Things: A portrait of the sluggard and the Path to Overcome Laziness. **Pray**

### **A Portrait of the Sluggard**

#### **1) Wastes Time and Opportunities to be Productive**

Proverbs 20:4

*The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.*

The sluggard looks at the work in front of him and says, "Later. Now isn't the time."

Proverbs 6:6-9a

*Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise. It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard?*

This is clearly a rebuke. Things have gotten pretty bad in your life if you need to learn life lessons from ants. But unlike the sluggard, the ant is diligent. The ant gets after it, summer- ant trails on patio...instinctively knowing the difference between a time to work and a time to rest. **Laziness is NOT doing what you OUGHT to be doing at the time.** And this is rampant in the workplace. 20% of the work day is spent goofing off...

Poem

I've gone for a drink and sharpened my pencils  
I've search in my desk for forgotten utensils  
I've reset my watch I've adjusted my chair  
I've loosened my tie and straightened my hair

I've filled my pen and tested the blotter  
 And gone for another drink of water  
 I've adjusted the calendar and raised up the blinds  
 I've sorted the erasers of all different kinds  
 Now down to work I can finally sit  
 Oops too late, it's time to quit.

## 2) Does not finish what they start.

Proverbs 12:27

*The slothful will not roast his game; but the diligent man will get precious wealth.*

The idea here is that he started the hunt, caught his prey, but is too lazy to prep the meat and the fire to follow through! Pretty comical and pathetic picture isn't it?

Are there lots of have unfinished and abandoned projects around the house? Illustration of spackled whole in bathroom wall. Stop seeing it. Do you have lots of great ideas but never seem to follow them through to the end? Have you started that degree but never seemed to complete it? More importantly, has this characterized your spiritual life? Have you started a Bible reading plan or devotional or book but never finished? Have you started attending a small group or a bible study and dropped out? Overcoming our tendency to drop out of what we start is a problem that plagues many Christians who then wonder why this are not growing.

## 3) Has Undisciplined Sleep Habits

Proverbs 6:9-11 (24:33)

*How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.*

Proverbs 19:15

*Slothfulness casts into deep sleep; the idle person will be hungry.*

Proverbs 20:13

*Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes and have plenty.*

Proverbs 26:14

*As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.*

When you put these verses together the portrait is of someone that loves their bed too much. They just can't bring themselves to get out of bed. The snooze bar was basically invented for the sluggard. And so the day begins late, feels hurried, like you can never quite catch up. Now Solomon is not talking to parents with young children who wake them up throughout the night. Now you may say, but I feel so tired. Not all sleepiness is laziness. Check your health. You may have a thyroid issue, or eating issue or sleep rhythm issue. But, for many- it is just a bad habit that is holding you back.

## 4) Makes an idol out of being idle.

Proverbs 21:17

*Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.*

-Solomon is not saying that life should just be boring and rigid. But he is pointing out the human tendency to turn pleasure seeking into an addiction.

-We are addicted to entertainment and leisure. Entertainment and leisure are not necessarily evil. There is a time to rest and turn off your mind and body. However, the amount of time that most Americans dedicate to entertainment and leisure rises to the level of idolatry. I think many, if not most, Americans view work and everything else in their lives as what they have to do to get to entertainment and leisure. "How long until I can lay down on the couch and watch TV [or browse the Internet or post on Facebook or whatever other leisure activity you might want to insert here]?"

Let me also challenge our seasoned vets. Being idle is not just a young person's problem. You may be in retirement and have less on your calendar these days but let me exhort you to make the most of your time. Do not get lulled by the enemy into thinking you have put in your time and now you can view life as one uninterrupted vacation. John and Donna Quigley, Bob and Janet McQuale, Dick and Astrid Warren...You may have health challenges that impede you from serving like you once did. But can you write letters? Can you be a prayer warrior? Can you encourage others over the phone?

#### 5) Creatively finds excuses for inactivity

Proverbs 14:23

*In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.*

The sluggard can talk a great game! He can carry on and on about his dreams and his gifts and the experiences he's had in life, as well as the day soon coming when "his ship will come in". He can give all the excuses for why he won't or can't or shouldn't work.

Proverbs 22:13, 26:13

*The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!"*

-Rationalizes his inaction. Clever in his own ways. It's not the sluggard lacks intelligence. Some of the most intelligent people can be the laziest people. Have you run out of excuses for why your house is still in shambles and you haven't done repairs like you should? Are you finding creative reasons why you shouldn't have to do your homework or put your best effort forward on that project? Why you haven't put forth the effort to find a job? Why that job available is "below you." That you are holding out for the right opportunity...? Are you finding excuses to put off spiritual goals?

#### 6) Brings Ruin on Themselves and Others

Have you noticed how many times the Proverbs link laziness with poverty? Now this doesn't mean that all poor people are lazy and all rich people are diligent...these are principles. But poverty can be a result of laziness. Not just financial. Laziness can result in spiritual poverty...underdeveloped spiritual life.

But I want you to see another type of ruin that comes into the life of the sluggard.

Proverbs 24:30-31

*I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.*

Notice, that *land will produce something*. The sluggard by sleeping was doing more for the cultivation of thorns and nettles than he could have done by any other means. Just as a garden will either yield flowers or weeds, fruits or thistles, so something either good or evil will come out of our lives. Don't be fooled into thinking that doing nothing is doing nothing. Doing nothing is bringing more ruin into our lives and those around us than we think. What are we producing in our spiritual lives? In our households? In our churches?

Charles Spurgeon- *Our hearts and the sphere God gives us to occupy will be sure to produce something. If we do not produce a harvest of good wheat, by labouring for Christ, we shall sow tares to be bound up in bundles for the last dread burning.*

Proverbs 21:25-26

*The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. All day long he craves and craves, but the righteous gives and does not hold back*

His desires ultimately kill him because they remain forever unfulfilled and unsatisfied.

### **Portrait of the Sluggard**

- 1) Wastes Time and Opportunities to be Productive
- 2) Does not Finish what they Start
- 3) Has Undisciplined Sleep Habits
- 4) Makes an Idol out of being Idle
- 5) Creatively find excuses for inactivity
- 6) Brings Ruin on themselves and Others

### **The Power to Overcome Laziness**

I could go through several steps to becoming a diligent person...and I do think there is merit in self-improvement steps...in fact I'm going to send some very practical things we can do to improve in the enews this week. Adding things to do without the power to do them is a recipe for fatigue and failure.

#### **1. Admit that we need God's Help.**

Laziness is a result of the fall. It's sin. It's an apathetic condition of the soul that we are all prone to in some ways. When we confess our sin and confess our inability on our own to overcome, we invite God into our lives. We activate his grace toward us in our time of need. As Christians- we are given the Holy Spirit as our helper.

#### **2 Timothy 1:7**

*For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*

#### **2. Look to Christ.**

Hebrews 12:2-3

*Fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Christ overcame for us and gives us the example.

### 3. Work for the Glory of the Lord.

Colossians 3:23

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.*

16 million violin. Why? Antonius Stradivarius believed that every violin that left his shop needed to be near perfect. *God needs these violins to send his music into the world. If it's defective, God's music will be spoiled.* This is God's music, I'm doing it for God. That's godly diligence.

So whether you dig ditches for sewer lines, preach sermons, change diapers, take care of the elderly, crunch numbers, or work with chemicals... all work is sacred because it is done for the Lord.

How much more important is it then that we work in our spiritual lives? **Philippians 2:12-13**

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

Some of us are killing it in our work life. Some of us are really diligent with school assignments or sports or physical fitness...but we are spiritual sluggards. Do you need to recalibrate?