

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 21

Laziness vs Diligence

Laziness vs Diligence

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To learn how Proverbs compares and contrasts the wisdom of being diligent with the folly of the sluggard/laziness.

Key Verses

Proverbs 12:24, 27

Matthew 25:14-30

Proverbs 21:5, 25

Proverbs 22:29

Proverbs 24:30-34

Proverbs 26:13-16

Memory Verse - Proverbs 15:9

"The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Proverbs 16:18-19.

Imagine that you're driving to school one day and you see someone throw a rock through a house's window. What would you think about this person? Were they wrong to do that? Absolutely! That was a terrible thing to do! His actions damaged someone else's property. We would never do such a thing! Or would we?

Today we are going to learn that laziness is also destructive. Something can be destroyed from neglect as much as from being directly attacked.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

According to Proverbs, laziness is evidence of foolishness. Solomon describes a field he saw as overgrown and broken down. What was the cause? It belonged to a lazy and foolish man. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and seemingly suddenly, he was hungry and poor (Proverbs 24:30-34). No doubt he made excuses to delay, and no doubt others warned him to get to work, until one day, seemingly all of the sudden, he awoke poor and hungry (26:13-17). He is left wanting everything he was unwilling to work for (21:25).

But the wise man is diligent. He makes plans (not excuses) and follows through, which causes him to prosper (21:5), having what he needs and more. Diligence is a precious possession (12:27) to those who have it because it leads to obtaining riches both inwardly (13:4) and outwardly. The diligent are honored by leaders (22:29) and placed in positions of authority over those who are not diligent (12:24) because they are trustworthy and dependable. Such is the way of wisdom.

We see this illustrated in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). A man travelled to a far country and left three servants to manage some of his wealth while he was gone, giving a different amount to each. Two of his servants diligently multiplied what he had entrusted to them, but one of them did nothing with what he had been given. He buried the money in the ground and made excuses to his master about why he did so. The master called this servant wicked and lazy, and what he had been given was taken from him and given to one of the diligent servants.

LOOK

Laziness is not passive and innocent; it's active disobedience to God's Word. It is sin, destructive to yourself and others. Consider the field Solomon saw. It looked like it had been attacked! But nobody had attacked this field. No one had done anything to it. This field belonged to a lazy fool who did what lazy people do best: nothing. Neglect had brought the entire field to ruin. What if we saw the same thing today?

Has anything been neglected in your home? Cleaning your room, doing chores, finishing your homework? Leaving things undone only makes things worse, for yourself and others. Imagine a city full of police officers, or a restaurant with cooks and waitresses, or a hospital full of doctors and nurses who just did nothing. The city would be full of criminals and injustice, the restaurant would be full of hungry and angry people, and people in the hospital would die! Lazy people don't love God or their neighbors. They just make everyone around them miserable.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

God designed us to work and desires that we do our work well as unto Him. We shouldn't procrastinate until our parents finally threaten to throw everything with a screen in the trash, and we shouldn't do our work half-heartedly while we grumble and complain. This is foolishness, and while it may seem easier to lie about and do nothing, it actually makes our lives more difficult. Instead, we should praise the Lord for the ability to work and do things for God and others, knowing that it pleases Him and He has promised to reward our diligence.

Sometimes that reward is public recognition. Maybe you can remember a time when your hard work really "paid off." Maybe someone complimented you on a job well done and you got recognized by your teachers or your coach. Proverbs says that those who are diligent in their work will be recognized and rewarded. But most of the diligent work we do will be done without public recognition (getting your homework done on time, practicing with your team to get better, cleaning up your room, and making your bed without being told to do it, etc.) But do you know who sees all of these things and rewards you? For every follower of Jesus who was diligent in their work Jesus will say to them, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord!"

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Proverbs 15:9.

Pray: Thank God for showing us the danger of laziness. Ask him to help you to keep your heart with all diligence and do all things in a way that honors and pleases him.

Parent Question: How is laziness destructive? What have I been lazy in? What have I been diligent in?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Select Proverbs by David Guzik

[Proverbs 12:24](#)

**The hand of the diligent will rule,
But the lazy *man* will be put to forced labor.**

a. **The hand of the diligent will rule:** This is both according to the blessing of God (who rewards the **diligent**) and the nature of the world and society. Hard working people achieve and come to places of leadership.

i. “So, Christian, be diligent. Spend and be spent in Christ’s service. Your privileges will be enlarged. Your God will be honored. Your crown will be secure.” (Bridges)

b. **The lazy man will be put to forced labor:** Because he is unfit to rule over others or even himself, **the lazy man** will be ruled over by others.

i. “Diligence at work determines success and advancement. To put it bluntly, the diligent rise to the top and the lazy sink to the bottom.” (Ross)

ii. **The lazy man:** “Heb. *the deceitful*. So he calls the slothful, because deceit and idleness are commonly companions, and such men seek to gain by fraud what they either cannot or will not get by honest labour.” (Poole)

[Proverbs 12:27](#)

**The lazy *man* does not roast what he took in hunting,
But diligence *is* man’s precious possession.**

a. **The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting:** Using a somewhat humorous illustration, Solomon showed that the **lazy man** does not finish the job. He went to all the trouble of hunting and capturing the prey, but will never enjoy the fruit of his work because he is too **lazy** to do it.

i. “Just as one who might hunt but never cook what he finds, so the lazy person never completes a project.” (Ross)

b. **Diligence is man’s precious possession:** There are many **precious** things a man or woman can have, but **diligence** is near the top of the list. Many great things are accomplished with little talent but great **diligence**.

[Proverbs 21:5](#)

**The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty,
But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.**

- a. **The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty:** When good planning is combined with **diligent** work there will be a harvest of **plenty**.
- b. **But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty:** The one who wants to avoid work, find shortcuts, and cut corners will find that failure instead of **plenty**. Their path leads **surely to poverty**.
- i. **Everyone who is hasty:** “Elsewhere the diligent person stands over against the lethargic sluggard ([Proverbs 10:4](#); [12:24, 27](#); [13:4](#)), but here he stands opposed to the rash and imprudent. The lazy are defective in action; the hasty, in thought.” (Waltke)

[Proverbs 21:25](#)

**The desire of the lazy man kills him,
For his hands refuse to labor.**

- a. **The desire of the lazy man kills him:** The **lazy man** has **desire**; he just doesn't have the initiative or the energy to fulfill it. His life of unfulfilled **desire** is unsatisfying and feels as if it **kills him**. This is a death to self, but not in the good and blessed way described by Jesus for His disciples ([Matthew 10:38](#), [Luke 9:23](#)).
- i. John Trapp explained that mere **desire** wasn't enough. “Balaam wished well to heaven; so did the young Pharisee in the gospel, that came to Christ hastily, but went away heavily. Herod for a long time desired to see Christ, but never stirred out of doors to see him. Pilate asked Christ, What is truth? but never stayed his answer.”
- b. **For his hands refuse to labor:** Having the **desire** for good and blessing and prosperity, but not the desire to work, the **lazy man** lives a life of constant frustration and disappointment. He does not know the satisfaction of earned achievement.
- i. “Living in a world of wishful thinking and not working will bring ruin...the verse teaches that doing rather than desiring brings success.” (Ross)

6. ([Pro 22:29](#)) The reward of excellent work.

**Do you see a man who excels in his work?
He will stand before kings;
He will not stand before unknown men.**

- a. **Do you see a man who excels in his work:** Wisdom pushes us toward excellence. God has given every **man** and woman **work** to do, and they should do that work with excellence as unto God and not only to men ([Colossians 3:23](#)).
- i. **A man who excels:** “One who is improving his talents all the time and is making the most of his opportunities. He is like Henry Martyn, who was known in his college ‘as the man who had not lost an hour.’” (Bridges)

ii. “Anyone who puts his workmanship before his prospects towers above the thrusters and climbers of the adjacent paragraphs.” (Kidner)

b. **He will stand before kings:** The excellence of a man or woman’s work can give them great standing in the world. More importantly, it gives them standing before the King of Kings, who promises to reward the one who works diligently unto Him ([Colossians 3:23-24](#)).

i. “How dear was Daniel to Darius, because, though sick, yet he despatched the king’s business! What favourites to our Henry VIII were Wolsey, Cromwell, Cranmer, for like reason! A diligent man shall not sit long in a low place.” (Trapp)

ii. “Jesus taught that the one who is trustworthy in the small matters of this world will be entrusted with ten cities in his coming kingdom ([Matthew 25:14-30](#); [Luke 19:11-27](#); cf. [John 12:26](#)).” (Waltke)

5. ([Pro 24:30-34](#)) The tragedy of the lazy man.

**I went by the field of the lazy man,
And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding;
And there it was, all overgrown with thorns;
Its surface was covered with nettles;
Its stone wall was broken down.
When I saw it, I considered it well;
I looked on it and received instruction:
A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest;
So shall your poverty come like a prowler,
And your need like an armed man.**

a. **There it was, all overgrown with thorns:** This is what the wise man saw when he looked at **the field** or **the vineyard** of the **lazy man**. The lazy man did not plant the **thorns** or **nettles**, and he did not deliberately break down the **stone wall**. Yet his laziness made these things happen just as much as if he had deliberately done them.

i. “[Isaiah 28:24-29](#) describes how careful, industrious field-work looks.” (Waltke)

b. **When I saw it, I considered it well:** The wise man learned from the tragedy of the lazy man. He didn’t have to suffer the same things the lazy man did to learn the lesson. This is one of the marks of wisdom.

i. “The anecdote invites the reader to recall similar observations of homes in disrepair and to draw the same conclusions even while participating in the poet’s disgust over the shameful condition of the lackadaisical man’s home.” (Garrett)

c. **A little sleep, a little slumber:** This is how the lazy man rationalizes his neglect of duty. “A **little sleep** causes no harm; surely we all need a **little slumber**.” The problem isn’t the **sleep** of the lazy man; it is his neglect of duty.

i. “Rest assured of that; be best will become the worse if we neglect it. Neglect is all that is needed to produce evil. If you want to know the way of salvation I must take some pains to tell you; but if you want to know the way to be lost, my reply is easy; for it is only a matter of negligence.” (Spurgeon)

d. **So shall your poverty come like a prowler:** This is the destiny of the **lazy man** or woman. Because of

their sinful neglect, **poverty** will come upon them as suddenly, as strongly, and as unwelcomed as **an armed man**. In this case the lazy man thinks himself innocent because he did not deliberately, actively sow the thorns or break the wall, but his neglect of duty did them—and he is without excuse.

i. “But let us look at the spiritual sluggard. If a neglected field is a melancholy sight, what is a neglected soul! Such a soul, when it is left to its own barrenness, instead of being sown with the seeds of grace becomes overgrown with thorns and nettles.” (Bridges)

5. ([Pro 26:13-16](#)) The nature of the lazy man.

**The lazy man says, “There is a lion in the road!
A fierce lion is in the streets!”
As a door turns on its hinges,
So does the lazy man on his bed.
The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl;
It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.
The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men who can answer sensibly.**

a. **There is a lion in the road:** The lazy man will create any excuse to avoid work. A **lion in the road** was a virtual impossibility in Biblical times. The **lazy man** shows creative talent (imagining not only a lion, but a **fierce lion**) and a form of work, but it is dedicated to the effort of *avoiding* work.

b. **As a door turns on its hinges:** The only way a door *can* turn is on its hinges. The only turning the **lazy man** does is **on his bed**.

i. **On his bed:** “But comes not off, unless lifted or knocked off. So neither comes the sluggard out of his feathered nest, where he lies soaking and stretching, unless hard hunger or other necessity rouse and raise him.” (Trapp)

ii. **On its hinges:** “The humor in this verse is based on the analogy with a door—it moves but goes nowhere. Likewise the sluggard is hinged to his bed.” (Ross)

c. **It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth:** The lack of energy and initiative in the lazy man is so profound that he can’t or won’t properly care for his personal needs.

i. “The sluggard so dislikes any form of work that the very thought of exerting himself exhausts him.” (Waltke)

ii. “Admiration for the wit of this portraiture has to be tempered with disquiet, on reflection that the sluggard will be the last to see his own features here (see [16](#)), for he has no idea that he is lazy: he is not a shirker but a ‘realist’ ([Pro 26:13](#)); not self-indulgent but ‘below his best in the morning’ ([Pro 26:14](#)); his inertia is ‘an objection to being hustled’ ([Pro 26:15](#)); his mental indolence a fine ‘sticking to his guns’ ([Pro 26:16](#)).” (Kidner)

d. **The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes:** The lazy man may lack energy and initiative, but he doesn’t lack a high opinion of himself. He considers himself smarter **than seven men who can answer sensibly**. The lazy man has great confidence in his own abilities, but never seems to accomplish much.

i. **Seven men:** “Seven here only means *perfection, abundance, or multitude*. He is wiser in his own eyes than a *multitude* of the wisest men.” (Clarke)