

Prov. 19:15, 24: Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, & an idle person will suffer hunger . . .

²⁴ The sluggard buries his hand in the dish & will not even bring it back to his mouth.

Intro: Have you ever heard the term: “Protestant work ethic”? Have you ever been taught that certain cultures of people have a greater emphasis on hard work than others?

1) Protestant: Back to the Bible! 2) A culture with an emphasis on hard work: may focus on Bible

The king is warning his son about the dangers of laziness. God’s children work hard; God’s people work hard; wise people work hard for the glory of King Jesus! We were made to work hard!

As God’s children, work hard & don’t be lazy for the glory of King Jesus!

1. Laziness Makes You More Lazy

Prov. 19:15: Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep

Slothfulness: Laziness, being idle, not working, sleeping all the time, wasting time doing nothing of importance, not accomplishing anything.

Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep: The lazier you are the lazier you become!

a. Laziness becomes a hard to break habit: John Kitchen: “Slothfulness” is self-perpetuating. This person doesn’t do anything, because he is lazy. Then, that laziness brings on the feeling he “can’t” do anything, which, of course, he doesn’t, because he doesn’t feel like it. This choice of laziness further feeds the emotions & he feels even more strongly that he “can’t” do anything. The vicious vortex of sloth gains power with each self-serving decision. The person ends up feeling trapped & powerless. [Welfare system?]

b. Laziness becomes an addiction: It becomes something the lazy person loves & worships. This is what makes him happy! He love it! He delight in it! **Prov. 20:13:** Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, & you will have plenty of bread.

c. Laziness can make you feel lazy so you just act lazy all the more: Have you ever lazed around all day or wasted time all day doing nothing productive & you either feel so bad physically or so condemned spiritually & emotionally that you want to be lazy the whole day?

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2. Lazy People Go Hungry

Prov. 19:15: an idle person will suffer hunger.

a. The second part of Prov. 19:15 shows us the result of giving in to laziness: the idle person will suffer hunger: You won’t eat! You won’t live!

- **Commentator:** the lazy would rather sleep than work . . . they would rather starve to death.

- **2 Thess. 3:7-15:** For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil & labor we worked night & day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command & encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly & to earn their own living. ¹³ As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, & have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

- **1 Tim. 5:8:** But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, & especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith & is worse than an unbeliever.

Encyclopedia Britannica: Protestant ethic, in sociological theory, the value attached to hard work, thrift, and efficiency in one's worldly calling, which, especially in the Calvinist view, were deemed signs [evidence] of an individual's election, or eternal salvation. **GOSPEL!**

b. The exhortation to hard work applies to both physical work & spiritual work: Charles Bridges: A religion without sacrifice, without diligence, will never open a way to heaven.

- **1 Cor. 15:10:** by the grace of God I am what I am, & his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me

- **1 Cor. 9:24-27:** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body & keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

- **Phil. 2:12-13:** work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will & to work for his good pleasure.

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3. Lazy People Can Be Really Lazy

Prov. 19:24: The sluggard buries his hand in the dish & will not even bring it back to his mouth.

a. An illustration to awaken: This is a funny illustration of a man who is so lazy that while he's eating, he is so lazy that he won't even pull his hand out of the bowl to eat what he has in his hand

Eric Lane: In Prov. 10:4 the lazy man couldn't be bothered to go & find food; in Prov. 12:27 he couldn't take the trouble to cook it; & here, having done all this (or had it done for him!) he is too lazy to eat it! We are meant to laugh at the picture of a fool with a meal in front of him, his hand about to pick up a morsel but dropping off to sleep in the process. A caricature, but if serious warnings won't work, perhaps ridicule will.

- b. Characteristics of the sluggard: Articles (Derek Brown):** 1) The sluggard will not start things: **Prov. 14:23:** In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.
- 2) The sluggard will not finish things: **Prov. 19:24**
- 3) The sluggard will not face hard things: **Prov. 22:13:** The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!"
- 4) The sluggard is anxious & restless: **Derek Brown:** Because he is living contrary to the way he was made – to work & build & accomplish & create – the lazy man is constantly restless & full of anxiety. He may long for greater productivity & accomplishment, but because of his unwillingness to work, he will exist in a perpetual state of craving without fulfillment. Eventually, these unfulfilled desires will wreak serious havoc on the sluggard's life.
- **Prov. 13:4:** The soul of the sluggard craves & gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.
- **Prov. 21:25-26:** The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. All day long he craves & craves, but the righteous gives & does not hold back.
- 5) The sluggard has constant trouble: **Prov. 15:19:** The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.
- 6) The sluggard is a nuisance to others: **Prov. 10:26:** Like vinegar to the teeth & smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him.
- 7) The sluggard is self deceived: **Prov. 26:16:** The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.
- 8) The sluggard won't become a leader: **Prov. 12:24:** The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.
- 9) The sluggard doesn't plan for the future: **Prov. 6:6-8:** Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer & gathers her food in harvest.
- 10) The sluggard sleeps excessively: **Prov. 6:9:** How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?

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4. As God's Child, How Are You Tempted To Be Lazy?

a. Do you love sleep too much? (We need sleep; the Lord gives sleep)

- **Prov. 31:15-18:** She rises while it is yet night & provides food for her household & portions for her maidens. ¹⁶ She considers a field & buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

¹⁷ She dresses herself with strength & makes her arms strong. ¹⁸ She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.

b. Do you work hard when you are on a job or at work? Article: In its annual Wasting Time at Work Survey, Salary.com reported that 89 percent of respondents admitted that they waste time at work each day. A small percentage even admitted they waste at least half of an eight-hour workday on non-work-related tasks. For the 61 percent who admit to wasting 30 minutes to an hour, the lost productivity may not seem like a big deal. But for a small-business owner, even 30 minutes each day adds up to 2.5 hours a week and 130 hours each year.

John Piper: [Have] Integrity. Be absolutely and meticulously honest and trustworthy on the job. Be on time. Give a full day's work. "Thou shalt not steal." More people rob their employers by being slackers than by [stealing] the petty cash.

Christians don't mess around on social media when they are on the clock – they don't take personal cell phone calls when they are on the clock – that's stealing from your employer; Christians don't call in sick when they are not sick; Christians work hard without someone checking in on them to make them work because they know God is watching, & ultimately Christians work for God!

- **Eccl. 9:10:** Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

- **Col. 3:23-24:** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord & not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

c. Are you simply unorganized? *Do More Better* – **Tim Challies:** Productivity is effectively stewarding your gifts, talents, time, energy, & enthusiasm for the good of others & the glory of God. Productivity thieves: 1) Laziness; 2) Busyness: "Busyness may make you feel good about yourself & give you the illusion of getting things done, but it probably just means that you are directing too little attention in too many directions, that you are prioritizing all the wrong things, & that your productivity is suffering." 3) Thorns & thistles (Practical advice: Change 1 thing; 3 tools: Task Management – Todoist.com; Scheduling: Google Calendar; Information: Evernote.com)

d. Are you distracted? Too much entertainment, sports, TV, smart phone?

e. Are you overweight? What are you eating habits? Exercise habits? **David Mathis (Make War On Sin With Exercise):** Sloth & gluttony may be two of the harder ones to talk about because they are so acceptable in our day, & they are a deadly combination, both spiritually & physically. Now, more than 40 percent of Americans are considered obese. You might think it's more difficult to find out what percent are lazy. However, one study reports that among adults under the age of 30, 43 percent self-identify as lazy! [**1 Tim. 4:7-8:** Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.]

f. Are you redeeming the time? **C. T. Studd:** Only one life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last!

- **Eph. 5:14-16:** "Awake, O sleeper, & arise from the dead, & Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. [As an intern: I wrote down everything I did & the time it took – logged it]

g. Are you the kind of person who slips out quietly when the hard work begins? (Family game questions) How often do you stay at church functions until the end when everything is totally cleaned up?

h. Are you lazy in the spiritual disciplines? (Word of God, Prayer, Church, Family Worship,

Fasting, Fighting Sin)

5. God's Children Work Hard

a. God's children redeem the time: Eph. 5:15-16: Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

b. God's children work so that they are dependent on no one: 1 Thess. 4:11-12: work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may live properly before outsiders & be dependent on no one.

c. God's children work so that they can give to those in need: Eph. 4:28: Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

d. God's children know they ought to work or they don't eat: 2 Thess. 3:10: For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

One thing you cannot work for: your justification before God: Rom. 4:4-5: Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. & to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness

Jesus worked for you to then enable & empower you to work hard for Him!

- **Gal. 5:22-23:** the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**

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Christ Jesus Worked And Served And Bled
He Had No Place To Lay His Head
He Prayed All Night While Others Bed
He Healed And Preached And Cried And Pled
And Worked Like None You've Seen Or Read
He's Never Lazy – Toiled Instead
Yet For Your Sluggishness He's Dead
Bore All God's Curse Upon His Head
And On That Cross He Died And Bled
But Rose Alive New Life To Spread
To All Who Trust And To Him Wed
Now By His Spirit Work And Tread
Upon All Laziness And Dread
Serve Your King – Full Steam Ahead
For He's Your All, Your Love, Your Head!