

Wisdom 101: Proverbs

Lesson #4 – Going to Work

“Laziness grows on people. It begins in cobwebs and ends in iron chains.”

– Thomas Buxton

Discuss with the person by you: How did Jesus exemplify a vibrant work ethic?

Laziness vs. Hard Work

10:26 – “As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.” (NASB)

“Like vinegar to the teeth, like smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy person to those who send him on a mission.” (God’s Word)

12:11 – “He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who pursues worthless things lacks sense.” (NASB)

“Those who work their land will have plenty of food, but the one who chases empty dreams is not wise.” (NCV)

21:25-26 – “The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, for his hands refuse to work; all day long he is craving, while the righteous gives and does not hold back.” (NASB)

“The desire of a lazy person will kill him because his hands refuse to work. All day long he feels greedy, but a righteous person gives and does not hold back.” (God’s Word)

22:13 – “The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside; I will be killed in the streets!” (NASB)

“The lazy man is full of excuses. ‘I can’t go to work!’ he says. ‘If I go outside, I might meet a lion on the street and be killed.’” (Living Bible)

In 1895, the citizens of Leadville, Colorado were getting desperate. Their little town was on the verge of economic ruin, and something had to be done. Suddenly, an idea occurred to some of the town leaders. They would construct an attraction so unique, so alluring, that tourists would drive from all over the nation just to come and see it. In turn, they would spend their money on hotel rooms, food, souvenirs, and other necessities, thus bolstering their sagging economy and saving the town. On November 25 of that same year, the people of Leadville went to work. They were going to build the largest ice palace in America. They planned a winter carnival to coincide with its completion. On New Year’s Day of 1896, the town turned out for the grand opening. The immense palace measured for 450 by 320 feet. The towers that flanked the entrance were 90 feet high. Inside was a 16,000 square foot skating rink. That winter, the idea appeared to be a great success. But by the end of March, the palace was melting away, along with the hopes of Leadville. Thousands have visited, but in the end, Leadville was back where they started. It was such a financial disaster, they decided not to do another one. Their imaginative scheme had resulted in nothing. It was a “worthless pursuit.” – *Today in the Word*, August 4, 1993

What are the characteristics of someone who is lazy?

What kind of excuses do we tend to make to avoid responsibility? Why do we do that?

As Christians, are we ever tempted to avoid laziness by overworking ourselves and spreading ourselves too thin? Why do you think we face that temptation? What can we do to change?

How Laziness Affects Wealth

10:4-5 – “Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in the summer is a son who acts wisely. But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.” (NASB)

“Lazy people are soon poor; hard workers get rich. A wise youth harvests in the summer, but one who sleeps during harvest is a disgrace.” (NLT)

20:4 – “The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, so he begs during the harvest and has nothing.” (NASB)

“Those too lazy to plow in the right season will have no food at the harvest.” (NLT)

21:5 – “The plans of the diligent lead surely to disadvantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.” (NASB)

“The plans of hard-working people earn a profit, but those who act too quickly become poor.” (NCV)

28:19 – “He who tills his land will have plenty of food, but he who follows empty pursuits will have poverty in plenty.” (NASB)

“Whoever works his land will have plenty to eat. Whoever chases unrealistic dreams will have plenty of nothing.” (God’s Word)

Read Matthew 25:14-30. What does that teach us about laziness, especially concerning our possessions and talents?

In what areas of our Christian lives will we see results from hard work on our part?

How Laziness Affects Stewardship

24:30-34 – “I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,” Then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man.” (NASB)

“One day I walked by the field of an old lazybones, and then passed the vineyard of a lout; they were overgrown with weeds, thick with thistles, all the fences broken down. I took a long look and pondered what I saw; the fields preached to me a sermon and I listened. “A nap here, a nap there, a day off here, a day off there, sit back, take it easy – do you know what comes next? Just this: you can look forward to a dirt-poor life with poverty as your permanent houseguest.” (The Message)

27:23-24 – “Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds; for riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.” (NASB)

“Know the state of your flocks, and not put your heart into caring for your herds, for riches don’t last forever, and the crown might not be passed to the next generation.” (NLT)

Read Acts 4:31-32. Do you think that the boldness mentioned in v.31 has anything to do with the sharing of possessions in v.32?

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13, the church at Thessalonica was becoming complacent, waiting for the Second Coming. What can we do to avoid complacency?