

1.

Diligence vs. Laziness
Proverbs 27: 23-27

Key concepts:

1. It is God who appointed man to work.
2. It is He who demands diligence in our work.
3. God requires that we are good stewards of His blessings/gifts.

From the beginning of time, before the fall, God taxed man with work. Work was not intended as punishment but as a means of achieving success, production, creativity and growth of every kind. God also requires that we, his children, be diligent in all you do rather than lazy and complacent. Diligence is the opposite of laziness, carelessness, procrastination, negligence, sleepiness (ways the bible describes someone who is sluggish and slothful).

Proverbs 27: 23-27: You are given many good opportunities and privileges, that may change tomorrow, for tomorrow is not certain. Your health and situation may change. What's available today may be gone tomorrow. The best thing that you can do now is to learn to manage what you are given wisely in order to reap well tomorrow. We all called to be excellent, faithful, responsible, successful stewards of every blessings entrusted and gifted to us. He expects us to wisely manage our resources, potential, health, talents and advantages to be all we can be. Laziness is an affront to God, it is a sin. Laziness is also harmful to us. The lazy person is destined to fail and consequently live with regrets, bitterness and envy; he/she is also one who depends on charity and thus is dependent. The responsible steward is one who knows the state of his/her affairs, he/she takes constant inventory of her life, resources and blessings and seeks to improve things as much as possible. In the parable of the talent, Jesus rewards the servant who worked hard and well with more riches, the lazy one is rebuffed and sent away empty handed. Would you not rather here "good and faithful servant" from The Lord than a rebuff? Diligence is not a matter left to chance, it about effort and wisdom, it's about determination and perseverance. What are you waiting for? Get to work!

2.

Diligence vs. Laziness
Proverbs 15:19, 18:9, 21:25

Key concepts:

- Strength is given for the sake of the weak.
- The strong has a duty to uplift the weak.
- Laziness leads to destruction.

Salomon tells us that he/she who is lazy or neglectful is a destroyer, one who destroys the very resources he/she depends on (Proverbs 18:9). Consequently, the lazy one destroys him/herself and others (Prov. 15:19). However, if you are of those who are not lazy or weak and thus strong and blessed; what is the purpose of such blessings?

Our blessings/strength are for the sake of others (Roman 15:1-3.) the strong is duty bound to uplift/help the weak become as strong as he/she. Strength should not, must not, be used to look down on the weak/lazy. Because laziness or a refusal to work destroys man (Prov. 21:25). Failure to act to prevent a crime/disaster is a crime in the court of law; it is equally so for the children of God if we choose to ignore the plight of our weak brethren out of selfishness. Indeed, the diligent one should bear with the failing of the weak one out of love, even as the weak grows in maturity and/or becomes less deficient. As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens another (Prov. 27:17.) you have a Christian duty towards your less-capable brother, in that also you must be diligent. Diligence involves hard work and constant vigilance but, in the end, it serves as a good investment, it produces good fruits.

3.

Diligence vs. Laziness
Proverbs 21:5, 26:13-16

Key concepts:

- A relationship between faith and social economic.
- How to achieve great things socially and spiritually.
- Right living and how to it is related to faith.

There is a way of life that leads to social captivity and even spiritual bondage. Certain behaviors or attitudes that lead to a life of victimization and social exploitation. As the lazy one is busy dreaming, rather than acting, their wish/dream become their prison, a trap that keeps them from success and time passes them by. Lacking in discipline their appetite is insatiable; lacking in motivation, the lazy craves incessantly for a life he could work for but refuses to in fear of labor.

Prov. 21:5: The lazy is insane for he does the same things always but expecting different results; whereas the plans of the diligent leads to abundance. The righteous fear God. He attains prosperity. He does not live in the fantasy world. He longs to know the will of God. His/her way is carefully constructed. The diligent trusts God to fight his battle for him.

Prov. 26:13-16: The lazy thinks himself/herself wiser than anyone else. His way is his/her own trap. Progress/success is thus denied him/her. In fact, he/she foresees the way to success as impossible. Those who depend on the lazy also suffer along with him/her. Laziness seems to be a choice, according to Salomon.

Luke (13:6-9) in the Parables of the fig tree, considers the useless tree. All efforts invested in this tree is in vain, it is supposed to be fruitful but not so. Similarly, you have everything necessary to yield good results, but you do not out of laziness. By judgement the tree should be righteously destroyed but out of grace, it is given an extra year to produce fruit. Grace and mercy offer an opportunity to amend the lazy attitude but not an excuse to continue unchanged. If you are considering marriage currently, you need to fast and pray for his/her face does not tell you all there is to know about him/her. Salomon through Luke tells us to beware of God's judgement and sanctions. Fortunately, God is always willing to forgive those who repent, those who change and turn away from sin. Repentance is not something for later but is presently due, for judgement does not depend on you and may be just around the corner. The fruit of repentance is to live life responsibly by God's grace; take advantage of the time you have now.

4.

Diligence vs. Laziness
Proverbs 10:4-5, 20:4, 21:25, 28:19

Key concepts:

- The lazy craves but hates hard work
- Lazy hands are for poverty but diligence for wealth.
- Learn principles that will lead to success.

We are not called to rest and relax and view work as an interruption to chilling. Work was established by God in Genesis 2:1. He entrusted man with farming/working the earth.

Here are 4 principles to apply to succeed:

Principle I: Proverbs 10:4-5: Stop procrastinating. If you should be studying waiting a couple of days before the exam to cram is sinful. You may pass but you'll keep justifying your laziness, thinking you work well under pressure, that's foolish. You need to do the right thing right at the right time. Diligence means to do careful and persistent work of effort done in timeliness. Sleep is not a bad thing we were created to need but sleeping at the wrong time is bad. See Prov 6:6-11, the diligent ant.

Principle II: Proverbs 20:4: Tackle important tasks no matter the difficulty. The lazy always has excuses to avoid hard work. If effort is required, they avoid it. They prefer a hand-out and to be subsidized by others. The lazy frustrates their boss always coveting but refusing to do the work to avoid stress and difficulties. The diligent does not avoid difficulties, nor details, he/she just get to work and does what needs doing. The lazy cannot expect to succeed.

Principle III: Prov: 21:25: Do not just wish for success but invest in the work for success diligent. The lazy desires success but takes short cuts at every turn. If you prefer to dream over doing, nothing good will happen. the lazy craves with greed, lusting after what they see.

Principle IV: Prov: 28:19: A godly work ethics is rewarded but empty pursuits are not. To succeed at your job, you need to work constantly and obey the wisdom of the bible. It is humane to wish for success, but a pipe dream is just that. Be aware of your strength and talent but mostly mindful of your weaknesses and limitations for there lies the potential for failure. Use your energy to work rather than pursuit of vain things and making excuses. Work hard, steadily.

Don't procrastinate, learn to prioritize, don't take short cuts and always put in steady effort. Spiritual laziness is the worst of all forms of laziness. Trusting your life to Christ is the most diligent thing you can do for your future.

5.

Diligence vs. Laziness
Proverbs 14:23, 19:15, 26:16

Key concepts:

- Benefits, reward, profits vs. costs of diligence and laziness.
- Diligence reaps good results.

It is God Himself who requires diligence of us, in all things that we do, pursue and seek after. Consider the benefits vs. the cost of diligence/laziness.

1. Prov. 13:4: If you invest your time/resources/energy in the right activity you will reap the benefits/great outcomes. There are times things do not work as they should because life is unfair, however hard work pays, see Prov. 21:5. Being called a “lazy bum” is not a compliment. Prov. 12:24, 22:29, teach us that leadership often is the result of diligence. There is honor and respect in earning what you have by being diligent. Choosing to be neglectful and lazy is not godly. If you’re an eloquent talker who can only argue ideas/concept without ever doing anything, you’re on your way to the poor house, the house of ruin, disappointment and regret.
2. Prov. 19:15, nothing is wrong will sleep but sleeping cannot be a lifestyle. There is a time to rest and a time to get to work. Too much sleep leads to negligence, being unproductive, lethargic and wasting your time and energy. You can either use the opportunities that you have now or lose them forever. In being lethargic and not progressing, one often loses the capacity to do anything. Lack of movement and progress leads to death, death of talent, future, career and of brain cells.
3. Prov. 26:16, if you’re only wise in your own eyes, you are deceiving yourself and being conceded. You are believing in your own lies, rationalize rather than act; you create your own distraction and thus destruction. Instead, learn to apply yourself at everything you do. Give yourself to the work, see Col. 3:23-24, 1 Cor. 15:58.

Rather than letting yourself down by neglecting your future, learn to take advantage of every opportunity that is given to you; only then will you achieve something worthwhile. Don’t let live pass you by for the sake of sleep. Idleness leads to poverty. For all your talking, what do you have to show for it? Instead of talking the talk, walk the walk.

Key concepts:

- Palm Sunday: an event of celebration or of rejection.
- The triumphant entry: an intentional act.
- The meaning of hosanna.
- Christ is coming back.

The history of Israel is that of God with the world. The bible presents Jesus as the living stone with the purpose of giving life to the spiritually dead. To those who accepts him by faith, he is a life-giver but to those who willingly reject him, he is a stumbling block. There is no middle ground. He is either the light to the those who are in darkness or their condemnation.

Jesus presents himself to Israel as king of kings in entering the city on a donkey. Palm branches by traditions were used for a king coming back to his city in victory. This was part of the Festival of Tabernacle. The bible does not tell us when he is coming back but tells us about the circumstances around birth, his birth place and how he will enter the city (Zacc. 14:4).

As Matthew reflects on his identity so must each of us answer the question: Is He the promised messiah? Is he whom He claims to be?

Christ announces himself as the rightful heir of the Davidic kingdom when he enters the town with the people screaming hosanna. The people laid their clothes on the ground instead of red carpet as was fit for a king. By doing so, they testify that indeed he is the rightful crowned king. Hosanna is also what the angels sang at his birth "blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord." Hosanna which means save us oh king we prays, and may the king live forever. As the rightful king of Israel, he is a threat to Caesar, Herod and thus Pilate and therefore he is not welcome.

Israel missed their chance due to sin, they were blinded and living in darkness. Instead walk in light while you are able, take advantage of God's visit. you may lose God's favor and opportunities to repent presently. The wise should take notice and act; you are given you the ability to do so. Some are miserable due to willful rejections, and some because of avoidance to see what God is doing in own lives.

At this very moment in our Christian walk, diligence is required, its necessary and crucial. Awake from slumber and sin! Like Israel, we are waiting for our king, awaiting His return. When he comes back, in what state will He find you?

7. Text of the day: Prov. 10:16, Ecc. 9:10.

Key concepts:

- Laziness and wickedness lead to God's condemnation and ultimately death.
- One reaps everlasting reward for valuable work with everlasting consequences.
- The work of the righteous leads to life and no condemnation or punishments.
- The wicked leads to sin, death and punishment. Rev. 22:12

Working for God yields to most satisfaction, which is unequal to all other professions or vocations. For its value is eternal and godly. Consider these two recommendations for believers:

1. Prov 10:16: As righteous people our work is useful for life (also see Rom. 6:22-23).
2. Ecclesiastes 9:10: Do all with all your might. God values good work ethics. Procrastination is sinful, and laziness leads to poverty. Whereas diligence leads to riches. The righteous stands firm even in disaster.

The purpose of the work of the righteous is to glorify God and to worship Him. For we were created for His glory which give us a particular/specific purpose and calling (Is. 43:6-7). John (9:4) tells us that tomorrow is not guaranteed so now is the time to fulfill our purpose. Does serving God comes naturally to you or do you have to be forced? (Phil. 2:11). If you're reluctant to serve God, you might not be of His flock to start with. Deut. 6:4-5. What we do for Him must reflect what He's done for us. Be diligent in any ministry you find to do. (Ps. 103:1.) serving God should take all of you for He deserves our best having given us His very best. Nothing you give can compare to what He's already given. To give God anything less than your best is an insult. John in Revelation (4:11) reminds us that God is worthy of glory, honor and power. Do not trust tomorrow rather seize the day, serve diligently today. Time is short, we have work to do, get to it. Do not concern yourself with tomorrow's trouble. Go find something to do and do it with all your might.

Key concepts:

- The heart of the matter is the heart
- Beware of what you feed the heart
- Hypocrisy and lies cannot be hidden from God

Have you been asked “What is the matter with you?” the right answer is the heart; the heart is the matter. The book of Proverbs (4:23) has much to say about the heart. We are urged to keep certain things outside of the heart and/or to remove quickly whatever has infiltrated it but doesn’t belong there less everything that comes from such heart become contaminated by what resides there. We are also supposed to protect the physical heart; the spiritual and emotional heart is also vital to our survival and must be preserved. What is feeding your heart? The wrong diet will cause a spiritual heart attack/failure. Does your heart need healing and/or restoration? The state of the heart dictates its functioning and your behavior; it affects all aspects of life. The way you feel and think of others reflect who you are on the inside; because you will project your feelings on who you are on other’s intentions. What you accuse another of indeed reflect who you are. “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Prov. 23:7). There might be more wickedness in your heart than you want to admit; you need to repent of it and ask God to change your heart. It is not the fault of others that you behave and think the way you do. The cause of your illness and destroyed relationships is your heart.

What motivates you? Impressing others? Fooling others? Fooling yourself? Are you genuine or a fake? God knows who you really are, you cannot lie to him. It takes very little for the real you to be seen or discovered.

How does the lord consider your ministry, service, your prayer or whatever you pretend to do or be? God vomits and rejects whatever you offer him in hypocrisy and with the wrong motive (Rev 3:16.). You cannot manipulate God; He knows you for whom you truly are. People may praise your actions for they cannot see in your heart. How do then should you pray? Implore His forgiveness (See Ps 139:23-24), ask him to change your heart.

9.

Prov 21: 1-3; 24:11-12

Key concepts:

- The heart of the matter is the heart.
- What is the motive behind your actions?
- Siding with what is wrong is doing what is evil.
- God is always willing to forgive when we repent and trust Him.

Regardless of what motivates you, God knows everything there is to know about you. There is not a thing you can hide from Him. All that we do is exposed to God's view and judgement. If your good action is just about appearance, you are deceiving yourself and others and that has consequences before God. Compared to God's holiness, even your best good actions are soiled by sin and count for little.

Prov. 21:1-3: God is the one who judges your motivation and actions. God is omniscient, and He rules the heart. We may think our behaviors are decent enough in comparison to others; we may justify all we do according to our own excuses, but God cannot be fooled by words or pretense. He knows our inner being and our every thought and deeds before we even think or act. Beware of who you choose for friends (Matt 15: 18-19); who you keep in your company will affect what you hear and see which will feed your heart. We are time guilty by association when we support and perpetuate evil through other who actively practice what is wrong.

Prov 24:11-12: you cannot claim ignorance as excuse, the bible is clear; God requires holiness of us. Rather than lying to yourself, be mindful that God weighs the heart. He judges our motivations, behaviors and deeds according to what He teaches, to His Word and commands.

When we are guilty of such hypocrisy (deception of self and others), it is critical that we confess and pray for a change of heart. Find what's wrong with your heart and seek a solution that will glorify God. Do not ignore His warnings for He resists the proud. Do not hide in self-pity or get caught up in pointing the finger at others, rather, humble yourself before God and trust in His mercy. Let us trust God with our justice and justification for we are not qualified to care for it ourselves. It is He alone who saves the lost and the wretched.