

The Biblical Responsibility Of Diligence

It is everyone's responsibility to be hard working, persistent, and diligent. The person who has no diligence is lazy – a sluggard, if you will. The sluggard. What can be said about this kind of person? Is he self-centered or lazy? Does he rest; does he do what he wants to do without regard to others? Certainly all these things probably describe a sluggard, but much more could be said.

The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.
Proverbs 21:25,26

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.
Romans 12:11 KJV

I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

Proverbs 24:30-34

At the very least, a sluggard has a major problem with procrastination. His motto would be to “never do today what you can put off until tomorrow”; always with good intentions; always just about ready to start a job, but not quite. The sluggard probably gets started on a few jobs, and with some of those tasks he may even get some things done, but never quite gets them finished or brought to completion.

What is his excuse? Maybe he didn't have all the tools to finish the job. Maybe he wasn't feeling well. Maybe the rain was on its way or it could be just that the sun was not shining brightly enough. Perhaps his excuse is that the job became bigger than he was expecting or it became more time consuming than he was willing to commit to. Whatever the excuse, the sluggard always finds a reason for not finishing the job.

The sluggard as portrayed in Proverbs is an example of what not to be like and presents a valuable lesson for us to learn. Proverbs 20:4 tells us that the sluggard is too lazy to pull a plow in the springtime, and therefore has no harvest in the fall. In Proverbs 22:13, he lets his mind wander, but refuses to move his body. He has a great reason why he can't get it into gear.

He says there could be a lion outside, and if he goes out to work, he could be murdered in the streets! Whatever the situation, when the sluggard makes up his mind that he doesn't feel like working today, he will find an excuse to justify his inaction. He will find some kind of plausible explanation for his decision. He will leap to shirk his responsibilities, for he has a quick mind and a lazy body.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, "The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools."

Samuel Johnson noted, "If your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed not by strength, but perseverance."

William Penn equates faith and diligence when he said, "Patience and diligence, like faith, remove mountains."

"Diligent people don't waste God's provision."

Proverbs 12:27 says, "The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions."

Here is the picture of a sluggard who is not only lazy,

but also wasteful. Not only does he do what he wants to, when he wants to, but he is also is a great waster of resources and provision. He goes out, he hunts his game, he kills his game. But after the fun of the hunt, the work never begins. He could prepare the provision for his family or the poor, the needy and the hungry, but he instead chooses to walk away from it, lets it die and lie and does not make the food available for the hungry.

Diligent people don't waste God's provision. They thank God for the provision and prepare the meat for future use. They share it with others. They continue diligently using the resources available to them.

Sluggards are not like that. They are not interested in saving resources and helping others. To them it is all about the fun of the sport. They are wasteful about everything. Sluggards proclaim that when their ships come in, they will begin to give. Herein lies the problem: If you never sent your ship out to begin with, you cannot expect it to come in. For what kind of ship are you waiting? Money does not fall from heaven. God does not give money miracles to a lazy, slothful person.

“Learn the right way to live.
Understand the responsibility
of personal diligence.”

If you are not going to live the life of a sluggard, you need to get your act together. You need to start working, using godly wisdom and insight. You need to understand your calling and purpose in life and set out objectives that will allow you to live that fulfilled life. Then, and only then, will you reap with joy what you have sowed with tears.

THE SLUGGARD

'Tis the voice of the Sluggard: I heard him complain,
“You have waked me too soon! I must slumber again!”
As the door on its hinges, so he on his bed
Turns his sides, and his shoulders, and his heavy head.
“A little more sleep, and a little more slumber!”
Thus he wastes half his days and his hours without number;
And when he gets up he sits folding his hands,
Or walks about sauntering, or trifling he stands.
I made him a visit, still hoping to find
He had taken better care for improving his mind:
He told me his dreams, talk'd of eating and drinking
But he scarce reads his Bible, and never loves thinking.

Issac Watts (1674–1748)