

TEACHING FOR AFRICA

DILIGENCE IN WORK—ARE YOU LAZY?

1. Proverbs 6:6-8 *Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: 7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, 8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.*

Ants-vs. 7—They work even when no one is bossing them, supervising them, or pushing them. They are self-motivated.

Vs. 8—They do the work at hand when it needs to be done without procrastinating.

2. Proverbs 6:9-11 *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? 10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

Lazy people are fond of sleep, rest, recreation, naps—to an exaggerated degree. Rest is good, but not when we should be working, and not instead of work.

They don't say, "I WON'T DO IT", but they never get the job done because they say, WAIT A LITTLE, NOT NOW, I NEED TO REST FIRST, I'M TIRED, TOMORROW, LATER, THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW, NO RUSH, I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT NOW, I'LL GET AROUND TO IT, WE COULD STRETCH THIS WORK OUT, THERE'S NO HURRY.

If a watchman only sits or lays around, he cannot grasp a weapon in time to stop a burglar.

Examples of laziness—Walking by litter and not picking it up.
Being sent to do work, then doing other things instead.
Pretending to work when you're really not
Working only when you're being watched

3. Proverbs 10:4 *He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

Laziness and stinginess lead to poverty, but diligence and generosity lead to wealth and well being.

In society, who gets ahead? When salaries can be raised, who gets the raises? When jobs are available, who gets the jobs?

In your own work, who has a garden adequate for his family's needs? Who has a variety of vegetables and fruits to supplement his diet? Who fixes up his house so that it does not fall down in a storm? Who cares for animals?

4. Proverbs 10:5 *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*

The diligent worker does his work at the right time. There is a time for rest and recreation, and there is a time for work.

Examples of working at the right time--

Those who get up early when wild mushrooms are in season, and pick them before breakfast

Those who dry greens when they are plentiful

Those who eat food that is in season

Those who fix their roof before it caves in

Those who immediately do what they have been asked to do

Those who start early on an assignment that will take some time to complete

5. Proverbs 10:26 *As vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.*

Who would like to drink a cup of vinegar? Who would like to fill their mouth with vinegar and hold it in their mouth for 5 minutes? Who likes to get smoke in their eyes? These things are unpleasant. They do not make us happy.

The lazy worker brings just such pain to his employer. Employing him or overseeing his work is constantly an unpleasant experience that we try to stay away from if we can. That's one reason it's hard for a lazy person to find work.

6. Proverbs 12:11 *He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.*

The principle of this verse is that we should use what God has given us. God will use that to bring us further provision for our needs.

If he has given us a job, let us do it.

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If he has given us land, let us plant a garden and develop it fully.

If he has given us a talent for music, let us practice and use it.

If he has given us clothing, let us keep it mended.

If he has given us a home or a vehicle or a bicycle, let us keep it in good repair.

If he has given us books, let us read them and share them with others.

7. Proverbs 12:24 *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.*

Diligence is recognized by everyone as a sign of leadership, laziness as a sign of incompetence.

The diligent becomes the lender, the lazy man the borrower.

The diligent becomes the captain, the leader, the supervisor, the boss. The lazy man always has to have someone telling him what to do and looking over him.

8. Proverbs 12:27 *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, but the substance of a diligent man is precious.*

The same principle—Use what God has given you.

The diligent man--

If he has food, he doesn't let it spoil. He eats it or preserves it or uses it to bless others.

Examples of laziness—

Cutting down palm trees to get their fruit instead of climbing them.

Letting a garden go to weed.

Letting food spoil in the refrig for lack of planning.

Ordering new items because he hasn't sorted out his drawers and closets to know what he has on hand.

9. Proverbs 13:4 *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*

The diligent understands how things are obtained in God's economy. It is not desiring things or coveting them that brings them to us. It is work. It is taking responsibility.

Africa needs to get rid of the notion that they are waiting for deliverance from somebody else—especially from white people. It is diligence that can bring good things to people, not gifts from the outside.

Perhaps some of the colonial governments treated Africans like little children who couldn't do anything on their own. Now many people have believed their lies.

10. Proverbs 13:11 *Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase.*

Don't be looking for get-rich-quick schemes like lotteries, gambling, etc. This is not how God has appointed for His people to gain money.

God has appointed a proper way to get wealth—by working.

11. Proverbs 13:23 *Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for lack of judgment.*

Sometimes people work hard, but they develop destructive lifestyles that work against them and destroy all they have gained.

Judgment is very important—Don't throw away money on worthless pursuits.
Drink Cigarettes Drugs Prostitution Pornography Lottery
Gambling Fancy, expensive clothing and jewels just to show off
Bribery Expensive parties Extravagant & addictive behaviors

12. Proverbs 14:4 *Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.*

Animal husbandry involves work and mess, but they can help a lot—
For work, for food, for income.

Sometimes we have to be willing to clean up a little mess in order to get productive work done.

13. Proverbs 14:23 *In all labor there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.*

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Work doesn't have to be high-paying, a union job, a titled job, a respectable-sounding job. All honest work is helpful to someone and helps the worker by earning him a wage.

Work, which is profitable, is contrasted with idle chatter, which is not profitable. Work tends to make us richer, idle chatter tends to make us poorer.

14. Proverbs 15:19 *The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns; but the way of the righteous is made plain.*

The way of the slothful is as painful as if he walking in a thorn hedge. He seeks ease and comfort, but he finds the way more difficult because of his laziness.

15. Proverbs 15:27 *He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.*

Those who seek to get rich quick bring trouble on their own house, but those who refuse bribery and corruption shall live.

16. Proverbs 18:9 *He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.*

Laziness is a great waste—a waste of time, a waste of energy, a waste of talent, a waste of life, a waste of opportunity.

17. Proverbs 19:15 *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.*

Slothfulness dulls the senses and ultimately results in poverty and hunger.

18. Proverbs 20:4 *The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.*

The lazy person cannot endure any inconvenience. The weather—too cold, too hot, too rainy, too dry. His health—too stiff, too achy, too tired, too much pain.

In the end, laziness will rob you of everything and reduce you to begging.

19. Proverbs 20:13 *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.*

The lazy person loves to sleep late and nap often. He will not push himself to work if he feels tired.

20. Proverbs 21:5 *The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.*

Not only the actions but even the thinking of the diligent is different from that of the lazy. The diligent have a different attitude and their thoughts plan their work carefully.

21. Proverbs 22:7 *The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*

The diligent man works to get money flowing to him as the lender, rather than away from him as the borrower.

22. Proverbs 22:13 *The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.*

The lazy person will use any ridiculous excuse to get out of work.

23. Proverbs 22:29 *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.*

The diligent have no reason to be ashamed, no matter who they are accounting to.

24. Proverbs 23:20-21 *Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.*

Another warning against throwing money away on wasteful, destructive and addictive behaviors.

25. Proverbs 24:27 *Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterward build thine house.*

Planning your work before you begin

26. Proverbs 24:30-34 *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little*

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sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth; and thy want as an armed man.

The lazy does not invest labor in upkeep or care of the things God has given. Therefore God's gifts get run down and are no longer productive. In the end, they cannot produce the wealth God intended for them.

The lazy is a procrastinator.

27. Proverbs 26:13-16 *The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*

The lazy man uses any excuse and even lies to cover up his laziness, but no one is deceived. He lies in bed when he can't even sleep or even lie still and rest. He begins a job but is too lazy to bring it to completion.

28. Proverbs 28:19 *He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.*

The diligent cares for and uses what God has given him, and those gifts yield more increase. The diligent spends time chasing around with worthless friends, which leads to poverty.

29. Proverbs 30:25-28 *The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make their houses in the rocks; The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces.*

The diligent work when the work needs doing, without procrastination. They are not afraid of hard work, they do a good job, they are self-starters, they work together harmoniously, there is nothing to limit the places they can go.

May God give us a mind to work!