

**Laziness and Hard Work**  
**Proverbs 10:4-5**  
**January 3, 2016**

## Introduction

As we begin the New Year, 2016, I want us to think about what we can be doing for the Lord for this year and perhaps beyond.

The theme of laziness and hard work is a frequent topic of Solomon. This is not the first time that Solomon deals with a lazy person. He talks about the sluggard in **chapter 6** and warns his son that being a sluggard is a bad thing because bad things happen to them—poverty, ruin, and reputation. Here in **Proverbs 10:4-5**, he contrasts two things: laziness and hard work. This is what he says.

**Proverbs 10:4-5** *He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a wise son; he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.*

## I. Lazy Person (4a, 5b)

- Identity
  - Slack hand and sleeps in harvest
    - Picture of bow without string (slack)
    - Cannot bend, so it does no work
    - Sleeping during harvest—this is a person who does not do any work throughout the whole time
    - Rest does not equal to laziness
  - Other proverbs identifying the lazy person

**Proverbs 19:24** *A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again*

**Proverbs 26: 15** *The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.*

**Proverbs 19:15** *Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger.*

**Proverbs 26:14** *As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed.*

- This is person who does nothing but sleep and do nothing
- Time is wasted and work is not being done

- Condemning laziness
  - He who has a slack hand becomes poor
  - Solomon is not saying that being poor is a bad thing or shameful
  - He is saying that laziness will lead to poverty

**Proverbs 13:4** *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.*

**Proverbs 20:13** *Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with bread.*

- How?
  - You won't be able to eat

**Proverbs 12:27** *The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man's precious possession.*

- This is an attitude problem, not physical inability

**Proverbs 21:25** *The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.*

- Forced labor (intense supervision)

**Proverbs 12:24** *The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.*

- Chaos

**Proverbs 24:30-34** *I went by the field of the lazy man, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; 31 And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down. 32 When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: 33 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; 34 So shall your poverty come like a prowler, and your need like an armed man.*

**Ecclesiastes 10:18** *Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks.*

- Excuses

- Lazy people give all kinds of excuses of why they cannot do the work
- Those excuses are silly but to a lazy person, it seems alright and wise
  - Full of self-justification

**Proverbs 26:13-16** *The lazy man says, "There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!" 14 As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed. 15 The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth. 16 The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.*

- Some excuses
  - It is too cold outside

**Proverbs 20:4** *The lazy man will not plow because of winter; he will beg during harvest and have nothing.*

- I cannot go to work today because something bad will happen to me

**Proverbs 22:13** *The lazy man says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!"*

- Shame

- Sleep in harvest causes shame
- This is the foolish son who brings grief to his mother (**10:1**)
- Causes grief to master and employer

**Proverbs 10:26** *As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy man to those who send him.*

**Proverbs 15:19** *The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, but the way of the upright is a highway.*

- Destroys relationships

**Proverbs 18:9** *He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.*

- Considered same as gluttons and drunks

**Proverbs 23:21** *For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.*

- The Bible constantly condemns laziness when there is work to be done
- Why?
  - Because God works, and always works
  - It is His character

**John 5:17** *Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working."*

## II. Hard-working Person (4b, 5a)

- Identity
  - Diligent
    - Picture of a sharp edge of a knife
    - Useful and works (works well and hard)
    - This is a person who works with all his might—the best of his ability and to completion

**Ecclesiastes 9:10** *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.*

- Not a workaholic
- Unpoverty
  - Hand of diligent makes rich
  - Best way to get out of poverty? Work hard and at your best
  - Rich does not always mean monetary richness
  - It means plentiful

**Proverbs 13:4** *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.*

**Proverbs 13:11** *Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase.*

- A diligent man will move up

**Proverbs 12:24** *The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.*

**Proverbs 22:29** *Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men.*

- Planner

- He who gathers in summer
- He plans his timing and work
- He has planned ahead and worked hard to make sure the harvest is ready
- He is a self-starter and does not wait for others to tell him what to do

**Proverbs 21:5** *The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.*

- He is orderly and purposeful

**Proverbs 24:27** *Prepare your outside work, make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house.*

- He studies the situation and plans the best course of action

**Proverbs 27:23** *Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and attend to your herds;*

- Blessing

- He who gathers in summer is a wise son
- A wise son makes his father glad (10:1)
- It is a virtue (praise-worthy)

**Proverbs 12:27** *The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man's precious possession.*

- Creates smooth relationship

**Proverbs 15:19** *The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, but the way of the upright is a highway.*

- Working hard and the best of your ability is an imitation of God
- All Christians must be hard workers and doing all things to the best of their ability

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-13** *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.*

**Hebrews 6:11-12** *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*