

Go To The Ant, O Sluggard

Proverbs 6:6-11

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Most of Proverbs is attributed to Solomon, the wisest man in all the earth. We can see how Solomon received his wisdom in 1 Kings 3:2-14.

Proverbs consistently mentions the attitudes and behaviors of the sluggard and the diligent when talking about riches or poverty.

“Sluggard” is used 14 times in proverbs. “Diligent” is used 5 times and “rich” or “riches” is used 26 times. “Poor” is used 34 times.

Here’s what’s interesting: “My son” is used 27 times. “Father” is used 27 times and “mother” is used 14 times.

Proverbs 6:6-11 *“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.”*

What is a sluggard and how does this apply to our lives?

Hebrew Word “Astel” - Sluggish, Lazy

Sluggards are sluggish, slow, and hesitant when they should be decisive, active, or forthright. (Prov. 21:25)

They are procrastinators towards anything important in life constantly making excuses for their lack of ownership. (Prov. 19:24, 21:25)

They are lazy sleeping away their life or wasting their life away with things that have no eternal significance. (Prov. 6:9, 26:14)

They lack the ability to lead themselves and are consistently fearful of things around them. (Proverbs 6:6)

They are selfish and self-absorbed very rarely thinking about others. (Prov. 6:6-7, 22:13)

They are fools, that are short sighted headed towards a path of destruction that they don’t see yet let alone even care. (Prov. 13:4, 26:16)

How do we throw off the sluggard ways within us and combat the flesh?

Proverbs 6:6 *“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.*

About The Ant: Despite her size and royal title, the queen doesn't boss the workers around. Instead, workers decide which tasks to perform based on personal preferences, interactions with nestmates, and cues from the environment.

Action 1. Live Your Life Defined By Commitments, Not Your Feelings

The sluggard is lazy, but the diligent is disciplined.

Corinthians 13:11 *"When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways."*

Questions to consider:

Are you walking and abiding in the Spirit? Or are you living for yourself?

Where are you spending your time?

What in your life needs to be addressed because of your slothfulness?

Proverbs 6:6-8 *"Go to the ant, O Sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest."*

Proverbs 10:4 *"A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."*

Proverbs 21:5 *"The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty."*

Action 2. Live Your Life Defined By Boldness And Passion, Not Worry And Fear - Trusting In A Sovereign God.

The sluggard is fearful, but the diligent is persistent.

Proverbs 26:12-13 *"Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!"*

Proverbs 13:11 *"Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it."*

Proverbs 10:4 *"A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."*

Investing is simply committing money, resources, or time in an endeavor or project with the hopes of obtaining a profit or a reward.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 *"Ship your grain across the sea; after many days you may receive a return. Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land."*

What about you? What do you worry most about in your life? What are you holding back from investing your time, resources, and money in?

Hebrews 13:11 *“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*

Action 3. Live Your Life Defined By Sacrifice And Not Selfish Gain.

The sluggard is greedy, but the diligent is gracious.

Proverbs 21:25-26 *“The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. All day long he craves and craves, but the righteous gives and does not hold back.”*

Proverbs 19:4 *“Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend.”*

Proverbs 19:6 *“Many seek favor of a generous man, and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts.”*

In 1971, Professor Dennis Regan at Cornell University demonstrated the power of the reciprocity principle in what was ostensibly an “art appreciation experiment.” In the experiment, subjects were asked to rate paintings with a partner, who was in reality a research assistant.

Halfway through the exercise, the research assistant would leave the room and return a little while later. For some subjects, he would bring back a soft drink. For other subjects, he would return empty-handed.

At the end of the exercise, the assistant asked the subjects whether they would be willing to do him a favor by purchasing raffle tickets from him. As expected, the subjects who had received the gift of a soda were far more likely to purchase tickets, even though the tickets were far more expensive than the soda had been.

-Paraphrased, Results From 1971 Study

Proverbs 19:17 *“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.”*

Matthew 6:21 *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

“Abundance isn’t God’s provision for me to live in luxury. It’s His provision for me to help others live. God entrusts me with His money not to build my kingdom on earth, but to build His kingdom in heaven.”

-Randy Alcorn, *“Money, Possessions, and Eternity”*

About The Ant: Like humans, ants are social. They live and work together in highly organized societies called colonies. In fact, most ant colonies are so united toward the common purposes of survival, growth, and reproduction that they behave like a single organism, or a “superorganism.”

Surrender Your Life To Jesus, The Author And Perfecter Of Our Faith.

The reality is both rich and poor, sluggard and diligent, we all need a Savior because we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Proverbs 11:4 “*Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.*”

What is the work of Jesus? It's the Gospel, it's the Good News that is for you and for me.

Proverbs 11:24 “*One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.*”

2 Corinthians 8:9 “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich.*”