

LAZINESS

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1986 (Rev. 96)

Lesson #27
Proverbs 6:6-11

Introduction: Each President of the United States has been concerned about the health and activities of the youth in our country. Lazy and inactive young people make lazy and inactive adults. Even in Solomon's day, laziness was a problem.

1. SAMPLES OF LAZINESS (What is laziness?)

Solomon uses four Hebrew words to describe laziness in Proverbs.

A. Proverbs 6:6 " **sluggard**" (Hebrew "'asel" "'asla" "'aslut") meaning "**lazy, idle or sluggish.**" Translated "slothful" in Proverbs 15:19; 19:15,24; 21:25; 22:13; 24:30; 26:13,14,15; translated "sluggard" in Proverbs 6:6,9; 10:26; 13:4; 20:4; 26:16; and translated "idleness" in Proverbs 31:27.

("'asel" by Ronald B. Allen in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 689)

B. Proverbs 6:10 "**slumber**" (Hebrew "num" "numa" "tenuma") meaning "**sleep or drowsiness.**" "The basic use of the noun in Prov. is in a figurative sense of laziness and inactivity (Prov. 6:10; 23:21; 24:33), but the literal sense of sleep or slumber is also found (6:4)."

("num" by R. Laird Harris in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 563)

C. Proverbs 10:4 "**slothful**" (Hebrew "rama" "remiyal") meaning "**slack.**" This word is translated "slothful" in Proverbs 12:24,27; translated "idle" 19:15; translated "slack" 10:4; and translated "deceive" 26:19. The concept of looseness and deceit enters into the meaning of this word.

("rama" by William White in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 849)

D. Proverbs 18:9 "**slothful**" (Hebrew "rapa" "rapeh") meaning "**slack, sink down, let drop, and be disheartened.**" "This root bears a wide variety of meanings and connotations. Each occurrence must be carefully compared with other similar contexts."

("rapa" by William White in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 858)1

2. SIGNS OF LAZINESS (What does laziness look like?)

Solomon gives us a picture of a "slothful man" or a person who is a "sluggard."

A. Proverbs 6:9 (26:14)= loves to sleep (i.e. anchored to his bed like a door to a jamb)

B. Proverbs 6:10 (24:33) = enjoys taking a rest (KJV "sleep") (NASV, NIV "rest")

C. Proverbs 12:27 = failure to use the meat from hunting (i.e. to lazy to clean and cook)

D. Proverbs 13:4 (21:25) = tends to dream and have desires which he never fulfills

E. Proverbs 18:9 = a great waster of time (KJV)

F. Proverbs 19:24 (26:15) = very inactive

"The sluggard is so lazy that he does not even have the strength to lift his hand from his dish to his mouth to satisfy his hunger."

(Book of Proverbs, Sid S. Buzzell, in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 946)

G. Proverbs 20:4 = avoids advanced planning and discomforts of working in the elements

"In the Middle East the season for plowing and planting is the winter, the rainy season. A sluggard avoids the discomfort and work of plowing a muddy field in the cold, so at harvest time he looks for a crop from his field but he has nothing. Without effort and advanced planning there are few results. . ."

(Book of Proverbs, Sid S. Buzzell, in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 948)

H. Proverbs 21:25 = desires things but refuses to work for them

I. Proverbs 24:30-31 (10:26) = fails to be responsible (neglects or doesn't maintain things)

3. SOURCES OF LAZINESS (What are the causes of laziness?)

Solomon uncovers at least six underlying causes of laziness.

A. Proverbs 10:4 (12:27) = lack of diligence

B. Proverbs 13:4 = lack of motivation

C. Proverbs 19:15 (6:9-10) = love of sleep

D. Proverbs 19:15 = allows himself to be idle

E. Proverbs 21:25 = refusal to work

F. Proverbs 24:30 = without understanding (NASV NIV "lack of sense or judgment")

G. Proverbs 26:16 = self-conceit (i.e. thinks he is smarter than everyone else)

4. STRATEGY BEHIND LAZINESS (What schemes do lazy people use?)

Solomon uncovers two schemes the "slothful man" or "sluggard" uses.

A. Proverbs 20:4 = begs for food from others

B. Proverbs 22:13 (26:13) = uses excuses and tends to exaggerate in order to avoid work

5. SHAME OF LAZINESS (What are the results of laziness?)

Solomon lists at least ten results of being "slothful man" or a "sluggard."

A. Proverbs 6:11 (10:4; 23:21) = poverty

B. Proverbs 10:5 = shame

C. Proverbs 10:26 = painful and aggravating to employers

D. Proverbs 12:24 = slavery or servanthood

E. Proverbs 13:4 = never satisfied

F. Proverbs 13:4 (20:4) = ends up with nothing

G. Proverbs 15:19 = a life filled with obstructions, difficulties and problems

H. Proverbs 19:15 = easily falls into deep sleep

I. Proverbs 19:15 = suffers hunger

J. Proverbs 21:25 = death (thought by some to be caused by starvation)

6. SOLUTION TO LAZINESS (What help is there for laziness?)

Solomon gives instruction for those who are "slothful" or are "sluggards."

A. Proverbs 6:6-8 = develop the following characteristics:

1. self-motivation,

2. Self-discipline,

3. responsibility, and

4. industriousness (i.e. wisdom from the ant).

"Ants, known for being industrious, are commended here for their initiative. Apparently ants have no leader, no commander, to direct them, no overseer to inspect their work, no ruler to prod

them on. Yet they work better than many people under a leader! Ants also work in anticipation of future needs, storing and gathering while it is warm, before winter comes. The virtue of wisdom is not in being busy but in having a proper view of forthcoming needs that motivate one to action (cf. 10:5)."

(Book of Proverbs, Sid S. Buzzell, in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 916)

B. Proverbs 6:9-11 = This passage seems to suggest there is a personal choice involved. The motivation for action comes from the severity of the impending danger. The results from "Point V" should be enough to motivate the lazy individual.

C. By correcting the items under "Points II and III" by practicing "righteousness."

Conclusion: Anyone can fall into the trap of laziness, whether young (just starting out in life) or older (having retired). Solomon addresses this issue with great insight.