

Discipline Brings Freedom
Proverbs 12:24-3:4
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

In this passage, we meet another character in Proverbs "the Diligent" and his counterpart "the Lazy." We learn that everyone works one way or another, but not everyone enjoys a satisfying and full life. And we see that wisdom is the key meaningful work and full life.

Be diligent!

The Diligent is another character we meet in Proverbs. He tends to wealth and power (Prov 10:4, 12:24, 13:4, and 21:5), he intentionally uses what God has given him (Prov 12:27). The Hebrew word translated "diligent" literally means "sharp" bringing to mind a decisive, action-oriented person. The Diligent is contrasted with the Lazy (Sluggard, Slack, or Slothful).

The Lazy is anchored to his bed like a door on its frame (Prov 26:14). He is slow to start (Prov 6:9-10) and rarely finishes (Prov 12:27). He always has a reason or an excuse for his laziness (Prov 26:16). His unhealthy appetite for rest makes his life difficult (Prov 15:19) and unsatisfying (Prov 3:4).

Proverbs 12:24-26 The Diligent Vs The Lazy

Vs 24 The diligent will be rewarded with authority but the lazy will be forced to serve. Notice that both end up working hard. The diligent work hard because they want to, but the lazy work hard because they are forced to. Hard work is part of God's will for all of humanity "...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground..."

Be diligent! Laziness will not make your life easier!

Vs 25 "Heaviness" This is the heaviness of sorrow or fear (translated as "care" in Ezk 4:16 and 12:18, and "fear" in Jos 22:24) so it might be best understood as anxiety. This verse might follow a statement about rulers and servants because there is not a station in life that is free from anxiety. Those who have suffered from nagging anxiety and depression know feeling well.

Some may think that refusing to work will spare them the stress of life, but the hope is actually found in "a good word" and once more we see the power of words in Proverbs. Proverbs does not tell us what the "good word" is but the phrase is used a couple of times in the Old Testament to refer to God's promises (Isa 39:8, Jer 29:10). Certainly the word of God and His wisdom are good and helpful against stress.

Seek help from stress in good words! See Philipians 4:4-9.

Vs 26 The point is that there are some people that you want to be around and others that you want to avoid.

But people you should avoid will work to con you. The first line could be reasonably translated "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor" or "the righteous carefully investigates his neighbor." Either way, the point is the same, be selective about your relationships.

Show diligence in relationships! Be sharp enough to avoid those who are bad influences!

Proverbs 12:27-28 The Wasted Vs The Valued

Vs 27 The lazy person does not follow through but instead wastes what God has given him. While the diligent cares for what is entrusted to him. This theme was wastefulness and responsibility is powerfully brought out in the next verse.

Vs 28 The way that the Doctrine of Life teaches is entirely good. Righteousness is the way meaningful work and full life. This "theological" verse reminds us of the holy wisdom behind these ideas. These truths about hard work are not just good advice, this is holy wisdom that comes from the One who gives life to all.

Know that laziness leads to waste and death but diligence leans to wealth and life!

Proverbs 13:1-4 The Empty Vs The Full

Vs 1 Instruction Vs, Rebuke "Instruction" is careful correction, but a rebuke is a rough warning that destruction is not far away. "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire (Isa 66:15)."

The picture is a powerful one: the wise respond to friendly instruction, but the scorner ignores menacing threats.

Vs 2-3 What comes out of someone has a way of coming back to them. Those that speak good have good return to them. So, be very careful about what comes out of your mouth.

Listen carefully and speak carefully!

Vs 4 When all is said and done, the lazy is empty and the diligent is full.

Know that hard work, not laziness, brings satisfaction!

CONCLUSION

The picture of the Lazy is funny. He's too lazy to work on his own, so he is forced to work by others. He is blessed with an animal from hunting, but it rots on his front porch because he won't cook it. He rolls and rolls on his bed like a door on hinges. The Lazy man should be laughed at.

But this passage shows, this really is a matter of life and death. The Lazy are tragic wasters who trade a meaningful life for the hope of an easy life, but in the end, they are made to work hard anyway.

Be diligent!