

Laziness

This article will focus on laziness and its fruits as outlined in Proverbs but much of this can be applied to our spiritual life.

The Hebrew word translated “*sluggard*” is “*âtsêl*” meaning indolent, slack, habitually lazy.

The sluggard is like a character in a tragic-comedy with his sheer human laziness.

Proverbs 26:14 [NIV] “*As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed.*”

The sluggard is more than anchored to his bed, he is permanently hinged to it like a door to the doorpost.

The sluggard makes preposterous excuses for **not** going out of the house to work. [**Proverbs 22:13; Proverbs 26:13**]

The sluggard has difficulty in beginning to do things.

Proverbs 6:9-10 [NIV] “*How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,*”

How long?

When?

Such questions are too definite for him, all he knows is this delicious drowsiness. He does **not** commit himself to a refusal, but little by little his opportunity for success slips away.

The sluggard has difficulty in finishing things –

The rare event of beginning a task has been too much for him, the impulse dies.

Proverbs 12:27 [NIV] “*The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions.*”

Having hunted some game the sluggard allows the meat to go bad by **not** cooking it.

Proverbs 26:15 [NIV] “*The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.*”

Having cooked a meal the sluggard allows it to go cold and spoil, even eating is too wearing for him to do.

The sluggard is able to rationalise his laziness –

Proverbs 26:13-16 [NIV] “*The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!’ As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly.*”

In his own eyes he cannot see his lifestyle as being lazy, he is not a shirker but a realist [**v13**].

I’m not self-indulgent but **not** at my best first thing in the morning [**v14**]. His inertia is his objection to being hustled [**v15**]. His mental indolence is fine, I’m just “*sticking to my guns.*”

A sluggard always takes “*the soft option*” –

Proverbs 20:4 [NIV] *“A sluggard does not plough in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.”*

The proper season for ploughing is the autumn when the weather may be cold and wet. It seems that this discomfort is the excuse the sluggard wants. Even if it is detrimental to his business and his character.

Proverbs 15:19 [NIV] *“The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.”*

The path of laziness just makes life more difficult for him, with problems that the diligent do **not** face, having prepared the fields in the autumn by ploughing in the cold and wet.

The consequence is that the sluggard feels restless [**Proverbs 13:4; Proverbs 21:25-26**], feels it unfair that he has **not** prospered like others [**Proverbs 18:9**] in spite of him being useless and exasperating to others who try to employ him. [**Proverbs 10:26**]

Proverbs 12:24 [NIV] *“Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labour.”*

In the end the sluggard will become a bondsman with **no** rights only responsibilities to his master.

We all need to take this lesson seriously. Too often we do **not** realise our spiritual condition until it is too late.

Proverbs 6:9-11 [NIV] *“How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.”*

The sluggard will suddenly awake to find that poverty [physical or spiritual] has arrived like the sudden attack of a bandit and there is **no** arguing with it for unarmed he faces a well-equipped opponent.

With today's support of the social state it is very easy for someone to be fed, housed and supported without ever having to work, hence fitting the character of a sluggard who expects all this without working for it.

Revelation 3:17-18 [NIV] *“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see.”*

Such people do **not** see what their lifestyle is doing to their character, how their spiritual state is in a dangerous position.

Real riches and stability in life can **only** be attained by discipline and work. [Please download and study our articles under the main heading ‘Work’]

Revelation 3:21 [NIV] *“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”*

Only if we overcome this attitude of laziness will we receive an opportunity to be part of the eternal world that God is planning for all humanity who will repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Simply put, sluggards will never be part of the Kingdom of God, the created family of God.

Proverbs 24:30-32 [NIV] *“I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw:”*

We have been looking at the life of a sluggard, we all need to apply our mind to what we see and fear to follow his example.

Help to make this change is at hand –

Revelation 3:20 [NIV] *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”*

Jesus Christ can come into our lives and save us from the bitter end of a sluggard, if we answer his call.

Revelation 3:19 [NIV] *“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.”*

This call will involve rebuke, discipline and repentance, that is a complete change in the direction our life takes.