

The Art of Living

Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs

Don't Waste Your Work

Series Overview

In this series, we're exploring the book of Proverbs to learn the art of living with wisdom.

Sermon Introduction

Is work a blessing or a curse? For most of us, work is probably both. We need jobs to pay the bills, but the things we need or want, but... it's still work. So, we punch the clock, live for the weekend, and dream of retirement.

But for Solomon, our work isn't just a matter of paying the bills (though it is). It's our opportunity to grow our character, provide for others, and better the world.

Passage: Proverbs 24:30-34 & select verses (NIV)

Prov. 24:30 I went past the field of the sluggard,
past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment;
Prov. 24:31 thorns had come up everywhere,
the ground was covered with weeds,
and the stone wall was in ruins.
Prov. 24:32 I applied my heart to what I observed
and learned a lesson from what I saw:
Prov. 24:33 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
Prov. 24:34 and poverty will come on you like a bandit
and scarcity like an armed man.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

1. Read the Proverbs passage above. What are your observations? What stood out to you?
2. Have you ever had a job that you didn't appreciate? Do you think that affected how you worked?

3. Prov. 24:30-35 presents work—the daily grind of farming—as a positive opportunity to provide for life’s essentials. Do you appreciate your job as a God-given opportunity to provide for yourself and your family?
4. According to Prov. 26:13-14, lazy people tend to make excuses to get out of doing the work that needs to be done. What are some of the better excuses you’ve heard? Are there any you’ve used yourself?
5. Proverbs 22:29 extols the value of skill. Do you think God cares how well we do our work? Do you think there’s a place for ambition in God’s economy?
6. In Colossians 3:23-24, the Apostle Paul instructs his readers (and us): “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” How would it change how you go about your work if you saw it as an opportunity to serve Jesus?
7. Compare Prov. 21:25-26 and Ephesians 4:28. Are there things you’ve gained—not only money, but your experience, expertise, opportunities—through hard work that you could share with others?

Prayer

Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality of meeting God. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God’s power.

- Tell God how you’re thankful for the opportunities he’s given you in your life.
- Thank him for the work you have, no matter what it is, for the opportunity it provides to work hard, earn money, and contribute to others.
- Consider if there might be ways that you’re wasting opportunities out of distraction, laziness, or self-indulgence.
- Ask God to give you wisdom to make the most out of the right opportunities and to share with others from the benefit you receive.