

## Glorify God By Working Diligently

### ----- 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.”*

### Doctrine:

**God has you here for a reason. Christians have much work to do and as a Christian you must have the best work ethic by considering the diligent ant and ultimately looking to Christ and imitating Him whose ethic is perfect, who perfectly worked out your justification by His work.**

### Introduction:

**As we have been studying through the book of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel and specifically looking here lately at the story of David, we pause today to work through a passage written by his son, Solomon. Who I must surmise was disciplined and raised up by his father to be well equipped to be the**

next King and pen these words, even to his own son. We ultimately know that this is divinely inspired scripture. The Holy Spirit did carry along this message through Solomon to the world. Let us, the local church, join with the church across the ages and cherish the Proverbs and use them to our good and ultimately to God's glory. Now, it is good and appropriate to perform an audit of our application of the Lord's decrees. Not only an audit of our souls (which we certainly must) but also our bodies and the work we have done with them, which is certainly connected to our souls by way of motivations and driving factors for the things we do, or do not do. Here, today, as far as all of the things that we do, or do not do, I'll be focusing on that specific aspect of working to the glory of the Lord and slaying the sin of laziness by such work. There is much in the God's scriptures about the work we must do and the law we must obey to love God how He says He is to be loved, out of great gratitude because for how He has first loved us. This is illustrated namely in Christ, God the Father's own son and the gracious fulfilment of promised salvation through His perfect obedience and personal sacrifice. This is the Good News! It must be a righteous spur to our side to get out of bed each day, in a timely manner, and be about the work of the Lord. The book of Proverbs is certainly a help to that end and we will be utilizing it today, as we ought to in light of 2 Timothy 3:16:

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness"

Studying through Davids life revealed in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel, I have been struck by his living faithfully unto the Lord, though not perfectly, yet admirably, by adhering to His commands while waiting for His promises to be fulfilled. Similarly, here we are today, in-between great promises. Christ has come as promised to provide salvation to the Saints and Christ has yet to return as promised to judge and to make the earth new and perfect. So, join me in this aim. That we may attain the goal of submitting to God by submitting to His word and thus be sanctified by it even in the "meantime", for His glory. Lord help us. As I work to preach this, may you work to receive this and apply it in your lives. And may it have its visible effect, that is, us living better

**lives, inwardly and outwardly, further aligned to Christ's way, in all things, including how we work, till we see His face.**

**Clarification: Before I go any further, Saints, your identity in Christ. You are not a sluggard, you are a Saint. If you identify with the sluggard, you must remember your true identity. Saint. Christian. Redeemed by Christ. Let that motivate your repentance. When I told Brandon what passage I was preaching he said, "Oh, so your just gonna call us all sluggards!" jokingly. I want to make clear, that is not my goal. Our examination of this text, and the preaching of it, is to be slaying sin that wants to slay you. There will be opportunity to root out your sluggardly ways if need be. But remember, Christ is perfect for you, and He is worthy of all imitation. If you are not in Christ, I have true hope for you. Real, accomplished hope. The only way out of the pit of hell you are doomed to spend eternity in for the sin of being a sluggard, or any other sins, is to turn from your sin and trust in Christ for forgiveness. Confess your sin to Him, turn from it and follow Him. Submit to and serve Him as the King of kings and Lord of lords. He says He is faithful and just to forgive you of all unrighteousness.**

**Exegete Passage: 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.”*

### **I: God Says There Is Wisdom In Working Well**

*(Vs 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.”*

#### **1.) We must consider the natural life of an ant and become wise. (vs 6a-b)**

*“Go to the ant, O sluggard...”*

- Solomon gives this direction to the sluggardly, the slothful, as proper diagnosis and good medicine to correct their ways. But, we must all perk up. Even if you could not be marked as sluggardly in your outward life. Certainly, to those who readily identify with the sluggard in this case, take heed lest ye fall. But, to those who do not identify, on the whole, with the slug, if you search your heart and life, I am sure you won't have to go too far to find some area that you have neglected or been sluggardly in. Those areas need this passage applied. If that's not you, may this serve as an encouragement to continue on the path of righteousness. But, let us all be honest with ourselves in the sight of the Lord.

- This is too humbling for the proud of the world, but God in his most intelligent and excellent design, even at such a minute and seemingly insignificant scale, has given us an example and illustration according to His purpose in the work of all things... the ant. God has a way of doing this, chopping the legs out from under the proud and lifting up the chin of the humbled. We Christians, those who must be humble, hear the words “Go to the ant...” and say “Alright! My King says it, let’s go to the ant!”

## **2.) It is not too late for slug-like people. (vs 6b)**

*“O sluggard; ...”*

- The mere thought of, as a child of God, acting like someone God refers to as having the characteristics of a slug should make us shudder. Here again is a comparison drawn from His design and order in the natural world. The slug. Slimy, gross, slow and lazy. Something more for the ditches of life rather than the path of life. Yet, this is who receives the warning that all may profit from it.

And this has serious spiritual considerations:

- Sinners, do not be sluggardly in your turning to Christ

Repent of your sin, believe on and follow Christ

- Saints, do not be sluggardly in your zeal for the Lord

Repent of your sin, believing on Christ and follow Him

And this has serious physical considerations:

- Stop being lazy!

- Adults, in your duties, is there something you know you must do, but don’t? Do that!

- Children, has one of your parents ever told you to do something only to come to you, after plenty of time has passed to get the thing done, just to find that you hadn’t done it? You must do what your parents say to do, when they say to do it!

## **3.) There is wisdom worth finding in how the ant works. (vs 6c)**

*“consider her ways, and be wise.”*

- That is, it is a wise way to live, working hard. We know that faith alone does not remain alone. Good works certainly accompany it. Good fruit is only borne on good trees. For bigger fruit, healthier, sturdier branches are required. Therefore, this ethic is one we must cultivate. We are told by God to consider the work ethic of the ant, and the goal is that it would be applied. Solomon was not giving his son good advice for no reason, or that it would only remain understood and never lived (which sadly, with Rehoboam, was the case). May it not be so for us, we receive this wise counsel today, that it would be lived. Now, right application comes with right understanding. As Solomon's son should have, along with Christians from all the ages let's consider this ant ourselves. More on that specifically in a moment...

#### **4.) If an ant can work heartily unto the Lord, surely we can. (vs 7)**

*“Without having any chief,  
officer, or ruler,”*

- The ant just goes about its work with no leadership. No boss boots on the ground. No teaching. No earthly authority over it. What then should the expectation be of us! Us, who have pastors. Us, who have teachers. Us, who have brothers and sisters for wise counsel. Us, who have authorities placed over us. Us, who have minds with the capacity to reason and problem solve creatively. If the ant has no excuse, then we are certainly at a loss for one. If your excuse is that the authorities over you somehow led you to the lot of a sluggard, look to the ant. Even without someone telling it what to do, it does what must be done. Many today sit idly by and are much outdone by ants.

#### **5.) So, what is it that the ant does so well? (vs 8)**

*“she prepares her bread in summer  
and gathers her food in harvest.”*

- The ant makes the best use of the days because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-17:

*“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

-Well, the will of the Lord, here, is for us to consider and understand the ant as an example of making the best use of the time. The ant makes the best use of her time by “*gettin it while the gettin’s good*”. So must we. We must make good use of our bodies and the faculties the Lord has provided us and not waste them until the day we no longer have them. As we can work, so we must work. This is applicable to God honoring labor in all things. Spiritual work, planning work, work in the home, and work outside the home. The ant prepares her stores while she can prepare her stores, then has them to utilize when the *gettin* is no longer good. So, we must work to have spiritual stores (a deep well of Biblical knowledge to draw from - Everyone) and provisional stores (the physical needs of our families to be met and maintained - Men) along with well-functioning store houses (organized and maintained homes that operate effectively - Women) both in times of abundance and for times where those things are needed and may be hard to come by. The ant is not desolated when famine comes because it has worked hard and prepared. So, we must work hard to prepare for times that feel like spiritual famine and times that are a provisional famine or even actual famine. We can’t lose sight of the actual goal here though. The things I just mentioned are secondary blessings from the actual goal. To focus on those as the primary reason for working hard would make them idolatrous. The actual goal is to work heartily unto the Lord. To worship him in all things including how we work. In obedience to Him for His Glory!

**Colossian 3:23-24:**

*“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”*

**1 Corinthians 10:21**

*“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”,*

Simply put: It serves the Lord Jesus Christ and glorifies God the Father to work hard. Being lazy grieves the Holy Spirit. This is applicable to EVERYTHING in your life. Now, concerning being lazy...

## **II: God Gives Us A Clear Example Of The Folly Of Sluggardliness**

*(Vs 9-10)*

*“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,”*

### **1.) The laziness of a sluggard is shameful. (vs 9)**

*“How long will you lie there, O sluggard?*

*When will you arise from your sleep?”*

- Here we have a clear visual of the sluggard. Lying around and known for lying around. The laziness of a sluggard is clear to those closest. Close enough to ask the question here. This is a shame that should cause one to be ashamed. Those who know you best usually see your laziness clearest. In the home, wives and husbands know the ramifications of this sin and feel its effects harshest. Children as well, your parents and siblings have to deal with your laziness most. It is those closest to us who see this example too often regularly, which is no example set by Christ. The sluggard, much like the slug, is not affected by the questioning. Even the asking of the question implies the impropriety of the sluggard's laziness. “How long...” the sluggard has been sleeping too long already. “When will you arise...” the sluggard should have already been up. Sluggard living is life wasting.

This is a drain to the family from husbands.

### **2 Thessalonians 3:10**



*“For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”*

This is a drain to the family from wives.

**Proverbs 14:1**

*“The wisest of women builds her house,  
but folly with her own hands tears it down.”*

This is a drain to the family from children.

**Proverbs 10:5**

*“He who gathers in summer is a prudent son,  
but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.”*

The Lord’s church (the entity that He’s used to bring the gospel even here, to Muskogee) is certainly drained by this sin as well. How can you give and serve to further the work of the church if you won’t work and serve. It’s a shame when this is the case, when people expect the church to cover for them so they can be sluggards when they should be working hard so that they could give more! Again, this is chiefly a disservice to God. God’s children, with all He’s gone through to make us so, must not return His love with selfish sluggardliness. I am very thankful that the opposite is primarily true here. Though we all stumble as we walk this path, I see you applying the proclaimed word and growing in glorifying the Lord in your lives by your work ethic. As we have gained much from the work of the Puritans, I see the Puritan Work Ethic easily here. The world even knows this is admirable. So, to you Saints here who have taken up the work of applying God’s word to your work, well done and keep it up!

**2.) If only there was something I could quote to myself to be like thorns in MY bed... (vs 10)**

*“A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to rest,”*

- In the morning. When I reach for my phone to snooze it... again. I often quote this to myself, and it has the effect of making me feel like a real piece of slug, and I get up. I am not only preaching this sermon to you. I have preached it to myself first. Audited my own heart and life. This is something that I often deal with. It sneaks in on Saturdays most often. When I feel I've worked hard enough all week, yet the day is beginning to get wasted. I, and you, must remember... There is good work to do every day. Join me and look to the ant, friends. Men, surely you know our days off are not days entirely "off". Women, I'm sure you already know you don't have any days entirely "off". Let me remind you though that this is the case. Make the best use of all your days and praise the Lord for days like today. God has seen fit to give us the Sabbath Day. The Lord's Day. A day of rest from our physical labors. Though there is duty, the labor is different. Also though, we must be looking for opportunities to make even days that seem like a wash, days to glorify the Lord with the work we can be doing. Days that are seemingly shot can be redeemed to glorify the Lord. Rain delays the ant's work. On those days, ants prepare their seed stores and when the sun shines again, they take their seeds to the surface and chew off the sprouting end of the wet seeds as they dry so they do not begin to sprout and grow and ruin their home. So we, on our days off from our typical vocations, must be about the work of correcting what could be the ruin of our homes. This is both physical and spiritual. Consider your life, identify the threats of what is lacking, and take time to cut off the sprouting ends. This verse would not pack as much of a punch if it weren't for the one that follows it where...

### **III: God Reveals The Just Fruits Of Sluggardly Lives**

*(Vs 11)*

*"and poverty will come upon you like a robber,  
and want like an armed man."*

**1.) The bitter fruit of this sin too, is sure. (vs 11a)**

*“and poverty will come upon you like a robber,”*

- Just as a robber sneaks up on its unsuspecting victim, so poverty sneaks up on the sluggard unawares. As the robber beats its victim, so poverty will beat the sluggard. As the robber disheartens its victim, so poverty disheartens the sluggard.
- This is true for those living in unrepentant sluggardliness and those who begin to go down that road.
  - Poverty, like a robber, sneaks a step closer, unbeknownst to its victim, each day that goes by in sluggardly living and each time the sluggardly option is chosen. The only way to run him off is by repentance and keeping with it. If this, sluggardly living, is how you are living your life, like a spotlight on a thief, identify this sin and confess it and repent.

## **2.) When this bitter fruit comes, it will be extremely difficult to deny. (vs 11b)**

*“and want like an armed man.”*

- Want, as in “need” in this case, will be the lot of the sluggard and it will be like fighting an armed man to get out of the state of “the needy”. So it will be for the sluggard and his household. I do not want this for any of you. If you are working hard unto the Lord, I say “Good work!” and “Keep it up!”. If you are not, I say “Repent!” “Get to doing the good work of working well!”. If poverty has come for you due to your sluggardliness, I say “Christ is stronger than any robber or armed man, including these figurative representations of “poverty” and “want”, look to Christ and do not give up or grow weary in the fight!” According to God’s word we must look to the ant with her good work for inspiration and wisdom and be sanctified and we must look to Christ and His perfect work for salvation!

## **Points Of Application: A Charge Moving Forward**

- 1: Be wise and glorify God with the work you do and the ethic you do it by.
  - Focus on doing what is worthwhile.

2: Be wise in the work you devote your efforts to.

-A good work ethic applied to foolish work is folly.

3: Do not require anyone between you and God to determine how diligently you work.

-Remove from your mind the thought that another human is required for you to work well.

4: Do not waste your days seeking to be comfortably at rest.

-Again, you are here for a reason. God has laid out good works that you should walk in before you existed.

5: In your work, remind yourself of the saying of the sluggard, “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest”, and press on diligently.

-When the days are a grind, remember who you are ultimately working for and how hard he worked for you and call yourself to then take joy in the work. You are pleasing Christ. What a blessing.

6: Fend off poverty and want by being mindful about your work, planning to do good and executing the good you planned.

-Much of all of our work will be more like plodding, but this is good work, most of our work is preparing for something in the future, and the next thing in the future, and the next thing in the future. There is wisdom in this preparation.

7: Remember that because of Christ, Saint, all your effort is no longer vanity or chasing the wind but purposeful as service to Christ.

## **Conclusion:**

I pray that as we continue through 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel, you would take up the work the Lord has for you, much like David, and that you would work heartily unto the Lord and that you'd do so throughout your days till you see Jesus face to face and then forever more. Lord Jesus, may it be so.