THE SLUGGARD

"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." —PROVERBS 6:9-11

A sluggard is defined as a person who is inert, inactive, slow moving, habitually indolent and lazy. It is one of those words that mean what it sounds like – sluggish, moving slowly along. In the book of Proverbs, the fool is characterized by bad habits and attitudes, but the sluggard is characterized primarily by poor activities.

There are four basic aspects to the profile of a sluggard. Firstly, he does not commence anything. Though there are things that need to be done, he is lying around, "a little slumber, a little folding of his hands to rest". Rest is important but it comes out of a background of work. The sluggard is always postponing until tomorrow what he can do today because present comfort is more important to him than the work at hand. The problem is tomorrow never comes for the sluggard.

Secondly, the sluggard does not conclude things. "The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!" (Proverbs 26:15) If he does start something, he loses momentum and interest. Things just drift away and are never brought to their logical conclusion.

The third aspect is the sluggard never challenges things. He sees the obstacles and it quickly stops him. "The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns" (15:19). The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road, a

fierce lion roaming the streets!" (26:13) It is not the obstacles, but the attitude that is the problem, and the sluggard will always rationalize his way out of doing something.

Fourthly, the sluggard does not create things. He dreams but never brings anything to fruition. He craves and gets nothing, because everything he wants is only at the expense of others. "All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing" (21:26). The sluggard craves; the righteous give. This, more than anything, exposes the heart of the sluggard.

We cannot change our pasts, but we can change our futures by giving attention to the present. If we are in Christ He is our Master, and on the Day of Judgment we will want to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23). This involves a change of heart that allows the Lord Jesus to get into the depth of our frustrations, which is by and large the cause of sluggishness. When we allow Jesus to begin the work of turning us into who He wants us to be, we will see things from a different perspective… His perspective and a better motivation we cannot have.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, there are often days I need a push. Help me to focus on You and what You want me to be. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Can I identify with the life of a sluggard and, if so, how can I best resolve this?