

Principles from Proverbs: Career Success

The Curse of Laziness

Introduction: The key element of success in any endeavor is a diligent work ethic. Conversely, the key element of failure in any endeavor is a negligent work ethic—commonly known as laziness. The contemporary emphasis on luxury, entertainment, and “free time” has produced a generation prone to laziness and has elevated **indigence** to the status of virtue. The Bible paints a vastly different picture of **indolence** and inactivity.

I. How to Identify Lazy People

A. Lazy people have no ambition.

As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. (Proverbs 26:14)

The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. (Proverbs 26:15)

1. Lazy people typically have an addiction to sleep. Temporary excessive sleep may indicate a physical or emotional problem; but a lifetime of oversleeping reveals laziness.
2. Recent medical studies indicate that adults typically require 7-8 hours of sleep each night. An occasional, brief nap may also be helpful.
3. The Bible does not condemn sleep; rather, the Bible condemns excessive, unnecessary sleep.
4. Lazy people resist the effort to provide for themselves. The entitlement mentality of certain segments of society indicates systemic laziness.
5. Work fosters independence; welfare fosters dependence.
6. Lazy people resist improving their condition through personal effort. They take what is freely given and remain satisfied as long as they are fed with little or no effort on their part.

B. Lazy people typically waste both money and opportunity.

He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster. (Proverbs 18:9)

The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious. (Proverbs 12:27)

Proverbs 24:30-34

1. People who do not work tend to waste. They do not appreciate the value of what they receive because they made no effort for it.

2. Lazy people do not complete tasks—frequently engaging in that which is enjoyable (hunting) while ignoring that which is laborious (roasting).
3. Lazy people do not value their possessions enough to maintain them. The lazy hunter allows his catch to rot. The lazy homeowner allows his home and property to disintegrate. A diligent man, however, views his substance (possessions) as “precious” and so maintains them.

C. Lazy people are full of excuses.

The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. (Proverbs 20:4)

The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets. (Proverbs 22:13, also 26:13)

1. Lazy people consistently make excuses as to why they must avoid working. Every little thing is a deterrent to the lazy individual.
2. Those who excuse themselves from work *deserve* poverty. There is a segment of society who should rightly feel the pangs of hunger brought about by their own excuses.
3. Excuse makers are frequently reduced to beggars. Contemporary beggars beg discretely by milking the government welfare system.
4. Lazy people view work as potentially detrimental to their well being. (“I’ll get cold” or “I’ll be eaten by a lion.”) Workman’s compensation and disability programs are continually flooded with bogus claims made by the lazy.

D. Lazy people are a continual disappointment and irritation to others.

As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. (Proverbs 10:26)

1. Lazy people not only harm themselves, but they harm others as well. A lazy employee is a constant irritation to his boss. The guy that does just enough to get by walks the fine line between a job and unemployment while continually aggravating his employer.
2. The tensions between labor and management frequently result from institutionalized laziness promoted and defended by labor unions. Slothful workers should not find aid and comfort in labor unions.
3. Continual disappointment with reasonable performance expectations in an employee stems from laziness. Reformation of character is the only redemption for such individuals.