

LESSON 13

WISDOM OF WORK ETHICS

CENTRAL TRUTH: God's word contains principles for a balanced work ethic.

MEMORY VERSE: Lazy hands make for poverty; but diligent hands bring wealth. – **Proverbs 10:4.**

LESSON TEXT

Gen 2:15; Eccl. 5:18-20; Prov. 6:6-11, 10:4-5.

Genesis 2:

15. The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Ecclesiastes 5:

18. Then I realised that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labour under the sun during the few days of life God has given him — for this is his lot.

19. Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work — this is a gift of God.

20. He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.

Proverbs 6:6-11.

6. Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!

7. It has no commander, no overseer or ruler,

8. Yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

9. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?

10. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest —

11. And poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. [Or like a vagrant and scarcity like a beggar]

Proverb 10:4-5.

4. Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.
5. He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

INTRODUCTION

Having the right attitude to work glorifies God and guarantees success. In the same way having the wrong attitude to work dishonours God and leads to poverty. God made work as part of human existence and the means of our sustenance on earth. In the same way a balanced work ethic is essential to effective Christian living. Therefore our attitude to work will determine our physical and material prosperity and our Christian maturity. This week's study will look at the wisdom of diligent work and how it impacts our lives.

LESSON

Work is part of God's plan for us humans from the beginning of creation. This was revealed in Genesis chapter two when God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden and gave him the responsibility to take care of it (**Gen. 2:15**). In this regard, work is not only necessary for our survival and comfort but must also be linked to God's purpose for our lives.

Proverbs 10:16 emphasizes that honest labour produces fruitful and enjoyable living. This implies God blesses diligent work which is accompanied by honesty, integrity and reliability since it glorifies Him. Idleness leads to the inability to enjoy the blessings which accompanies diligent work. The idle person according to proverbs will be consumed by poverty. It is for this reason that the idle or lazy person is admonished to observe the ways of the ant. The ant has no ruler, yet it labours with great diligence, gathering food and storing provisions for itself. The ant because of its hard work does not lack the necessities of life. The person who is not diligent in labour may end up with severe hardships and become burden to his family and others. Hence a **Proverb 18:9** equates idleness or laziness to being wasteful and destructive. Similarly, **Proverbs 12:11** links idleness to a lack of judgment. The idle person tends to indulge in schemes to make "easy" money. When people are attempting to avoid honest work, they often make foolish and hurtful decisions. More often than not, the result is that they are worse off than

they were before. Therefore **Proverbs 12:24** declares that the diligent end up ruling while the lazy are forced to serve as slaves.

LIFE APPLICATION

Diligence in labour brings fulfillment in life and also glorifies God. We must therefore approach work as a form of worship and do it with all our hearts. God desires hard work hence He committed Adam to take care of the garden. In the same way we are admonished in **Ephesians 4:28** to labour with our hands and become a blessing onto others. Paul emphatically declared in **2 Thess. 3:10** that the person who does not work must not eat.

1. Why do Christians sometimes overlook the value of work ethic?
2. What can believers do to maintain a balanced work ethic?
3. How can you use your resources to serve Christ's kingdom?
4. What are some 'get-rich-quick' schemes that people indulge in today?

----- DIALY BIBLE READING -----

Monday: Labour and Rest (Exodus 20:8-11).

Tuesday: How to Enjoy Labour's Fruit (Psalm 128:1-4).

Wednesday: Wages Expected for Service Rendered (Jeremiah 22:13-16).

Thursday: Earn Wages to Help Others (Ephesians 4:25-28).

Friday: Work is an Obligation (2 Thessalonians 3:6-12)

Saturday: God Hears the Oppressed (James 5:1-4).