

Get Smart: A Study in Proverbs

Study 3: Good Work

It is Wise to Work

In our previous study we saw that wealth is not the most important thing in life. Yet Proverbs seems to assume that wealth is preferred to poverty, for it gives much advice in how to gain wealth through work. Poverty is a threat given to the lazy and wealth an incentive to the industrious. Proverbs teaches us that it is wise to work.

Proverbs 6:6-9 *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?*

Proverbs 10:4-5 *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.*

Proverbs 12:24 *Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.*

Proverbs 13:4 *The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.*

Proverbs 16:26 *The laborer's appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.*

Proverbs 19:24 *The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!*

Proverbs 20:4 *A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.*

The Danger of Excessive Pleasure

Proverbs also speaks of the dangers of a life given over to excessive pleasure. The pursuit of pleasure, especially if it replaces work will also lead to poverty.

Proverbs 20:13 *Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare.*

Proverbs 21:25 *The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.*

Proverbs 21:17 *He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.*

Proverbs 23:20-21 *Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, 21 for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.*

Wise in the Way We Work.

Not only is it important that we work in order to avoid poverty, but God is concerned with the way that we work. He desires honesty, skill etc. It is not only wise that we work, we must work wisely.

Proverbs 11:1 *The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.*

Proverbs 14:23 *All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.*

Proverbs 16:11 *Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making.*

Proverbs 18:9 *One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.*

Proverbs 21:5 *The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.*

Proverbs 22:29 *Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.*

Proverbs 24:27 *Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.*

Proverbs 27:23-27 *Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; 24 for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations. 25 When the hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in, 26 the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. 27 You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you and your family and to nourish your servant girls.*

Proverbs 28:19 *He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.*