

Wisdom for Work  
(Summer Wisdom 2016)

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## Introduction

- Today we will look at what God's Word says about our work, work environments, and work ethic.
- I believe everyone wants to work better, smarter and more efficient. I will provide this morning some work hacks to help you work smarter not harder.
  - See Pics
- What is better than a life hack is godly wisdom in our lives. We all work in some capacity. Proverbs has much to say about our work
- Proverbs parodies laziness more than any other form of foolishness
  - What is laziness? It is unwillingness to work or use energy
- What a waste of God's resources. He gives you the ability to work and the energy to serve and be beneficial. This is why laziness is sin... it takes the life and energy given by the Lord and wastes the purposeful strength.
- Let's look at Proverbs 26:13-16 this morning. May the Lord grant us favor and give us wisdom this morning.

## Proverbs 26:13-16

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### Hear what the lazy man says (Prov. 26:13)

- **The lazy man makes excuses. An excuse is an attempt to lesson blame by attaching it to a fault or seeking to justify/defend you behaviors.**
  - Excuses are often found in the mouth of the lazy man. And not just any excuse. This is an excuse that is over the top.
  - Listen to what the man says... there is a lion. While it is true that lions could be found in Palestine at this time, they were not so numerous that they could be a legitimate excuse for not leaving one's house (Longman)

- IF anyone has a good excuse for not going to work... a lion in the marketplace is a good excuse.
  - However,... laziness makes us bad excuse makers.
    - This would be the equivalent of me saying there was an alligator under my care.
- Another product of laziness here is that it is possible this lazy man is suffering from **irrational fears**. He fantasizes that a lion is out to get him.
  - Listen: laziness and excuses will breed irrational fears in your life.
  - Often... spiritual excuses have the same effect. We deflect blame and now we have irrational fantasized fears to hang our excuses on:
    - People in church hate me
      - Truth: those who follow Christ are not allowed to hate
    - They all know my business
      - Truth: we are all sinners and your business is no worse than theirs
    - God can't forgive me for the things I have done.
      - Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.... Of who I am the chief
- **What does the righteous man do?**
  - He accepts responsibility for mistakes and seeks forgiveness
  - He does not justify bad behaviors and decisions
  - When he has irrational fears:
    - He leans into Christ
    - He leans on prayer
    - He finds life change in God's Word
    - He relies upon wise godly friends
- Are you an excuse maker?
- Do you have fears that you shouldn't have?

## See what the lazy man does (Prov. 26:14)

- Not only do we hear what the lazy man says we now get a glimpse at what he does, his behavior.
- **The lazy man here in Proverbs is a person who spends a lot of time in bed.**
  - We are invited to also imagine the door opening and shutting, with people going in and out, while the sluggard remains in bed (Alter).
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  - Illustration
- **What is the danger? The danger is that if you spend all of your time in bed you go nowhere.** There is no progress.
  - God has created us to live, do, and serve.
  - If we fail to move forward (sanctification) we are denying one of the purposes, we are created for.
    - However the turning of a door is profitable vs the sluggard hinged to his bed is wastefully

idle.

- Are you moving forward to win the prize, to reach the goal, set before you in Christ Jesus?
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- **Another danger of lazy behavior is this: you never leave your comfort zone.**
  - Paul did not say: to live is comfort... to die is gain. No to live is Christ (Phil. 1:21)
  - Far too often we are ok with living in our spiritual comfort zone... this is laziness. We have our comfortable spiritual bed.
    - This is why we do not grow
    - This is why we don't share the gospel
    - This is why we have not waged war on our sin... we are spiritually... lazy
- **The righteous man is not content at comfort... but seeks Christ.**
  - Following Christ is hard work!

## Look at the lazy man's heart (26:15)

- This lazy man may not even be able to muster enough energy to send their hand into a bowl to eat. So for this man not even hunger can motivate them to finish the job by lifting it to their mouth.
- We see another trap of laziness: no motivation.

### Improper motivations for career/work.

- To make money
- To make a good life for yourself
- To gain status
- To find fulfillment

### Biblical motivations for work.

- To be good stewards of our talents and strength
- To use our abilities to serve the world
- So others can see our good works and see Jesus
- To worship
- To prepare for heaven. There will be a day again (Gen. 2:15) where our work = perfect worship.

Do you have motivation?

## Listen to the lazy man's thoughts (26:16)

- Now we finally see into the lazy man's mind and we get a small glimpse of this thoughts: He alone is wise.
- Indeed they are unwilling to hear the criticism of other people... here they claim a sevenfold wisdom, that they are wiser than even seven (Longman).
- This is why laziness breeds and helps perpetuation self-destructive behavior. The lazy "wise" person is often unwilling to listen to godly biblical advice.
- Here is the heart of laziness... pride. Laziness is not the source of the issue. The source of laziness is a sinful self-serving and self-seeking heart.

## Conclusion

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A lazy man has no idea they are lazy... a sinful man has no idea they are sinful. Laziness is a self-centered, me first approach to live. Another word for the lazy man is the sinful man. The lazy approach to live is a sinful approach to life.

What is the answer for laziness? It's the same answer for our sin.

- **5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
  - **9** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
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- **You can put your faith in Jesus right were you sit**
  - Opportunity to respond publically
    - Come forward

- Connection card.. we will follow up and encourage you

### **Why does it Matter?**

- We have been justified (made right before the Lord) and accepted
- We receive forgiveness (redeemed)
- We escape God's wrath (reconciled)
- We are adopted in to a new family
- We gain a new identity (New Creation)
- **Believe, Confess, Faith, Baptism**

# Notes

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- Proverbs parodies laziness more than any other form of foolishness (Longman)
- A lazy person has no idea they are lazy
  - A sinner has no idea they are sinners
- Overworker?
- Lazy---hard work--- over work
  - Busy or hard work?
- Overwork (vintage church)
  - Busy
  - Burnout
  - Broken

**Prov. 26:13** The lazy *man* says, “*There is a lion in the road!*  
*A fierce lion is in the streets!*”

- This verse ridicules lazy people for using thin **excuses** for avoiding work. (Longman)
- While it is true that lions could be found in Palestine at this time, they were not so numerous that they could be a legitimate excuse for not leaving one’s house (Longman)
- Both show the sluggard as suffering from irrational fears. He fantasizes a lion’s threatening existence in the marketplace keeping him from work. (NICOT)
  - What better reason could a person have for staying at home and not going to work than have a lion threaten him in the marketplace.
- Here this verse shows what the lazy man does: he makes excuses
- We also see that laziness does: it brings irrational fears

**14** *As a door turns on its hinges,*  
*So does the lazy man on his bed.*

- The second proverb makes fun of the propensity of lazy people to spend too much time in bed. (Longman)
- They may move, but they go nowhere; they make no **progress** (Longman)
- We are invited to also imagine the door opening and shutting, with people going in and out, while the sluggard remains in bed (Alter).
- Both the door and the sluggard move within a very narrow range (NICOT)
- In addition, the satirical comparison makes no progress because he is fixed firmly to his comfort zone.
  - However the turning of a door is profitable vs the sluggard hinged to his bed is wastefully idle.
- Next we see what the lazy man does: he sleeps

**15** *The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl;*  
*It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.*

- They may be able to muster enough energy to send their hand into a bowl to eat. But not even hunger can **motivate** them to finish the job by lifting it to their mouth (Longman).
- This proverb relays the truth that a lazy person fails to provide for his own basic needs (Alter)
- Here we see the lazy mans heart/attitude → he has no motivation

**16**     The lazy *man* is wiser in his own eyes  
           Than seven men who can answer sensibly.

- The problem with lazy people, and probably the reason they perpetuate self-destructive behavior, is that they are ‘wise in their own eyes’ (Longman).
- Indeed they are unwilling to hear the criticism of other people... here they claim a sevenfold wisdom, that they are wiser than even seven (Longman).
  - The symbolic number for never-ending or “many” discerning people.
- Now see what the lazy man thinks: that he alone is wise.

**11:1-3** Dishonest scales *are* an abomination to the LORD,  
           But a just weight *is* His delight.

**2**     When pride comes, then comes shame;  
           But with the humble *is* wisdom.

**3**     The integrity of the upright will guide them,  
           But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.

- This proverb applies the book’s teaching on honesty and deception to business practices (Longman).
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## Illustrations

## Application

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- Work has dignity because it is something that God does and because we do it in God's place, as his representatives. (Keller)
- All work has dignity because it reflects God's image in us, and also because the material creation we are called to care for is good. (Tim Keller)
- Christians should be aware of this revolutionary understanding of the purpose of their work in the world. We are not to choose jobs and conduct our work to fulfill ourselves and accrue power, for being called by God to do something is empowering enough. We are to see work as a way of service to God and our neighbor, and so we should both choose and conduct our work in accordance with that purpose. The question regarding our choice of work is no longer, "What will make me the most money and give me the most status?" The question must now be "How with my existing abilities and opportunities, can I be of greatest service to other people, knowing what I do of God's will and of human need?" (Tim Keller)
- Without the gospel of Jesus, we will have to toil not for the joy of serving others, nor the satisfaction of a job well done, but to make a name for ourselves. (tim Keller)