

INSIGHT

The ant (Hebrew, *nemalah*) appears in the Bible only in the Book of Proverbs. It is praised by God as the supreme example of industry. Solomon says, “*Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer*” (**Prov. 30:25**). The ant is described as a wise, hardworking creature (**Prov. 6:6-8**) as opposed to the foolish sluggard, who only wants to sleep (**Prov. 6:9**). This goes to show that God desires workers in His kingdom.

Christianity is not a lazy man’s religion. Laziness never produces success, especially within the kingdom of God. It only produces destruction, despair and negativity--both in the spiritual and the physical realm.

A sluggard has no place in the kingdom of God. For God calls laborers to work His vineyard. Christ was not a man of slothfulness. Neither were His apostles. When Christ called the Twelve, he trained them to be men of diligence; men of action for the kingdom of Heaven. The sluggard has no desire to work--he rather sleep and depend on the labor and generosity of others for support.

As Christians, we must be like the ant; We must be workers in the church of Christ, motivated by the cross of Christ. Jesus calls us to be His faithful servants. He calls us to be faithful to the great commission (**Matt. 28:19**) and to live lives reflecting His teachings (**John 8:31,32; 1 Tim. 4:16**). He calls us to love Him and to love one another. How can God be pleased with an indolent person? For he will be “*as vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes*” (**Prov. 10:26**).

Jesus condemned a “*wicked, lazy servant*” (**Matt. 25:26**) but praised and rewarded the “*good and faithful servant*” (**Matt. 25:23**). Let Jesus work in our lives as together we

serve Him and one another in the spirit of power, wisdom, diligence and love.

Becoming Like Christ Laziness, Idleness and Discipline

Key Text: 1 Timothy 4:7-8

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Theme:

Few, if any of us, are naturally disciplined. Discipline must be learned. Without discipline we will not be able to take the world for Christ. Discipline must be built into our Christian lives from the earliest possible moment. Christ came to the world to save the world (**John 3:17**). He came for a people eager to do what is good (**Titus 2:14**); Workers for the kingdom of God. Are you a worker for the Lord?

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. Keep a timetable for the best use of your time.
2. Set some goals on what you want to accomplish for the Lord.
3. Spend time with a disciplined person and follow his or her example.
4. If you are not a punctual person, make every effort to be early.
5. Be kingdom-minded!
6. Accept correction from a brother or sister who is trying to help you in your lateness or laziness.
7. Speak often with the Lord in prayer and let Him speak to you through His word.

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

Laziness And Christianity

I. Indolence Not Praised

A. The Animal Kingdom

1. The Sloth
 - a. slow moving mammal
2. The Ant
 - a. a hardworking insect
 - Prov. 30:25--weak but productive
 - Prov. 6:6--teacher of the lazy

B. Attributes of Indolence

1. *Proverbs 26:13-16*
 - a. He dreads to work
 - He hates where work is to be done or a journey to be walked (*in the road*)
 - Makes an excuse when pressed to be diligent: *there's a lion...!*
 - He doesn't succeed because he's lazy
 - b. He's in love with his ease
 - He's attached to his bed
 - c. Too lazy to do work for himself
 - d. He has a high opinion of himself
 - Everyone else is wrong except him

C. The Outcome of Indolence

1. Weeds, thorns and ruins (*Prov. 24:30f*)
 - a. Poverty--*Prov. 10:4*
 - b. He craves and craves--*Prov. 21:25*
 - c. Spiritual life is in shambles

II. Conclusion

"Go to the ant...consider its ways and be wise"

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up:

If you were buying **used** property such as a car or a house, what would you take into consideration before purchasing the item?

See To It

Proverbs 24:30-34

1. How did King Solomon determine that a sluggard owned this field?
2. Why did Solomon address this field owner as one who *lacked judgment*? Explain.
3. Can we learn a person's nature by how he/she keeps his/her possessions? What did Solomon learn?
4. Where does slothfulness lead to? How come? What is the antidote?
5. Would you ever buy a car or home or anything from a person who doesn't take care of their possessions? Why?

Seeing It Closer:

1. How does God feel about slothfulness? Why?
2. **Read Proverbs 10:26.** Explain the meaning of this verse and how does it apply to us as Christians?
3. How can we prevent the following?
 - a. Missing church, devotionals, etc.
 - b. Being late to services, work, etc.
 - c. Poverty and hunger
 - d. Being fired from a job

Getting To It:

Pray for one another that we would be diligent workers for the Lord, a people not idle, but pleasing to our Savior Jesus Christ.