

“DILIGENCE RULES”

Proverbs 12:24

The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work. Show me a man of God who you admire – I guarantee they will be a hard worker.

Proverbs 12:24 NKJV ²⁴*The hand of the diligent will rule, But the lazy man will be put to forced labor.*

Proverbs 12:24 NLT ²⁴*Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and become a slave.*

I. THE LAZINESS TRAP

A. This text speaks about lazy men: **V24** *But the lazy man will be put to forced labor.*

1. Lack of desire/unwillingness to work
 - a. *Bowstring that is slack/no tension; Not being strained – but not useful*
 2. **Lazy men lack understanding: Proverbs 24:30** ³⁰*I walked by the field of a lazy person, the vineyard of one with no common sense.*
 - a. They fail to understand what it takes to succeed at anything: *Hard work!*
 - b. They fail to gain understanding of how to do what they need to do
 3. **Lazy men live by their feelings:** Hard work can be unenjoyable...I don't feel like working
- B. Laziness ruins the future! **V24** *But the lazy man will be put to forced labor. be lazy and become a slave.*
1. A lazy man cannot determine what happens in the future: People or circumstances determine it
 - a. In ministry: Disciples who do not get where they want to be. b. Pastors who don't grow

II. THE NEED FOR HARD WORK

A. Anything good in life requires hard work

1. Man was placed in a garden to work: *Great potential could be released through labor*
 - a. Many parables: Fields/farms/dirt; Work was required to release blessing
 2. The things of God require hard work: **V24** *The hand of the diligent...Work hard...*
 - a. **Matthew 9:37** ³⁷*Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*
 - b. **Colossians 1:29** *To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*
- B. The process:
1. Decide what you want: Diligent means ‘to decide’
 2. Work to understand what is needed: Asking questions requires work
 3. Work hard at it – every day: When you feel like it/don't. When rewarding/not. When exciting/boring
- Jerry Seinfeld: “When I was starting out, I used to sit down and write a couple of times a week. Then, I watched construction workers go back to work, trudging down the street. It was like a revelation to me: these guys don't want to go back to work after lunch, but they're goin'. That's their job. If they can exhibit that level of dedication for that job, I should be able to do the same for mine.*
- Learn to accept your mediocrity. No one's really that great. You know who's great? The people that just put tremendous amount of hours into it. It's a game of tonnage. Net worth \$1 billion.*

4. There are things you can't choose in life: Intelligence/talent; **But you can choose to work hard!**

III. DILIGENCE RULES

A. Our text says that hard work determines your future: **V24** *The hand of the diligent will rule...*

1. You rule or determine your own future: Successful/effective – or not
2. You rule others – meaning you can lead them
 - a. Hard work will give you influence with others
3. God blesses hard work
 - a. God watches workers – to reward & promote them
 1. *Rachel/camels: Watching how she works to choose a bride for the wealthy son*
 2. *Ruth/gleaning in the heat: Rewarding/marrying the wealthy owner – line of Christ!*
2. This is why we should work as hard as we can & do the best we can!
 - a. We do the best we can – and God adds His blessing; *He does what He can do!*