

The Characteristics of a "Sluggard"

Proverbs uses a unique Hebrew word to describe the sluggard. The word “עצל” (‘asel), is only found in Proverbs and is normally translated "sluggard," or “lazy.” Look up the following verses in Proverbs to see how this person is described and the consequences those who are like this can expect (from NASB unless noted).

| <i>Verses</i> | <i>Main Characteristics</i> |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 6:6-8 Go to the ant, O sluggard , Observe her ways and be wise, Which having no chief, Officer, or ruler, Prepares her food in the summer, And gathers her provision in the harvest. | |
| 6:9-11 How long will you lie down, O sluggard ? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest - And your poverty will come in like a vagabond, And your need like an armed man. | |
| 10:26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him. | |
| 12:27 Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, But the diligent man will get precious wealth (ESV) | |
| 13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat. | |
| 15:19 The way of the sluggard is a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is a highway. | |
| 19:15 Laziness casts into a deep sleep, And an idle man will suffer hunger | |
| 19:24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, And will not even bring it back to his mouth. | |
| 20:4 The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing. | |
| 21:25 The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work; All day long he is craving, While the righteous gives and does not hold back. | |
| 22:13 The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside; I shall be slain in the streets!” | |
| 24:30-34 I passed by the field of the sluggard , And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense; And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles, Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest, Then your poverty will come as a robber, And your want like an armed man. | |
| 26:13 The sluggard says, “There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!” | |
| 26:14 As the door turns on its hinges, So does the sluggard on his bed. | |
| 26:15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again. | |
| 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer. | |

Think About It

The root meaning of the word translated “lazy” or “sluggard” in Proverbs means “to put off; postpone.” A study of the verses that use the word in Proverbs reveals several alarming characteristics and consequences. Take the following quiz to see if any of these characteristics are growing in your life.

| Yes | No | Question |
|-----|----|--|
| | | 1. If your mom looked at your room right now, would she describe it as messy? |
| | | 2. Have you procrastinated on your homework to the point that you got a lower grade on a test or assignment because you didn't prepare adequately? |
| | | 3. Did you spend more than 15 hours this week on the internet, watching TV or playing video games? |
| | | 4. Do you have a number of books or projects that you haven't yet started or that you've left unfinished? |
| | | 5. Are there specific things, goals, or skills that you've wished for but never taken steps to accomplish (musical instrument, sport, or computer skill; college, etc.)? |
| | | 6. Have your grades stayed the same or gone down in the past year because you aren't studying as you should? |
| | | 7. Do you have possessions that are broken or deteriorating due to neglect or procrastination? |
| | | 8. Do you frequently have to be reminded by parents and teachers of what you are supposed to be working on (appointments, responsibilities, or assignments)? |

Hope for the Sluggard!

1. Learn to observe and reflect on life's experiences.
Proverbs 6:6 “. . . observe her ways and be wise.”
2. Learn to plan and prioritize daily activities.

A =
B =
C =
3. Plan a basic schedule (daily/weekly).
4. Work hard as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

Learn more of what Proverbs says about how you should do your work and why!

10:4

18:9

12:24

21:17

14:23

22:29

16:26

28:19

