

Of Hedges and Highways - May 19, 2019

Proverbs 15:19 The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is a highway.

Let's establish the foundation for why **laziness is a sin**: God, the Creator is a laborer and He sees work as a good and valuable attribute. This is the opposite of the way that a lazy person thinks.

1) After the creation of the earth, God rested from His labor and the fourth commandment of The Ten confirms that it was passed on to man as a good thing. Gen 2:2-3 Ex 20:8-10a

2) God ordains specific work for us and commands us to pray for workers. Eph 2:10, Mt 9:37-38

Synonyms for **lazy**: A **sluggard** is habitually lazy or inactive. **Slothfulness** (used in KJV) develops gradually as a person makes "little" decisions with the goal of maintaining comfort and taking the easy path. A **procrastinator** is someone who postpones work.

I. Hedges and Highways

A. Highways - This is what it's like to follow in God's ways as laid out in Scripture

1. It is a constructed or built up roadway by design and engineering.
2. Troubles may still be encountered along the highway.
3. You can easily see where you're going or where the road is leading.

B. Hedges - The difficulty and opposition experienced by going the way of the lazy.

1. A hedge or hedgerow is a line of closely spaced shrubs or trees, planted and trained to form a barrier or to mark the boundary of an area. Hedges used to separate a road from adjoining fields or one field from another,... Wikipedia
2. Imagine swapping out a briar or, more apt for Florida, saw palmetto patch for your walking trail. You'll wish you had not chosen to go that way.

II. What is *the way* and What is *the path*?

A. Way of the Lazy equals a Hedge of Thorns:

1. **Unfaithful and untrustworthy**. Won't be able to stay employed. Only bring grief and disappointment in leaving things undone. Proverbs 10:26. Contrast with Luke 16:10
2. **Typically complainers and whiners**. Even if food or money is given to the lazy, they won't eat it or they let it go to waste such that it spoils and must be thrown out. They want to be spoon fed. Pr 12:27; 19:24; 13:4
3. **Think they're a "know-it-all"** Mt 25:26 Pr 26:16
 - a) The lazy slave didn't truly know the character of his master.
 - b) Laziness is wicked, because God designed us to work. **This is why He will oppose and make the way difficult** for those who are proud by being lazy. Pr 18:9, 16:25
4. **Careless and reckless plus always needy** Pr 24:30-31; 21:25,26
 - a) This is the way of the procrastinator.
 - b) **Careless** rushing at the last minute, **incomplete or lacking excellence**.
5. Lastly, the lazy, sluggard is **full of excuses**. Pr 26:13;

- B. Path of the Upright equals a Highway
1. They have **clear goals and action plans** to get there. Proverbs 4:18
 - a) **Full of confidence, hope and peace.**
 - b) **Able to rejoice** regardless of the circumstances.
 - c) Believing and acting on Eph 2:10.
 2. Proverbs 16:17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches **his way preserves his life.**
 - a) Not always looking over his shoulder wondering when he's going to be found out to be a sham or a schemer. Pr 21:29
 - b) Job: Reputation as God-honoring and prosperous. Job 1:1, Jms 5:11
 3. **Surrounded with God's mercy, truth and goodness.** Ps 25:10, Pr 28:10
 - a) I believe that it shows up by **exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit.**
 - b) Not freedom from trials, but freedom in the midst of them.

III. Staying on the Path of the Upright

A. A look at Psalm 1:1-3

1. Ps 1:1 "blessed" from "level or straight" paths on the right course; not devoid of bumps or twists, but provides confidence we're walking the way God desires.
 - a) First, don't act this way:
 - (1) Walk: Don't gauge success or fulfillment by the world, but measure it by the Scripture truth and godly examples .
 - (2) Stand: Don't stand up to be counted or aligned with the way or waywardness of sinners, but stand up for God's way.
 - (3) Sit: Don't sit in judgment as the scoffers do Mt 7:1-5
 - b) Second, definitely act this way:
 - (1) Delighting in the law of the Lord should bring feelings of joy and pleasure. Greatly desire it, not out of compulsion, but genuinely look forward to time in the Word with Him.
 - (2) Meditating on the law of the Lord; contemplate with serious thought, pause, ponder, study. Trade out some entertainment time for restful, thoughtful refreshment in God's word. Plan it.
2. Ps 1:3 Know by fruits whether on highway or not.
 - a) Either fruit of character: fruit of the Spirit examples
 - b) Fruit of drawing ones towards Christ or Christ-likeness: impact on others

B. Helpful resources:

1. Put Laziness to Rest - Paul Maxwell, Desiring God Ministries:
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/put-laziness-to-rest>
2. What is a Sluggard? <https://www.gotquestions.org/Proverbs-sluggard.html>

C. Promises for the Upright - Ps 84:11; Ps 140:13; Pr 2:7

**Oh that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me
and keep all My commandments always,
that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!**

Deuteronomy 5:29