

Cultivating God's Work Ethic

WOLBI: Proverbs Hour-8

WOLBI Proverbs Class Themes

- Hour-1: God Has Given the Guide to Wisdom in Proverbs
- Hour-2: The Best Life Possible is: Doing the Will of God for Life
- Hour-3: Don't Waste Your Life Like SOLOMON
- Hour-4: The Ultimate Sin is Pride
- Hour-5: The Second Greatest Day of Your Life
- Hour-6: The Un-intoxicated Life
- Hour-7: Raising Kids Who See Your Character & Look for the One God Says is Best
- **Hour-8: Cultivating a Godly Work Ethic**
- Hour-9: The Foolishness of Distractions
- Hour-10: The Power of Spoken Words

OLD TESTAMENT FOOLS

In the Old Testament, the word fool is actually a translation of 4 different Hebrew words¹ that reflect subtle differences in “types” of fools.

God's Will for My Character

- A. God Wants to Make Me **Wise**, Not Foolish
- B. God Wants to make Me **Teachable**, Not Stubborn.
- C. God Wants to make Me **Righteous**, Not Wicked.
- D. God Wants to make Me **Humble**, Not Proud.
- E. God Wants to make Me **Self-controlled**, Not Rash.
- F. God Wants to make Me **Forgiving**, Not Vindictive.

God's Will for My Relationships

1. God's Will for our **Relationship to our Parents.**
2. God's Will for our **Relationship to our Partner.**
3. God's Will for our **Relationship to our Children.**
4. God's Will for our **Relationship To Our Friends & Neighbors.**

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WORK HARD AND DON'T BE LAZY!

Here are twenty practical principles from Proverbs to motivate you to work hard and avoid laziness. After you read through these principles, take the time to go back through and look up the origin of each principle in the book of Proverbs.

Work Hard and Don't Be Lazy!

1. **God opposes the “ sluggards ”**. Remember, working hard is first a mindset (and so is laziness). Either we adopt God's attitude (work), or the foolish mindset (sluggardliness). **See Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:5; 15:19; 22:13; 26:12-16.**
2. Working hard and staying on task is a matter of self-control. **See Proverbs 16:32b; 25:28.**
3. **Get up early.** Try to stand up right when the alarm clock goes off. **See Proverbs 20:13; 24:30-34; 26:14; 31:15.**

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Work Hard and Don't Be Lazy!

4. **Do hard jobs first.** Easier jobs second. Then you can have fun. [**Proverbs 22:29; 21:20; 24:27**]
5. **Love what you do as a vocation, regardless of what it is.** Ask God to grant His blessing and favor in your work (cf. the account of Joseph in Genesis 39). [**Proverbs 12:11, 14b; 28:19**]
6. **Don't try to make money by deceit or fraud.** If you do, God will punish you, sooner or later. [**Proverbs 3:9-10; 10:2; 11:18; 15:27; 16:8; 20:14; 28:8, 20**]

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Work Hard and Don't Be Lazy!

7. **Be honest with your employer about how much you work.** If you're lazily collecting a paycheck, that's stealing. **[Proverbs 14:23; 20:17; 22:16; 30:8-9]**
8. **Don't work so much, however, that you need to re-introduce yourself to your family.** Strive for a healthy balance between your work and your family life. **[Proverbs 13:11, 25; 15:16-17; 23:4-5; 24:3-4]**
9. **If you travel too much (according to your wife's/family's honest, loving assessment), seek to curb your travel, if possible.** Perhaps another position would provide greater harmony in your home. **[Proverbs 11:29; 15:22, 32; 18:15, 22; 19:20; 21:16]**

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10. **Does your wife regularly wonder how the bills are going to be paid?** If you're not taking initiative to lead, confess your failure in leadership and take control of your family finances. **[Proverbs 16:26; 19:14; 21:5; 26:15]**
11. **Treat your work** (house cleaning, school work, or whatever it is) as though you will reap a harvest from your labors. **[Proverbs 20:4; 27:18, 23-27]**
12. **Don't work only in order to receive.** Rather, find satisfaction in simply doing good work for God and men. **[Proverbs 3:27-28; 12:26; 21:25-26; 24:21-22; 25:21-22]**

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Work Hard and Don't Be Lazy!

13. **Lazy people often assume that others owe them a handout** (whether they've worked hard or not). Don't fall into an entitlement mentality. **[Proverbs 13:4]**
14. **When you are asked to serve in some way**, don't attempt to take the path of least resistance (because of laziness). **[Proverbs 10:26; 19:15]**
15. **Consider how much more** would be accomplished for the kingdom of Christ if you worked as hard in ministry as you do for a paycheck. **[Proverbs 18:9]**

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Work Hard and Don't Be Lazy!

16. Consider how your employer would evaluate you if his assessment was based on your work ethic in ministry. (Would you be fired?) **[Proverbs 21:2]**

17. If you are a lazy person, or if you tend toward laziness in certain areas of your life, confess your sin to God. Whether at home, at work, or in ministry, admit to God that you haven't been working as hard as you should (He knows already), and ask Him to cleanse you from sin. **[Proverbs 28:13]**

16. Consider how your employer would evaluate you if his assessment was based on your work ethic in ministry. (Would you be fired?) [Proverbs 21:2]

17. If you are a lazy person, or if you tend toward laziness in certain areas of your life, confess your sin to God. Whether at home, at work, or in ministry, admit to God that you haven't been working as hard as you should (He knows already)HeH, and ask Him to cleanse you from sin. [Proverbs 28:13]

Work Hard and Don't Be Lazy!

18. **Abandoning laziness and growing in diligence means you must be controlled by the Holy Spirit.** Here are some practical steps you can take: [Proverbs 12:24, 27; 31:27]

- Ask the Spirit to make you a hard worker for God.
- Read, re-read, and even memorize the proverbs that pertain to both laziness and work.
- Trust God to overcome any bad habits you've developed regarding work and diligence.
- When you are tempted to be lazy, seek the Spirit's help in prayer and remind yourself what the Word of God teaches.

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Work Hard and Don't Be Lazy!

19. **Show how the Proverbs on diligence and laziness are important** by reading them to your family and then applying the biblical principles. Discuss with your family how you can hold one another accountable to be diligent workers for God and men. **[Proverbs 1:8; 2:1-2; 3:1-2; 4:1-2, 10-11, 20; 5:1-2; 6:20; 7:1-3; 8:32-36; 22:17-21; 23:15-25]**
20. **Ask God to give you opportunities to become a hard worker,** and then look for Him to answer in every realm of your life (home, work, school, ministry, etc.). **[Proverbs 6:6-11; 24:30-34]**

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Choices That Keep Us From Wasting Our Life

2 Corinthians 5:10

CHOICES THAT KEEP US FROM WASTING OUR LIFE

God wants you to serve His church in an unusual and special way. He wants you to live a life that testifies that the Lord is good—good enough to obey completely, to trust implicitly, to follow faithfully, and to intentionally sacrifice my comfort, my security, and my convenience for His Cause!

Few writers have the gift of expressing truth as well as John Piper, the missionary-hearted, teaching pastor at Bethlehem Baptist of Minneapolis. Let me read an excerpt from a book everyone should read when they think about the future. It is called: *Don't Waste Your Life* (2003):

A Tragedy In The Making: Wasted Lives

A TRAGEDY IN THE MAKING

You may not be sure that you want your life to make a difference. Maybe you don't care very much whether you make a lasting difference for the sake of something great. You just want people to like you. If people would just like being around you, you'd be satisfied. Or if you could just have a good job with a good wife, or husband, and a couple of good kids and a nice car and long weekends and a few good friends, a fun retirement, and a quick and easy death, and no hell—if you could have all that (even without God)—you would be satisfied. That is a tragedy in the making. A wasted life.

These Lives and Deaths Were No Tragedy

In April 2000, Ruby Eliason and Laura Edwards were killed in Cameroon, West Africa. Ruby was over eighty. Single all her life, she poured it out for one great thing: to make Jesus Christ known among the unreached, the poor, and the sick. Laura was a widow, a medical doctor, pushing eighty years old, and serving at Ruby's side in Cameroon.

The brakes failed, the car went over a cliff, and they were both killed instantly. I asked my congregation: Was that a tragedy? Two lives, driven by one great passion, namely, to be spent in unheralded service to the perishing poor for the glory of Jesus Christ—even two decades after most of their American counterparts had retired to throw away their lives on trifles?

No, that is not a tragedy. That is a glory. These lives were not wasted. And these lives were not lost. "Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35).

An American Tragedy: How Not to Finish Your One Life

I will tell you what a tragedy is. I will show you how to waste your life. Consider a story from the February 1998 edition of Reader's Digest, which tells about a couple who: "took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast five years ago when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30 foot trawler, play softball and collect shells."

At first, when I read it I thought it might be a joke. A spoof on the American Dream. But it wasn't.

Tragically, this was the dream: Come to the end of your life—your one and only precious, God-given life—and let the last great work of your life, before you give an

account to your Creator, be this: playing softball and collecting shells.

Picture them before Christ at the great day of judgment: "Look, Lord. See my shells."

That is a tragedy. And people today are spending billions of dollars to persuade you to embrace that tragic dream. Over against that, I put my protest: Don't buy it. Don't waste your life.

"God created us to live with a single passion: to joyfully display his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life. The wasted life is the life without this passion. God calls us to pray and think and dream and plan and work not to be made much of, but to make much of him in every part of our lives." [551 words]

What Can Keep Us From Serving Jesus In Daily Life?

Revelation 3:17–18

WHAT CAN KEEP US FROM SERVING JESUS IN DAILY LIFE?

Jesus answers that question in one of His most sobering postcards, the one to the final church called Laodicea. It was a literal church in the first century, and may well be a prophetic look at the very age in which we live. Here is what Jesus says to each of us who live in these dangerous times of great comfort, wealth, security, and freedom of unlimited choices.

“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are ... blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments ... that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” (Revelation 3:17–18).

Jesus is warning us to be careful of three grave dangers, these dangers are more virulent than melanoma or staphylococcus (both MRSA and VRSA). Here are three deadly spiritual pathogens :

What Can Keep Us From Serving Jesus In Daily Life?

Pathogen 1—Un-Forsaken Desires:

The Lust for Comfort and Convenience;

Greed for Recognition;

Covetousness for Security.

PATHOGEN 1—UN-FORSAKEN DESIRES

These sins of an affluent society can erase Christ's "Well done!" Remember Solomon: he began by sacrificing thousands of animals and building the most beautiful worship place for the Lord, but he failed to finish well. He got to heaven yet so as by fire. (In today's language, we'd say that Solomon got into heaven "by the skin of his teeth.") What are these sins of old age?

1. The Lust for Comfort and Convenience: This sin is epidemic. We continually lust for comfort. A life consumed with a lust for comfort and convenience like that won't finish well. (Rev. 3:17-18)
2. Greed for Recognition: Older people usually want to receive recognition of some sort. In fact, it seems that almost everyone lusts for the applause of others. We must beware of seeking approval from people and instead seek approval only from God. (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16)
3. Covetousness for Security: Our whole country has become security-obsessed. People want to know how to best secure retirement funds, how to secure college education funds, how to get job security, and how to secure their homes and other possessions. We are caught up in the pursuit of security, and are wasting valuable time and energy to protect things we cannot keep. (Isaiah 31:1)

These sins of old age—the lust for comfort, greed for recognition, and covetousness for security—can erase Christ's "Well done!"

What Can Keep Us From Serving Jesus In Daily Life?

Pathogen 2—Un-Recognized
Exception-ism

Pathogen 3—Un-Mortified
pockets of pride

PATHOGEN 2—UN-RECOGNIZED EXCEPTION-ISM

What is exception-ism? It is thinking that your life is an exception to God's Word. Thus you excuse yourself from doing anything for heaven because of things like your past, pain, poverty, or poor self-image.

Think carefully on this: you will never be in the future what you are not becoming today. If you are not responding to and obeying God's Word now, and you feel like you're always an exception, that attitude will stay with you till the end.

PATHOGEN 3—UN-MORTIFIED POCKETS OF PRIDE

"Un-mortified pockets of pride" means allowing pride to grow that can make you secretly, inwardly proud of your intellect (thinking you are smarter than others); or proud of your achievements (thinking you are better than others); or proud of your goodness (thinking "I'm not as bad as others").

Sin, in the light of sin, never does look bad, but sin in the light of God's holiness always looks bad. Pockets of pride in your life can erase Christ's "Well done!"

Invest The Rest Of Your Life With God

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

INVEST THE REST OF YOUR LIFE WITH GOD

God is on the lookout for men who have ears to hear His Word, eyes that see His plan, and who are surrendered, yielded, sold-out, full-hearted, true-seekers of Him. Helen H. Lemmel (1864–1961), the blind hymn writer, gave us this beautiful song (it is Hymn # 335).

I invite you to turn your eyes fully upon your precious Jesus as I read the words to this great song. Its chorus packs a powerful message of surrender for today's church!

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!

Thro' death into life ever-lasting
He passed, and we followed Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion—
For more than conq'rors we are.

His word shall not fail you—He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

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