

DILIGENCE vs. SLOTHFULNESS

ACCEPTING EACH TASK AS A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT FROM THE LORD AND USING ALL MY ENERGIES TO DO IT QUICKLY AND SKILLFULLY

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” Colossians 3:23.

DEFINITION OF DILIGENCE

Bible translators have used the term *diligence* to render several Hebrew and Greek words. They communicate such concepts as rising early; searching out with painstaking effort; being earnest, eager, and determined; working swiftly, skillfully, and efficiently; and pursuing a task promptly and energetically. One of the richest word pictures for diligence, the Hebrew word *charuwts*, means “a trench that is dug, or gold that is mined.”

The California Gold Rush of 1849 provides a powerful illustration of diligence. Men living on the East Coast dropped everything and rushed out to the West Coast to dig for gold. They worked swiftly and thoroughly without regard for personal weariness or sacrifice. Their vision of what they could do with the gold they discovered motivated them to do very hard work. If we copied their energy and motivation in every project that we undertake, the people around us would see and honor the quality of diligence.

THE GREAT REWARDS OF DILIGENCE

God promises valuable rewards to those who demonstrate diligent. For example, diligent workers will receive riches, leadership, favor, a standing before rulers, an understanding of the meaning of life, and honor from God.

- “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men” (Proverbs 22:29). The Living Bible paraphrases this verse as: “Do you know a hard-working man? He shall be successful and stand before kings!”
- “The hand of the diligent will rule, But the slack hand will be put to forced labor, (Proverbs 12:24, New American Standard).
- “Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth,” (Proverbs 10:4, New International Version).

THE BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE DILIGENT

God encourages us to have diligence in the following areas:

- Resolving legal disputes (See Luke 12:58)
- Carrying out leadership responsibilities (See Romans 12:8)
- Doing good works (See I Timothy 5:10)
- Seeking the Lord (See Hebrews 11:6)
- Watching over fellow believers (See Hebrews 12:15)
- Making your calling and election sure (See II Peter 1:10)
- Developing Godly character (See II Peter 1:5-7)
- Working for personal peace and purity (see II Peter 3:14)

THE KEY TO DEVELOPING DILIGENCE

True diligence requires an expenditure of energy contrary to our human nature. We naturally tend to make soft choices and let others do the hard work. Whenever we are asked to carry out a difficult task, we usually ask ourselves two questions: “What will I gain if I do it?” or “What will I lose if I do not do it?” God provides answers to these questions in the following passage of Scripture.

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23).

The Apostle Paul urges us to change our perspective about our everyday toil. We do not simply work for an earthly employer. In whatever we do, we actually labor for the Lord Jesus Christ. He will make a thorough inspection of all that we do and reward us for diligence, not only in this life but throughout all of eternity. This realization motivates us to diligence.

Because Jesus Christ is our employer, we do not need to worry if we do not get recognized for extra effort that we invest in quality work. Because Jesus Christ is our employer, we do not need to wonder whether He will see if we overlooked or avoided details that might not get noticed by others. This understanding should motivate us to fulfill the instruction of Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom,” (New International Version).

If you fail to demonstrate diligence in all your projects, then you fail to adequately represent the Lord Jesus Christ Whom you serve. You also disappoint those expecting more diligence and productivity from you. You need to ask forgiveness of the Lord and of those whom you have disappointed, and to purpose now to develop true diligence in every task set before you.

HOW DILIGENT ARE YOU?

1. Do you complete an assigned task quickly and enthusiastically, or do you reluctantly fit it into your schedule?
2. Do you plan ahead on a job to do it the quickest and most efficient way?
3. Do you redeem valuable minutes by moving quickly on the job, or do you walk slowly?
4. Do you look forward to going on to a new job or to resting after a job?
5. Do you complete chores so thoroughly that your parents consider you a diligent worker?
6. Do you do a job to first please the Lord and then your employer?
7. Do you go the extra mile, working wholeheartedly to complete each job?
8. Do you use every minute of company time to make your employer successful?