

HOW TO LIVE

LIFE LESSONS FROM PROVERBS

Work February 12, 2023

OPENING QUESTION

What is the most important lesson you took away from your first job?

Proverbs is a book of distilled biblical wisdom, where we can reflect on How to Live in God's world, in God's ways. Wisdom offers a perspective on the path we are currently walking, allowing us to consider if we are reflecting the image of the world, or reflecting God's order, light, goodness and love in the ways we live. This week, we'll look at what Proverbs has to say about work.

What wisdom does culture offer us about our work?

These might be quippy aphorisms or more informal and casual statements.

READ Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4,26; 11:1; 12:11,24,27; 13:4; 14:23; 16:3,11; 18:9; 20:4,23; 21:5; 22:29; 26:13-14

Take turns paraphrasing each proverb, or summarizing its meaning

- Sometimes it's helpful to remember proverbs can be metaphorical: when we use the phrase "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink," we're almost never talking about horses. Consider how your proverb's meaning might expand beyond its literal understanding.
- Give a quick example of what this wisdom looks like in modern life or situations where it might apply.

As you read through them all, brainstorm a few unifying themes or main ideas you hear.

- How is this wisdom in general similar to or different from the wisdom you hear about our work, vocation and career from culture?

CHOOSE TWO FAVORITE PROVERBS

From the selection above, which two stuck out or were the most interesting?

After reading your selected proverbs in at least two other translations, spend time considering the following questions around each of those two Proverbs:

- What is the Proverb highlighting as *good* (or, perhaps, as bad!) in God's eyes?
 - Is this easy or difficult to agree with? Why?
- Can you think of examples of this proverb in action from the Bible? What about in popular media? (Anti-examples are great too!)
- What contexts and scenarios in your own life need and application of this wisdom?
 - Describe what it would look like to live by this wisdom in the situation where it would be most difficult.

Consider Colossians 3:23-24. Practically, in your daily experience, why is it hard to remember that you're not ultimately working for your boss?

- What is something you could do to help you keep this perspective in mind?

DAILY TIME

Proverbs 11

Proverbs 12

Proverbs 13

Proverbs 14

Proverbs 15

Psalms 119:105-112

As you read each day, consider:

What do these proverbs show me about God and His character?

Where do they highlight my need to confess and receive God's forgiveness?

Where can I ask for help to live out the wisdom I see that I need?

Partner Potluck!

February 26

[Encounterchurch.org/events](https://encounterchurch.org/events)

KISS Booth!

Kisses If you Sign up to Serve

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NOTES AND QUOTES

Proverbs are **principles**, not *promises*. They are wisdom that is good to walk in, regardless of the outcome.

Consider: If the forecast calls for rain, it is wise to take an umbrella. It may be useful and keep you dry, you might use it yet get soaked anyways, or it might not rain at all. Regardless of the outcome, it was wise to take the umbrella.

If we hear proverbs wrongly as promises, and we walk in their wisdom, but the good we expect does not come, we may question God's goodness or power: Is He not faithful? Is He not able?

If we see proverbs as principles: They are a kindness from God - to know how to navigate everyday difficulties, to live well in a broken world in a way that brings honor and glory to the One whose name we bear. (Wilkin)

FROM THE MESSAGE

After spending some time in Proverbs 6:6-11 considering the faithfulness of the ways of the ant, Dirk moved on to the practical implications of Colossians 3:23-24. What did you hear in the meditation on the ways of the ant that reminds you of faithful work?

- What in your life seems like a huge change or action or job that could benefit from the steady, small faithfulness-over-time wisdom of the ant?

From Colossians 3:23-24, do you find the biggest challenge in *what* you're doing ("whatever you do..."), in your *attitude* ("do it with all your heart"), or in *who* you're working for ("as working for the Lord...")?

EXTRA: Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

How does this passage expand and compliment the themes you identified in Proverbs?

- Does it add anything to your understanding of how God calls us to use our work to honor Him?

"My actions and choices were shaped more by the brokenness around me than the reality of God's goodness and nearness..."

God is working to restore goodness and beauty in creation, *and* our ability to see and know goodness and beauty (Romans 12:2)

"How can we, imperfect as we are, develop an instinct for recognizing and embracing the good? How does discernment equip us to navigate a broken, complicated world with confidence and joy?" (Anderson, p 12-13)

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

As you pray for one another, ask God for wisdom; use James 1:5 to guide your prayer.

PRAYER AND CARE

How can you care for one another? How can you pray for one another throughout the coming week?

Proverbs 6

6 Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.

7 Without having any chief, officer, or ruler,

8 she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.

9 How long will you lie there, O sluggard?

When will you arise from your sleep?

10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,

11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Proverbs 10

4 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him.

Proverbs 11: 1 A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight.

Proverbs 12: 11 Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.

24 The hand of the diligent will rule,

while the slothful will be put to forced labor.

27 Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.

Proverbs 13: 4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.

Proverbs 14:23 In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.

Proverbs 16:3 Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.

Proverbs 18:9 Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

Proverbs 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

Proverbs 22:9 Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings;

he will not stand before obscure men.

Proverbs 26:13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!"

14 As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Proverbs 24:30-34

30 I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, 31 and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.

32 Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction.

33 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,

34 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.