

## **The Sluggard On Display**

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***“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 on 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” (Proverbs 24:30-34).***

*“I passed by the field of the sluggard”* – We get to catch a glimpse into the life of the sluggard. What does his home life look like? What about his work space? Or his yard? Or his finances? In their ignorance, sluggards often forget that their lives are on display for the world to see, especially now, in an age when voyeurism seems more rampant than ever. Scan the cable channels and you will find them flooded with reality shows parading the lives of everybody from hoarders to housewives, from teen mothers to polygamists. It is easier than ever to “pass by the field” of almost any kind of lifestyle.

*“Completely overgrown”* – There is no hiding it! Within plain view of every passerby is a life completely choked by weeds, littered with failed and neglected projects or hobbies, half-heartedly set aside for care that never seems to materialize. *“Through indolence the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks”* (Ecclesiastes 10:18). Sadly, every overgrown flowerbed and ramshackle home begins with just a single project being neglected, a single weed. Without diligence, one leak or broken piece of siding quietly turns into a dozen. The same is true of many self-inflicted conditions: finances, failing marriage, disciplinary issues with our children, faltering attendance at church. It all starts small!

*“When I saw, I reflected...I received instruction”* – The sluggard’s life becomes a cautionary tale for all those observing his self-implosion. We also learn that many of our most powerful lessons can come from observing people around us. If you are seeking a wise, productive life, do not waste the opportunity to learn a thing or two from those who have made poor choices. Perhaps having a greater understanding of the sluggard can help us not only keep ourselves on God’s path, but also create opportunities for us to help those whose indolence has put them in an unfortunate position.

***“The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!’ As the door turns on its hinges. So does the sluggard on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can give a discreet answer” (Proverbs 26:13-16).***

*“A lion in the road...”* – How often does this actually happen? The excuses that we make for ourselves may seem reasonable in our own minds, but they are proven totally outlandish in the real world. Of course, the sluggard does not see himself as being lazy! He feels totally justified in staying home or neglecting his work because of the off-chance that a lion might kill him on the way. We do the same thing when we make excuses for our laziness:

- I could die in a car accident, so I avoid driving anywhere;
- I could have my heart broken, so I do not date;

- I could get sick, so I never visit people at the hospital;
- I could get hurt, so I refuse to do manual labor;
- I could get lost, so I never leave my comfort zone.
- Should any of us be surprised by how many “illnesses” people seem to contract on sunny days, or Fridays, or when a big game is on television?

*“He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again”* – Like Proverbs 19:24, this verse is saying that we should never be surprised by just how lazy a person might be. The lesson is that even when nourishment is mere inches away, the sluggard will not find the will to feed himself. This is how pathetic some people become, though! The path to prosperity is littered with those who know the way but lack the motivation to achieve their goals. Couple this with the fact that the sluggard spends most of his time wishing and dreaming, craving for the very thing at his finger tips (Proverbs 13:4), and you start to get a clear picture of the depth and extent of his laziness.

*“Wiser in his own eyes”* – The sluggard pats himself on the back for getting out of work, for being “above” it. *“The wise man will learn that the sluggard is no freak, but, as often as not, an ordinary man who has made too many excuses, too many refusals and too many postponements. It has all been as imperceptible, and as pleasant, as falling asleep”* (*The Proverbs*, Kidner, p. 43).