

Scripture Text

Proverbs 6:6-11, 23:4-5, 26:13-16, 27:18

Context

The book of Proverbs gives 21st century Christians wisdom for their lives. It is part of God's plan to redeem man by providing the "skill in the art of godly living". The book of Proverbs is thematic in scope and is widely regarded as the pinnacle of the bible's wisdom literature. It assumes and builds upon the law and prophets, but goes beyond them in training the reader to live wisely in a practical 'how to' way.

Big Idea

Work in a fallen world can be hard. Most people deal with this by selectively avoiding some aspects of our work, and overinvesting in other aspects of our work. Because the root of both avoidance of work and workaholicism is pride, the only way to meaningful work is to do it to the glory of God, through the grace that comes to us in Jesus Christ.

Sermon Outline

1. Proverbs' unusual diagnoses of the problem: A heart that avoids work
2. Redemption of the worker
3. Redemption of work

Ice-breaker Question

- What do you consider as work and do you enjoy it?

Observation and Meaning

Let's read Proverbs 6:6–11

- What can we learn from the ant? (6:6-8)
- What are the characteristics of a sluggard? (6:9-10)
- What is the fruit of laziness and how have you encountered that in your own growth? (6:11)
- Why is overworking dangerous as well? How is it linked to laziness?

Let's read Proverbs 23:4-5

- What is the text telling us about wealth in v4-5?

Let's read Proverbs 26:13–16

- What is the meaning of v13-14?
- What kind of excuses do we often make when we don't want to work on something? (26:13)
- What is dangerous about a slothful man? (26:14-16)
- What are some of the reasons that contribute to the laziness?
- Do you agree that lazy people are actually proud people? Why or why not? (26:16)

Let's read Proverbs 27:18

- What is the text teaching us about the reward of faithful work?

Getting to Christ

- How does the gospel change our views of work?

Application

- How can we help one another to have a godly perspective on work?
- What are some of the reasons we overwork? What do these reasons reveal about our trust in God as our provider?
- How does Gospel centric view of work helps you?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.