

How can you get maximum benefit in your work? (10:5)

THE TEXT (NASB)

He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. Classic KJV - Proverbs 10:5

INTRODUCTION



Timing is everything.

There's a time to resist sleeping. Our entire family suffers if we don't respond to the economic cycles. It's easier to discern the business cycle (planting, nurturing, harvesting) on a farm, than in a city. But even in a city, people can sense times the economy is shrinking, stagnant, or growing.

We must push ourselves to work when we can make the most profit, and at other times, our life may depend on our sleeping.



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COMMENTARY

We have here a stern warning against sleeping too much. We all need sleep, but not too much, and not at the wrong times. When the crop ripens, farmers are up before the sun. Likewise, successful businessmen work long hours when the business cycle beckons and profits come easily. This text might also refer to someone's life-stages, such as the high-energy levels of youth, when opportunities seem unlimited. As we get older, we all come to regret the wasted time and energy of our earlier years.

Harvests are Manifold



The “harvest” might be anything. Virtually every area of our lives has its cycles, offering greater and lesser returns. It takes wisdom and understanding to recognize opportunities, and it then takes energy to seize them. We waste energy by working at the wrong time in the cycle. When we've seen and seized our opportunities, we then need to rest in the down-time. The word sleeps may refer to laziness, slackness, any effort less than the best, or just being unenthusiastic about the task at hand; but when we need down-time, we can do it deliberately, playfully, and restock the most energy from our rest.

To Sons, Not to Servants or Fathers

This text addresses the son, not the servant. Servants have no choice but to work the harvest. Sons must be concerned with the prospering of the whole family. Not all sons expect to make any effort for the success of their family. Yet this text addresses the son, not the father. It's not a prod for dads to get lazy sons out of bed. It's coaching their sons to pitch-in when there's work to be done. A sleepy son diminishes the life of his whole family—his very inheritance—for the sake of his ease—“shamefully.”

Avoid Overwork



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Japan's rise from the devastation of World War II to economic prominence from 1945 to 1975 was not without human cost. People worked ten- or twelve-hour days, six or seven days a week, year after year. And during the first three decades, and growing number of men in their 40s and 50s died of strokes and heart attacks. The Japanese call this death from overwork, [karoshi](#). Yet our Proverbs text does not say sleep is evil. Rest when it's not harvest time!

"Japan is witnessing a record number of compensation claims related to death from overwork, or 'karoshi'... increasingly afflicting young and female employees," reports Stanley White in the Financial Post (4 April 2106):

Claims for compensation for karoshi rose to a record high of 1,456 in the year to end-March 2015, according to labor ministry data, with cases concentrated in healthcare, social services, shipping and construction, which are all facing chronic worker shortages... Hiroshi Kawahito of the National Defense Counsel for Victims of Karoshi, said the real number was probably 10 times higher, as the government is reluctant to recognize such incidents....

A cardiovascular death is likely to be considered karoshi if an employee worked 100 hours of overtime in the month beforehand, or 80 hours of overtime in two or more consecutive months in the previous six... A suicide could qualify if it follows an individual's working 160 hours or more of overtime in one month or more than 100 hours of overtime for three consecutive months... Work-related suicides are up 45 percent in the past four years among those 29 and younger, and up 39 percent among women, labor ministry data show.

"How sadly this all proves Jesus' caution that "the Sabbath [rest] was made for man..." His next phrase, "...not man for the Sabbath," rebuked the religious leaders who had used ritual law to pervert the Sabbath into just another kind of work. He's instructing us that we must learn real rest.



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus was not an advocate of over-sleeping! He was accustomed to rising early (Mark 1:35) and spending time in prayer with his heavenly father.

Jesus also said, “Work... while it is day, for the night is coming when no man can work,” John 9:4. Jesus was an advocate of seizing the day (*carpe diem*), but also affirmed not working in the night. And sometimes there is a “dark,” where the Spirit is not moving. The Spirit of God is like the wind, that no one can predict where and when it will blow (John 3:8). So the best work is Spirit-led work. Jesus slept when there was no work to be done (Matthew 8:24), even on a boat in the middle of a storm.

We need real work times and real rest times, and we must be attentive to balancing both.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Identify your most profitable business periods. Every industry has peak times and slack times. For example, ski resorts must work around the clock when the snow is falling. Ensure you are giving extreme effort during your most profitable periods. Rest during the slow times.
- Once you have recognized your harvest time work intensely. Prepare yourself to blitz. Get ready spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. Eat the proper diet. Pace yourself. Avoid all distractions. Focus on the tasks at hand!
- If you work in a family business you have a potential double blessing. You have a job. Benefits not paid directly to you, extend to your family members. Adjust your personal goals and desires to help with the business.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



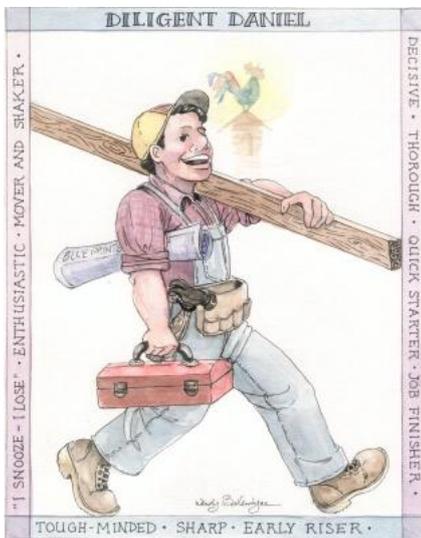
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KEY WORDS

business, diligence, harvest, laziness, more assets (quantity), shame, sleep, wise, work, saving money, bf serving others

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Diligent Daniel?



Diligent Daniel is a friend of Steady Eddie. Whereas Steady Eddie is known for his staying power, Diligent Daniel is known for his decisiveness and thoroughness. He is an early riser, a quick starter, and a job finisher. There's no room for procrastination here.

Daniel is tough-minded and sharp. He tells himself each day, "I snooze- I lose." He pushes himself and calls himself lazy. He is tough on himself—not rough.

He's the one Benjamin Franklin was thinking about two hundred years ago when he came up with the maxim, "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, WEALTHY, and wise." Daniel's also the one the author Oswald Chambers described with the words, "The heights by great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night."

Daniel is more of a thinker than Steady Eddie, but is known for his enthusiastic work capacity, not his brilliance. He's a mover and a shaker. He's not afraid to get his hands dirty and is in good physical condition. He's a builder. He starts the job right away and gets it DONE. He doesn't flip-flop in this thinking. He is not double-minded. He remains humble while exuding confidence.



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One of his favourite financial tools is the Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).



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FOOTNOTES

¹“Karoshi (Kah-roe-she) - Death From Overwork in Japan,” last modified May 2002, <http://www.apmforum.com/columns/boye51.htm>.

