

What products need no advertising? (22:29)

Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

THE TEXT (NASB)

Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men. KJV - Proverbs 22:29

INTRODUCTION



Outstanding workmanship needs no advertising. Any product of the highest quality, best-in-class, sooner or later rises to the top in public recognition.

The most powerful marketer is a delighted customer, who happily tells others. Word-of-mouth promotes products best and...best of all...it's free!

The news about stellar products and services spreads fast, even to prime ministers and presidents.



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COMMENTARY

The Best for the King

This proverb deals with finances only indirectly. Anyone “working before kings,” as a reward for excellent workmanship, will likely profit from wealth and honour. Kings want only the best and give the best rewards. Kings have full and absolute authority—even more than prime ministers and presidents, so some kings can act like despots and not return fair compensation to the craftsman.

Translation: *skilled*

The Hebrew word for “skilled,” מְהִיר, has strong connotations of the “expeditious,” as that word properly signifies: Quick dispatch, vigorous, and “speedy in executing what has been well and wisely contrived.” Thus a skilled worker is both accurate and quick. Kings and others places of great authority want the job done quickly and properly the first time.

The Search for Significance



We all have a desire to be important—to be significant. We want to be well-regarded—respected—yet this proverb insists that the best way to rise to a high place is by doing our own mundane tasks extremely well.

The type of craft here is not specified, only the quality of the work. It might be a baking, carpentering, or negotiating business deals. The point is this: it's not so much what you do—it's how well you do it. It's the degree of skill and care put into your work. Whatever you do, you must know the scope and parameters of your work—what it is and what it is not. Then you must focus, focus, focus. It requires saying “No” to distractions. No one becomes skilled by dabbling.

We need dedication, not dabbling. Learn what you are best at, and master it. Meanwhile, off-load or delegate any other tasks that keep you from your core craft.

Classic Comments



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In his *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Gill elaborates that such skilled craftsmen “shall be taken into the service of princes and noble men, and admitted into their presence and receive favours from them; as Joseph, who was industrious and diligent in his business in Potiphar’s house (Genesis 39:4), was in process of time advanced, and stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt (Genesis 41:46).”

Matthew Henry notes, “It is hard to find a truly industrious man. Such a man will rise”—particularly, one might add, given the fading diligence of our contemporary labour force. And the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary states most succinctly: “Success rewards diligence.”

Deep First, Broad Second

This proverb does not advise us to “toot our own horn” or praise our own abilities. Instead, we must concentrate on doing our immediate task well—extremely well—and wait until we are noticed. I appreciate the advice given by Christian counselor Bill Gothard: “Concentrate on the depth of your message and let God determine the breadth of your ministry.” Or as someone else has said, “Bloom where you are planted, and you may be transplanted to be bigger pot.”

It’s worth remembering that we are always standing before “the King of kings,” that our Creator is always appreciating our efforts. For Him, all tasks are equally important and unimportant, and become worthy only in the love and faithfulness of our efforts.

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus stood before both King Herod and Governor Pontius Pilate. He never sought an audience with royalty, but chose instead to be obedient to His heavenly Father (John 5:19, John 5:30, John 8:28, John 12:49).

Jesus was most highly exalted, since He was completely obedient, even obedient to the point of death (Luke 22:42). We learn about Jesus’ path from the throne, to the grave, and then back to the throne in Philippians 2:5-10.

Being a “craftsman” of His Father’s will, Jesus was granted all authority in Heaven and on Earth. He was made “Kings of kings and Lord of lords.” He was indeed fully God, but also fully Man. The first thirty years of his private life, before his public ministry, must have been filled with the drudgery of his work as “the son of a carpenter.” So He appreciates our efforts to endure the grind of any job, so we might polish it to the best of our ability and the glory of God. Those who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, will be exalted by God *in due time* [emphasis mine] (1 Peter 5:6).



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APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Know what your job is and is not. Be clear on your core responsibilities, and complete them to the very best of your ability.
- Love your job. If you can't force yourself to love it, then change jobs until you learn to love your job, otherwise you'll never be good at your job.
- Do not follow Hindu/Ancient Greek belief that secular work is somehow less noble than religious/spiritual work. No. All work is noble when done to God's glory.
- If in business, make sure the quality of your products and services is the best. Many businesses over advertise to mask mediocre quality.

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



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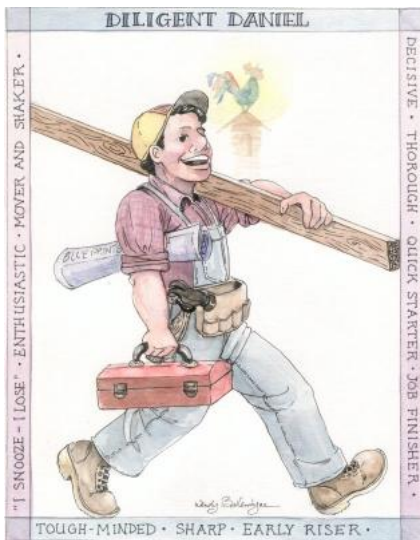
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KEY WORDS

advertising, diligence, excellence, focus, honor, laziness, more assets (quantity), quality, work, of 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).

