

What do eating styles reveal about working styles? (26:15)

The sluggard buries his hand in the dish. He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again.

THE TEXT (NASB)

The sluggard buries his hand in the dish. He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again.

A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. KJV - Proverbs 26:15

INTRODUCTION



It's a bad sign when *everything* is wearisome—even eating.

Those who eat heartily, usually work heartily.

Our attitude affects all our activities.



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COMMENTARY

This message is very important since the text is repeated almost verbatim in Proverbs 19:24, “The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, but will not bring it back to his mouth.” Check the question: [Laziness: How does it grow?](#)

The Free Lunch Test



My dad used to tell this story about his experiences as a boy in Zabrze, Poland in the 1920s. When his parents wanted to hire farm hands they first gave them a free lunch. The men loved the free food but didn't know they were being tested by their host and potential employer. My grandparents discovered a pattern. In German, “Wie zum essen, so zum arbeiten”—as a man eats, so he works. They found that those who ate with gusto also worked with gusto. Hired! Others who were picky, slow eaters were usually picky, slow workers. They got one free meal, but no job.

Laziness Spreads

I'm not recommending this as a foolproof hiring technique for the Human Resources or Personnel Departments, but eating habits are one behavioural indicator of a person's work ethic. We all know sitting at a table and just picking at food is a waste of time, space and food. Sometimes it's okay to linger over a meal. Sometimes we sit at the table just to keep company with others. Sometimes we are ill and don't want any food. The question is: Are these the exceptions or the norm?

Classic Comments

Matthew Henry observes that the sluggard

...dreads, as if it were a mighty toil, to lift his hand to his head. It is an elegant hyperbole, aggravating his sin, that he cannot endure to take the least pains, no, not for the greatest profit [although eating is not the "greatest profit", it is probably the most basic] , and showing how his sin is his punishment.

Matthew Poole makes the same point:



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He will not take the least pains for the most necessary things.

Gill comments:

The sluggard hides his hand not caring to make use of it for labour; or covers it out of sight in his bosom, pretending some weakness or ailment in it, which hinders him from working.

Matthew Henry makes a similar observation:

It is common for those who will not do their duty, to pretend they cannot.

Wealthy At Risk



Those who are wealthy are more at risk than those who are poor since the wealthy may have convenient access to food and don't need to work for it. Therefore it is hard to get the lazy out of their habits and by feeding them; we only enable their addiction. Furthermore, the lazy have a narrow comfort zone. Any activity outside that comfort zone is avoided. It's tragic when they don't make an effort to feed themselves. Children of wealthy parents, if not trained properly, are often lazy.



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND



Jesus enjoyed eating, but was not controlled by it. He was no ordinary man. His enemies called Him a “gluttonous man and a drunkard,” (Matthew 11:19). This implies that they saw Him eat heartily. Obviously, He enjoyed food and drink, but He was not mastered by His love for food. Consider the following.

After fasting for forty days and nights He *became* hungry. The hunger drive is strongest at the beginning of an extended fast and then remains largely dormant until the point of starvation. If the body does not receive nourishment as hunger is reawakened after a long period of fasting it is fatal. Precisely when, at the brink of death, the devil tempted Jesus to use His divine power and turn stones into bread. He could have done it, but refused to do anything not initiated by His Father in heaven (Matthew 4:2-4).

Jesus loved food but He loved and trusted His Heavenly Father much, much more.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Participate in your meals. Prepare it, clean up, help pay, or (as a minimum) say “thank you!”
- Watch your eating habits.
- Watch how others eat. Slow eaters tend to be lazy. Wasteful eaters tend to overspend.

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



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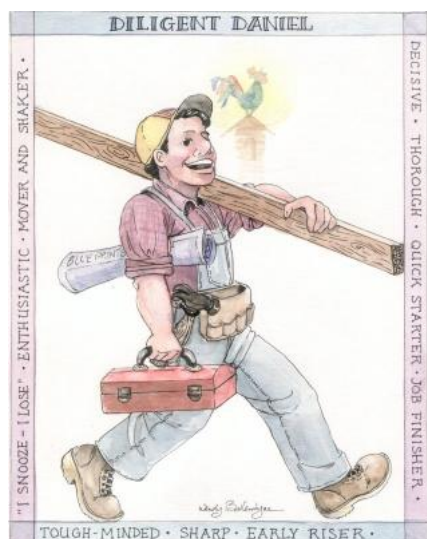
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KEY WORDS

diligence, hand, Human Resources, hunger, initiative, laziness, less assets (quantity), work, bf spending

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).

