

# How are laziness and generosity related? (21:25-26)

The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, for his hands refuse to work. All day long he is craving, while the righteous gives and does not hold back.

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## THE TEXT (NASB)

The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, for his hands refuse to work. All day long he is craving, while the righteous gives and does not hold back.

*The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not. KJV - Proverbs 21:25*

## INTRODUCTION



Laziness ruins generosity and then everything.

Those who hoard their skill, strengths, and assets tend to lose them all.

Givers end up succeeding by giving.



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## COMMENTARY

This proverb speaks of the sluggard's desire and craving. What does he crave? Some commentators believe that he wants the basics: food, shelter, and clothing. I don't think so. If someone who is employable has no food and can get food only through work, then it won't be long before he starts working. Not starving is a basic human instinct. Yet the very thing the sluggard craves, he forfeits. His inaction is not just harmful. It's fatal. He's trying to hoard his strength, but he dies in the process. So much self-regard or self-conservation proves deadly. The lazy are trapped on an "I-Land" of destruction.

### Craving for What?

The Hebrew word for "craving," תַּאֲוָה (tă•ăwāh, pronounced "ta-a-vah"), refers to a dissatisfied longing for either good or evil things. It appears first in Numbers 11:4, describing the resentment of the "rabble of Israelites," who crave better food than the miraculous manna that God is supplying, following their escape from Egyptian slavery. God's sufficiency is not good enough for them. So in most of its twenty-six biblical appearances, tă•ăwāh denotes a discontented desire for something different and something more. tă•ăwāh won't make the effort for what's available.

If the sluggard desires simply food, it should arouse him to work. It shouldn't lead him to death, but life. So if it's not basic food the sluggard craves, what is it? It seems the sluggard desires "finer things," delicacies, because wholesome nutrition is just not worth his effort. What's not to his taste is not worth the effort.

I like how the Generations Family Devotional puts it: "The sluggard desires 'not to work.' It's just that simple. He doesn't want to work. Every day, he sits and longs for vacation. He want to play his games and enjoy his entertainments....The slothful man has no desire to work, as proven by his refusal to perform menial tasks offered him."<sup>1</sup> So by watching how a person handles a small task, we can often predict how he will handle a big one.

### Good Workers are Good Givers



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Here's the problem: The sluggard won't exert his effort for basic necessities, even though they must be the stepping stones toward his elevated preferences. He has expensive tastes, but he won't make incremental steps toward his goal. He wants to ride, but he isn't willing to walk.

At first blush, I had expected the proverb to say, "the righteous works and does not slack-off." Instead the text says that "the righteous gives and does not hold back." Somehow diligence is related to generosity. And on reflection, this is one very important truth about work. True work—real labour—is an act of service, motivated by a spirit of giving. It doesn't seek to do as little as possible, but as much as possible. Workers are essentially givers, giving their energy to help others. Good workers tend to be generous people, and generous people, good workers. A possible test for prospective employees: Find out how generous they are, before you hire them.

## Give a Little Extra



I once knew the vice-president of a major Canadian steel producer who'd always try to give just a little bit more than expected. With an attitude like that, it's no surprise that he became a major executive at Stelco. He never just traded his time for some fair market value. He always gave more.

The proverb gives us a sharp warning against fatalism, the attitude that says, "I can't change things, so why even try?" Our fatalistic attitude may just be disguising self-centred laziness. Our closest helpers are at the ends of our arms: Hands. Work begins internally when we change our attitude from only wishing and wanting, to choosing and doing.

If we want peace and comfort to "take it easy," then we have nothing to contribute to others. Energy-givers end up with more, but ironically, energy-hoarders —"just too tired to help"—are losers.



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## OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus said, whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses it for Jesus' sake and the gospel will keep his life forever (Luke 9:24).

Jesus also said that the unprofitable servants are those who merely do what they are told, and never anything extra (Luke 17:10).

So real "profit" is generated ONLY when the extra load is lifted. This brings the greatest reward. Good workers go the extra mile from a sturdy passion to do the job with excellence (Matthew 5:41).

## APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Give a little more than you are paid for. It's like giving a tip to your employer.
- Work toward your goals; don't just dream or talk about them.
- Be careful what you crave, or it can lead to your demise and even your death.

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



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## KEY WORDS

assets, death, diligence, focus, hand, hoard, laziness, less assets (quantity), motivation, righteous, work, bf serving others

## ILLUSTRATION

### Who is Self-Centered Sam?



Self-Centered Sam looks out for number one. Who's that? It's Sam, of course! Sam doesn't consider himself to be self-centered. One of his favourite books is ["The Richest Man in Babylon."](#)

What does Sam do with his income? The cream, the very best goes to his own long-term growth fund. His motto is 'pay yourself first.' Some call him Stingy Sam. But he's not stingy; he's just making careful preparation for his own future, comfort, and well-being. He is part of the "me" generation. He typifies the Maslow's hierarchy of needs with self-actualization as apex of all values. Sam is a dedicated humanist. He doesn't recognize any higher power than himself. He's a tough negotiator.

Sam doesn't ignore charity. But how could he possibly help anyone one else unless there was something in it for him? Therefore any and all charitable donations must have full and public credit given to the donor. The more people are aware of his generosity the better. After all, a little bit of advertising is good for business. When his corporation gives a gift it comes as a percentage of profits, not revenues.

His financial hero is the multi-millionaire, whose assets once exceeded the entire US treasury:

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The great Railroad and Steamship Baron [Cornelius Vanderbilt](#).



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### FOOTNOTES

1. Generations Family Devotional, Homeschool Summits & Generations, Email Distribution June 16, 2022.

