

Why not skip the boring parts of a job? (12:27)

THE TEXT (NASB)

A lazy man does not roast his prey, but the precious possession of a man is diligence.

CLASSIC KJV TEXT

The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, but the substance of a diligent man is precious. KJV 12:27

INTRODUCTION



Every job has parts that are both exciting and boring. The **lazy** do only what is fun; they avoid tedious attention to boring detail.

A successful hunter gets his **prey**. Although his hunt is successful, and he may have enjoyed the thrill this does not guarantee he will finish the job. He may not go through the messy task of gutting, skinning, and roasting the prey.

The reward comes at the end of the race, not at the start or the middle. This holds true even with our assets.

COMMENTARY

[Classic KJV – Proverbs 12:27](#)

How do we develop **diligence**? There is an old Hebrew saying: “A man who does not teach his son to work teaches him to steal.” Diligence is learned. It can be learned early in childhood. The text does not apply only to hunting, but to any task that has an exciting start and a tedious, boring finish. The text ties in closely to a statement in Ecclesiastes 7:8: “The end of matter is better than its beginning.” Note the maxim, “A job well begun is a job half done.”

Translation: *Difficulties*

The last part of the text is difficult to translate from the Hebrew. The Darby translates, “but man’s precious substance is to the diligent.” The Revised Standard Version says, “but the

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diligent man will get precious wealth.” The NKJV renders it as, “but diligence is man’s precious possession.” The Young’s literal translation of 1899 states, “the wealth of a diligent man is precious.” The NIV says, “but a diligent man prizes his possessions.” According to the ESV and the sense of the German Luther Bible it is, “but the diligent man will get precious wealth.”

Three Alternatives

We find three alternatives to the translation of the last part of the text:

1. A person’s most valuable asset is a good work ethic.
2. Diligent people get good riches.
3. The assets of diligent people are well maintained.

Although I believe all are true, I prefer the NIV translation since it contrasts best with the first part of the text. I understand it to mean: “a lazy man does not take care of his assets, but a diligent man takes good care of all that he gets.” This is also the rendering of the text by the classic KJV.

Process the Prize



It’s significant that God allowed the lazy to succeed in capturing prey. A successful hunt is an opportunity to show whether or not the hunter will use the prize and fully process it. Much legitimate criticism has been directed against hunting because of those who hunt only for sport but waste the meat. Similarly, proper asset maintenance is the key difference between the field of a sluggard and that of an industrious gardener (Proverbs 24:30-34).

Debt and Clutter

If we cannot maintain what we already have then perhaps our stuff has become clutter. The incursion of debt may be a sign that a person is stretching beyond his capability in asset management. If God has not provided the assets through internal production or external blessing, then the person may not be able to handle extra assets and should not be borrowing to get them. *Debt may bring more assets than the owner has the capacity to maintain.*

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus’ last words were, “It is finished.” In the original Greek this is a one word expression, “teltesti,” meaning “paid in full!”



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Jesus finishes whatever he starts, whether it's the agonizing work of redemption that he accomplished through extreme pain, humiliation, and his execution by torture on a cross, or whether it's his work of training and teaching his disciples. Concerning this we read in John 17:4 that Jesus accomplished the work his father gave him.

Jesus was—and is—a finisher.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Practice finishing jobs. Don't start new work while existing jobs are undone.
- Take good care of what you have. Keep your assets clean and in working order.
- Don't get in the habit of jumping from one exciting task to another while never fully completing a job.

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

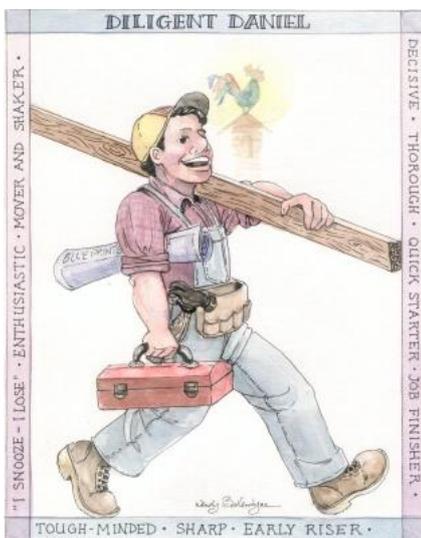
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KEY WORDS

assets, capacity, debt, diligence, endurance, laziness, less assets (quantity), leverage, maintenance, precious, productivity

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.

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