

How are promising resources ruined? (24:30-34)

I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles. Its surface was covered with nettles and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked *and* received instruction. 'A little sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the hands to rest,' then your poverty will come as a robber, and your want like an armed man.

THE TEXT (NASB)

I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles. Its surface was covered with nettles and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked *and* received instruction. 'A little sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the hands to rest,' then your poverty will come as a robber, and your want like an armed man.

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

INTRODUCTION



Neglect! Left untended, even the best resources produce nothing, and worse yet, fall into ruin.

Unused and neglected assets soon become liabilities. Property, plants, and equipment deprived of human effort soon becomes useless. How does this happen?

Tiny, innocent-looking comforts can cost us dearly. Small lifestyle choices bring huge financial problems. Minor luxuries can bring major losses.



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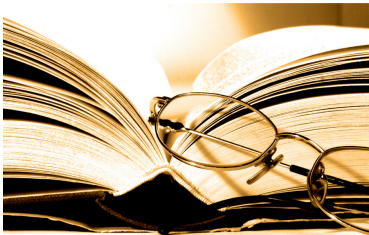
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COMMENTARY

The Scene

This proverb describes someone personally observing a couple of properties owned, but not maintained. Normally, a field can produce a crop of fruit and vegetables, and a vineyard yields a harvest of grapes, but both properties are now messes, **overgrown with thistles, covered with nettles**. They are owned by **a sluggard and by a man lacking sense**—likely the same person. He most likely inherited the properties, since if he has no desire to maintain them, he likely didn't have the energy to acquire them.

(1) Look, (2) Think, and (3) Learn



We can learn valuable life-lessons without going to school, if we pay attention to our surroundings. Develop an observant eye and ponder! Imitate the author of the text who **saw, reflected, and received instruction**.

Unfortunately (or fortunately), great circumstances and great opportunities never guarantee great results. Even in Israel's Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey, the cows and goats needed to be milked, and honey had to be collected. God's bountiful supply of resources must still be mixed with human effort. In any organization, management must provide both tools and training to its employees. No successful corporation can survive and thrive if it wastes good assets on lazy people.

A Little, A Little, A Little



Note the words **"a little"** appear three times! Small surrenders to



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~~creature comforts lead to big trouble, slowly, incrementally.~~ The last sentence of this proverb—repeats the lesson of Proverbs 6:10-11, where excessive sleep is discussed in detail. The author, the Holy Spirit, makes the same point from two different perspectives. Proverbs 6:6 gives us a good example in the productive ant. The text gives us a bad example: The sluggard. Refer to “Part Two - Extra Sleep Is Expensive” in [What are two essentials for financial survival?](#)

The point is this: Inactivity brings poverty. Procrastination brings poverty. It starts with just a little extra *sleep*, not with cat-naps. Cat-naps (or “power naps”) can refresh. But lounging around in bed when we’ve already had sufficient sleep is financially disastrous. The snooze button is the lose button. Big problems can come from small, seemingly harmless, comfort choices. [What is the sleep test?](#) Learn more about this with the keyword, “[sleep](#).”

Translation: *Sense*

The Hebrew word for “sense,” לֵב (l?v, pronounced “l?v”), is translated as “understanding” in the classic KJV. Our Proverbs 17:16 commentary notes that this word is also translated “heart” as by Young’s Literal Translation. The word “heart” expresses our core commitment, our passion. And as an old 1950s song warned us, “Oh, it’s fine to be a genius, of course, but keep that old horse before the cart. First you gotta have heart.” The most successful people in any field are not the most intelligent, educated, or even talented, but those who have the most HEART, an unwavering dedication to their vocation, association, or project. [Listen to the song.](#)

Goodbye Heart—Hello Debt



Note this profound point: The expression, “lacking sense,” is also used in a financial sense in the question, [Should you lend money to friends?](#) Proverbs 17:18 describes someone effortlessly and uncaringly falling into debt. Those who lack sense—lack heart—are likewise foolish with their wealth and financial obligations. They’re too careless to maintain their own property, yet eagerly buy more on credit, multiplying their poverty—and often the poverty of their friends.

Generations Comments

This commentary from Generations Family Devotional states the point perfectly:



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Just as most people never know when the thief will break in to rob their home—he almost never sends a note ahead to announce his intentions—slothful people almost never see poverty coming. Quietly, slowly, and unexpectedly, it creeps up on them. It takes a while to use up the capital of previous generations and then spend your way into debt (which has happened in the present era of easy access to credit). Now slothfulness is almost a universal problem for our young men, 70% of whom are not “grown up” and ready to lead a household by 30 years of age (up from 30% in 1970). Since Proverbs deals with this temptation repeatedly throughout the book, it is safe to assume the temptation has always been real and present for young men in our sinful world. Therefore, it would be prudent to go after every instance of slothfulness. The problem with a little slothfulness is that it will morph into more slothfulness. A little extra sleep on Saturday turns into a little extra sleep on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. An occasional binge will, over time, turn into a habit, and habits will determine the character of a man. Once the character trait of slothfulness is ingrained in the man, it is extremely difficult to root it out of him.¹

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus lived a busy life in the service of others.

Sometimes He prayed all night while others slept (Matthew 26:40), but He took cat naps (Luke 8:23).

The correct amount of sleep is healthy and necessary, but too much sleep is pure waste.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Don't waste your life sleeping. Snoozing is losing. Practice getting out of bed quickly.
- Identify your own “fields and vineyards.”
- Do the simple, ordinary jobs to be productive.

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



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KEY WORDS

wisdom, diligence, laziness, estate, more assets (quantity), poverty, sense, sleep, bf serving others

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Prudent Pauline?



Prudent Pauline is a planner. She looks before she leaps, she thinks before she speaks. Her favourite mottos are: "Haste makes waste," "brains over brawn," and "don't jump to conclusions."

When Pauline first heard that famous maxim: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step," she said NO! It begins with a good map. The map must be studied and the best route plotted. Consider road conditions, terrain, rest stops, refuelling, hostile territory, expected weather, travelling companions, clothing, supplies, and many more factors, including (if necessary) a guide.

She has studied the wisdom of Solomon and even helped teach him a thing or two. Solomon wrote these words about 3,000 years ago in honour of Prudent Pauline. "Whatever your hand finds to do (no matter what you are doing) do it with all your might (give it your full ability and energy) for there is no activity or planning or wisdom after you die—it will be too late." Pauline says, "First comes wisdom, then comes planning (her favourite activity), and then comes activity."

Pauline makes the time to do tax planning. She does a work plan every day. She uses a day



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~~timer or planner to assign priorities to her activities. She and Diligent Daniel are an incredible~~
pair. Pauline does all her homework before she starts an activity.



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FOOTNOTES

1. Generations Family Devotional, "What a Slothful Home Looks Like." Monday August 15, 2022.

