

Diligence

1) What is the definition of diligence?

- A) The MacMillan Dictionary defines diligence as “the attitude or behavior of someone who works very hard and very carefully.” In ordinary usage, the word diligence conveys the idea of perseverance, dedication and hard work.
- B) The word “diligence” is found throughout our English bibles, and it is used to translate several different Hebrew and Greek words. In this study, we will focus on the book of Proverbs and the Hebrew word *charuts* which is translated “diligence” by most English translations.
- C) Proverbs has a lot to say about various types of people. It talks about the fool, the simple, the wise, the scorner—and it talks about the diligent. As we will see, there are several instructive maxims on what it means to be diligent. Proverbs also describes someone who is the complete opposite of the diligent—the sluggard. This lazy fellow is singled out for some of the most picturesque ridicule in the entire book. The sluggard serves as a direct contrast to the diligent, and ironically, helps us learn a lot about diligence.

2) How does Proverbs describe/characterize the diligent?

- A) “A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich” (Prov 10:4).
- B) “The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor” (Prov 12:24).
- C) “Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth” (Prov 12:27).
- D) “The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied” (Prov 13:4).
- E) “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty” (Prov 21:5).

3) How does Proverbs describe/characterize the sluggard?

- A) “Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest” (Prov 6:6–8).
- B) “How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man” (Prov 6:9–11).
- C) “Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him” (Prov 10:26).

- D) “The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway” (Prov 15:19).
- E) “Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys” (Prov 18:9).
- F) “The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth” (Prov 19:24; also 26:15).
- G) “The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing” (Prov 20:4).
- H) “The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. All day long he craves and craves, but the righteous gives and does not hold back” (Prov 21:25–26).
- I) “The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!” (Prov 22:13; also 26:13).
- J) “I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man” (Prov 24:30–34).
- K) “As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed” (Prov 26:14).
- L) “The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly” (Prov 26:16).

4) How did Jesus model diligence?

A) By Word—Jesus modeled diligence in what He taught His disciples:

- Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14–30).
- Parable of the Sleeping Servant (Mark 13:33–37).

B) By Deed—Jesus modeled diligence by the way He lived:

- Jesus at the Feast of Passover (Luke 2:41–52).
- Jesus at Simon’s house (Mark 1:35–38).
- Jesus on a mountain (Luke 6:12–13).
- Jesus on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 8:18, 23–27; Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25).

5) What are some practical steps I can take to become more diligent?

A) Be DAPPER:

- Divide—life is too big to tackle all at once. Divide it into manageable pieces.
- Assess—take stock of where you are in each area of life.
- Plan—come up with some simple, realistic steps you can take to begin changing.

- Prioritize—saying ‘Yes’ to one thing means saying ‘No’ to something else (you only have so much time).
- Execute—follow through on your plan. Take action now to get your momentum going.
- Reward—encourage a new pattern of behavior through positive affirmation.

B) Be smart about diligence:

- Identify and remove distractions from your life.
- Put off procrastination.
- Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good.
- Consistent, small steps are better than occasional, large leaps.
- Find a role model of diligence and pattern your life after theirs.