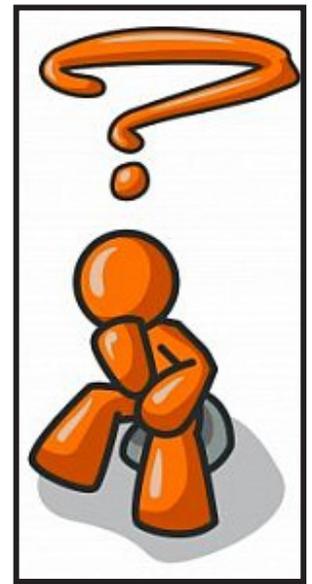


What About ... Lazy Men?

BY DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

Three thousand years ago, Solomon wrote these words: *Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest"—your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man (Proverbs 6:6-11).*



Laziness among young men is an age-old problem, but it seems to be increasing. For example, the “Washington Post” reported that young men living at home “cuts across all demographics. You’ll find it in families both rich and poor; black, white, Asian and Hispanic; urban, suburban and rural. According to the Census Bureau, fully one-third of young men ages 22 to 34 are still living at home with their parents—a roughly 100 percent increase in the past 20 years” (Leonard Sax, “What’s Happening to Boys?” March 31, 2006).

Why is a lazy man lazy? The answer is simple, but the solution is not. It’s all about **desire**. A lazy man has no useful desires. The Bible expresses the value of good desires and the danger of evil desires 111 times. It tells us to have good ones and avoid evil ones. For example:

- Deuteronomy 5:21—...*You shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*
- Job 21:14—[The wicked] *say to God, “Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways.”*
- Psalm 73:25—*Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.*
- Proverbs 3:15—*She [wisdom] is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her.*
- Proverbs 13:12—*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.*
- Proverbs 21:25—*The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work.*
- Galatians 5:16-17—...*walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*
- 1 Peter 2:2—*like newborn babies, long for [literally, desire] the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.*

Notice that desire gets us into sin and desire brings us to God. Notice especially the Galatians 5 and 1 Peter 2 passages, which tell us that the whole spiritual life depends upon our desires.

But there is no way to create desire in anyone for anything. In Proverbs, Solomon repeatedly talks about wise vs. unwise desires, but he never tells us how to create wise desires in anyone. However, we can help a person uncover his own valuable desires. We can expose people to valuable things they are unaware of, and see if there is a spark of desire, which can become a flame, motivating them out of laziness.

This is not to say we can all find something we desire enough for it to erase all the drudgery of work. Even though socialism tries to reverse it, and some parents enable their sons to avoid it, work is part of the curse for men (Genesis 3:17-19). It’s the God-ordained way of life on earth after the Fall. So, even if we find something we like to do, men still have to figure out a way to continue to be motivated to work.

Here are three things some of us do, who work regularly all our lives:

- We find some thing we really like to do – some specific task or job or activity. (“I want to be an air force F-16 pilot.”)
- We settle for limited objectives. We don’t all have the talent to be what we desire. (“I can’t be an F-16 pilot, but I can fly some kind of airplane.”)
- We find a way to enjoy most of the differences between what we desire and what we have to do. There is always a part of work that simply cannot be enjoyed. Productive people find ways to enjoy as much of their work as possible, and keep looking for ways to make those mundane parts more enjoyable.