

# Proverbs Week #57 (6:9-11)

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*“How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.” Prov 6:9-11*

Last week we started to learn what Proverbs has to say about the sluggard. A sluggard was defined as someone who is sluggish or lazy. If you are a sluggard Proverbs teaches that you should “go to the ants.” They will teach you how to be wise as you observe how they act. It is what the ants do that teaches us about wisdom.

What you do and how you do it makes a difference. Do you believe that? Do you think that the choices that you are making now and the things that you are doing or not doing will make a difference in your future? You may remember when we first started learning about wisdom that I mentioned that wisdom is more like a skill than just knowing things. It is like playing an instrument, learning to fix a car, or making a cake. You do not learn to be wise by just thinking about being wise. You need to practice the lessons learned. But the lessons also need to be learned first before you can practice them. What else do we need to know about sleep?

*“In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.”*

*Psa. 127:2*

Sleep is a gift from God and part of His created world. God created us in such a way that we need to sleep. These two passages help us understand two ways that we can think of sleep that are both wrong. On the one hand, we can love sleep too much and allow it to keep us from the work God has given us to do. On the other hand, we can love work too much and allow it to keep us from sleep. How much you value sleep will make a difference in whether you are living like a fool or a person who is wise. If you are wise you will give sleep its proper time. You will thank God for giving you the ability to rest and be refreshed.

Our goal in these studies is to learn to be wise and not foolish. If God has given us things for our good we can use them as fools would or as people who are wise. How we think about sleep and how much value we place upon it will make a difference in how we live our lives. I want to emphasize that we need to thank God for work and for sleep. We need to remember that both are gifts from God and learn to trust Him as we both sleep and work. God provides means to accomplish what he desires. He works all things according to His plans and this includes work and sleep.

Let’s consider this lesson in a practical context. Think about the life of a farmer. A farmer who is raising crops needs to be wise about harvest times. If he is an apple farmer he knows when his apples are ripe. He will have a window of opportunity to pick those apples before they start to fall off the trees. If he is a wise farmer he will not sleep too much during harvest time. If he is a sluggard he will sleep too much and not do all the work that needs to be done. His failing to harvest the crops will be just like someone robbing him. It will be like a person on a journey who is attacked. “Poverty” and “scarcity” will be like an armed thief who attacks and steals everything that is valuable. In this example being foolish means that we will not have things that God intends for us to have. He desires to provide for us but if we are fools we will not experience that provision.

Now, how can we remember this lesson? Let me help by giving you three options. Hold up your left hand and we will think about one of the options as a boundary that we should not cross. On our left is loving sleep too much. Now hold up your right hand. On the right we will have loving work too much. Now our third option is going to be the path that is between these two foolish options. The wise path is living our lives trusting that God will provide both sleep and work for us in proper measures. He will give us enough of both if we learn to live in the ways of wisdom.

In our next lesson we will learn more about how fools use their mouths and how we can practice wisdom to keep us from hurting others and ourselves with the words we speak.