

SLUGGARD

DEFINITIONS:

Waltke—Laziness in Proverbs is more than a character flaw; it is a moral issue, for it leads to a loss of freedom (12:24), the perpetual frustration of getting nowhere (24:34), and a loss of life (6:6-11; 10:4; 18:9; 20:13; 21:25-26; 24:30-34; cf. 28:24). The sluggard is contrasted with the "upright" in 15:19 and with the "righteous" in 21:25-26; he has nothing to give to society. He is never equated with the "poor", who are so by virtue of circumstances beyond their control, such as by tyranny (13:23), but the sluggard is poor by virtue of his moral degeneracy (114).

Kidner—All [the sluggard] knows is his delicious drowsiness; all he asks is a little respite...He does not commit himself to an outright refusal, but deceives himself by the smallness of his surrenders. So, by inches and minutes, his opportunity slips away...the sluggard is...an ordinary man who has made too many excuses, too many refusals and too many postponements (42, 43).

MAIN TEXT—Proverbs 26:13 *The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!" 14 As the door turns on its hinges, So does the sluggard on his bed. 15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again. 16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer.*

3 Characteristics of sluggards:

1. The sluggard is an expert in excuse making—v.13

Proverbs 22:13 *The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside; I will be killed in the streets!"*

2. The sluggard consistently trades work for sleep/leisure—vv.14-15

Proverbs 6:6 *Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, 8 Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest. 9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?*

Proverbs 13:4 *The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.*

Proverbs 20:4 *The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.*

Proverbs 21:25 *The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work;*

Proverbs 24:30 *I passed by the field of the sluggard And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, 31 And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down. 32 When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. 33 “A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest,” 34 Then your poverty will come as a robber And your want like an armed man.*

TDNT—It denotes one who for various reasons or difficulties does not have the resolution to act.¹ (Matt. 25:26; Rom. 12:11)

3. The sluggard will not learn from others—v.16

REMEDIES:

-Ask those who know you the best if you are a constant excuse-maker

Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*

-Do your work as to the Lord

Col. 3:22 *Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*

-Be committed to learn from others

Proverbs 10:17 *He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who ignores reproof goes astray; **Proverbs 13:18** Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, But he who regards reproof will be honored; **Proverbs 11:14** Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory; **Proverbs 15:22** Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.*

¹ Friedrich Hauck, “Ὀκνητός,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 166.