

-Save This Page as a PDF-

Don't be Lazy

6: 6-11

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

This is **the father's** ninth teaching (**to see link click [Aj](#) - Proverbs for the Youth**). In **6:1-19**, **Solomon** gives us **wisdom** about three types of **foolish men: the security (6:1-5), the sluggard (6:6-11), and the troublemaker (6:12-19)**. The next topic that **Solomon** tackles is **laziness**. Like the matter of putting up security for another (see **Bd** - **Avoid Foolish Financial Entanglements**), **his** advice concerning **laziness** anticipates extensive advice in the latter part of the book. **Proverbs** is intolerant of **lazy people; they** are considered the epitome of **foolishness**. The quantity of **proverbs** on **laziness** and **hard work** is surprising (**10:4-5 and 26; 12:11, 24 and 27; 13:4; 14:23; 15:19; 18:9; 19:15 and 24; 20:4 and 13; 21:25; 22:13 and 29; 24:30-34; 26:13-16; 27:23-27; 28:19**). With the call to go and observe the activity of the industrious **ant**, we see here an example of the importance of observation in the development of **wisdom** principles. We are therefore not surprised to find the following description of **the wise woman** in **31:27: She watches over the affairs of her household and does not suffer from laziness.**¹⁴¹



Solomon directs **his** hearers' attention to **the ant**. A study of **the ant's** behavior will direct **the lazy person** to grow wise. As we will see, in this case growth in **wisdom** means giving up **lazy** patterns of behavior and adopting a **hardworking** lifestyle similar to **the ant**. **Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and become wise (6:6 NLT)**. What characteristics does **the lazy person** display? Think of the way syrup oozes slowly out of a bottle when it is cold. That's **the lazybones** - sluggish and slow and hesitant when **he** should be decisive, active, and direct. **His** life motto is, "Don't rush me." The Bible says: **As a door swings back and forth on its hinges, so the lazy person turns over in bed (26:14)**. **He** is **lazy**, constantly making the soft choice, losing one opportunity after another, day by day, moment by moment, until **he** lies there helpless in **his** wasted life. The people in life who succeed (for the most part) are those who can do what they don't want to do. You spend ninety percent of your life doing what you don't want to do, so you can spend ten percent of your life doing what you want to do. **The lazybones** spend ninety percent of **his** life doing what **he** wants to do, and ten percent of **his** life doing what **he** has to do.¹⁴²

What does Proverbs say about the lazybones? Three things: First, the lazy person will not make up his mind. You lazybones, how long do you sleep? When will you wake up (6:9 NLT). The accusing question of **how long** presumes that the harvest has been in progress for some time, and, unless decisive action is taken immediately, judgment will fall. The rhetorical question implicitly warns **the lazybones** to repent of **his** foolishness and to get up quickly and redeem the time

before it's too late. The question, together with the repeated vocative **"you"** **lazybones** aims to wake him up out of his lethargy and, demanding an answer, holds **him** accountable. Here the full thought is: **When will you wake up from your sleep and work?**¹⁴³

Second, the lazybones will not finish things. On the rare occasions when **he** finds the motivation to get going, it's too much for **him**, and the impulse dies: **Lazy people take food in their hand, but don't even lift it to their mouth (26:15 NLT).** **He** does not stick with a task all the way through to completion. **He** is a shallow person.

Third, the lazy person will not face reality. Rather than embrace the challenge of life, he dreams up excuses: **A lazy man says, "There's a lion outside! I'll be killed if I go out into the street" (22:13 CJB).** **A lion** walking along on Main Street? I doubt it. What's really out there is life: a job, **work**, commitments, responsibilities, and a relationship with **Yeshua**.

What should **the lazybones** do? Go to the ant and take notes. How humiliating! **The lazy person** probably wouldn't mind learning from C. S. Lewis or Max Lucado. **The lazybones** like to debate and speculate about theological issues with **his** buddies. But **Lady Wisdom** (see [Am - Lady Wisdom's Rebuke of the Foolish](#)) is saying, "Go watch **the ant**." I don't know anyone with a PhD in Antology. We all want to study big important things. And it is doubly humbling to go to an **ant** school, because the Hebrew word for **"ant"** is in the feminine gender. But we guys need this, because we are too often passive. We are so accustomed to being wait-and-see, hang-back, and critical and guarded that we do not even feel the shame of it anymore (see thelionwithin.us). The congregations of **God** filled with men energized, men **working**, men engaged, men with intensity, men of conviction and action - that is exactly what the world needs to see in us today. But to display **Messiah** strongly, we need to humble ourselves and admit our need and accept **ADONAI's** simple remedy. It is so humbling that we, whom **Ha'Shem** created to rule over creation, need to learn how to live from an **ant**.¹⁴⁴

What then can we learn from an ant? Three things: First, inner motivation. **"Though they have no chief, officer, or ruler . . ."** (6:7 NLT). This verse describes the ant as not having hierarchy in its social structure. The fact that modern scientific study has uncovered hierarchy in an ant colony is beside the point. This information was not available to the ancient Near East observer, so **Solomon** is speaking from the point of view of naïve observation. And without

obvious social structure these creatures cope quite well.¹⁴⁵

Second, hard work. They labor hard all summer (6:8a NLT). Under that hot sun **she** scurries around and gets the job done. You are at a Fourth of July picnic, you are relaxing, but **the ants** are carrying off the sugar one grain at a time, and **they** will be back for the Fritos. In **30:25 ants** are described as having **no strength**, thus **their** success in gathering food is based on **their** diligence. I don't know if **ants** sweat, but if **they** do they don't care. **They** don't complain. **They** are not above hard **work**. In fact, **they** seem to love **it!**

Third, future preparation. Gathering food for the winter (6:8b NLT). The **ant works** today for tomorrow. **She** is not hoping that life will go **her** way. **She** gets out ahead of the next season of life. Here is why that matters to you. There is a winter blast coming your way. I don't know when, I don't know how. And you don't need to go looking for it. For it will come and find you. But your winter of discontent is coming. Are you getting ready, right now on this day of harvest? Are you stocking up on **God's Word**? Are you exploiting today as an opportunity from **God** to become wisely prepared for tomorrow? One year from now are you going to be more fruitful for **ADONAI**? How will that happen? What is your plan?¹⁴⁶

The final three verses apply the lesson of **the ant** to **the lazy person** by way of contrast. While **the ant** is industrious, those who are **lazy** are ridiculed for not getting out of **bed**. **But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep? When will you wake up (6:9 NLT)? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a thief and your need like an armed man (6:10-11 BSB).** As is typical of the overall teaching concerning laziness in the book of **Proverbs**, this section uses hyperbole and satire in the attempt to motivate those who are **lazy** to get to **work**. **Verse 9** contains taunting questions, while **verse 10** creates an imaginary statement of **a lazy person**. **The lazybones** says **he** just wants **a little sleep**, but we suspect that **a little** nap will become a long **sleep** to avoid the necessary work to sustain life. **Verse 11** describes the results of a **lazy** lifestyle, which is poverty. In the first place, the onset of poverty is likened to **a thief**, and in the second place, it is likened to **an armed man**. In both cases, the simile describes **individuals** whose arrival threatens harm. It also suggests that poverty will sneak up on **the lazybones** suddenly. Again, the function of this description is to serve as a warning, with the hope that those who have the tendency toward **laziness** will stir themselves to get up and work.¹⁴⁷

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being so wonderful that it is a joy to labor on*

Your behalf. For you as **Your child**, I have many joys and perks. **But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12)**. Joys include: sonship (**John 1:12**), salvation (**Acts 16:31**), no shame in believing on Messiah (**Romans 10:9-11**), companionship and a friend always nearby (**Hebrews 13:5c**), a Heavenly Father whom your child can always run to for comfort (**Psalms 23:4**), wisdom (**James 1:5**) guidance (**Exodus 15:23, John 16:13**), a rest/trust in you that brings salvation (**Isaiah 30:15**), gladness (**Psalms 30:11!**)

What a joy it is to minister for such a loving heavenly **Father**. It is not work to serve **You**, it is a joy. A time of rejoicing in the privilege of serving such an awesome **Lord** and **Savior!** We love **You** for clothing those who love **You in Messiah's righteousness. He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21)**. May I follow **Your** obedience, no matter the cost of shame or pain, I look forward to living in heaven with **You**. **Let us run with endurance the race set before us, focusing on Yeshua, the initiator and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame; and He has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1c-2)**. In Messiah Yeshua's holy **Name** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen