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The Lazy Person

26: 13-16

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.



Proverbs mock **laziness** more than any other form of **foolishness**. This behavior drives the hard-working sages crazy. The quantity of **proverbs** on **laziness** and hard work is surprising. The sting of the images used to mock those who refuse to put in any effort is also notable. Indeed, the sage is at his most sarcastically comedic when it comes to **the lazy person**. Because it takes effort to make it in this world, the **wise** teacher is concerned that **the lazy** will impoverish themselves. Therefore, the sages warn their disciples to work hard (**to see link click Be - Don't be Lazy**). It is true today, as in antiquity, that some **lazy people** are rich, not because of their efforts, but because of being born into a wealthy family. However, the fact that there are exceptions does not disprove the importance of the point that is relevant in ninety-nine percent of the cases, that **laziness** leads to destitution or want.

On the other hand, according to a proverb like **22:29**, those who work hard get

ahead in life: **Do you see anyone truly skilled at their work? They will serve kings rather than working for ordinary people (22:29).** We are not surprised to find the following description of **the wife of noble character: She watches over the affairs of her household and does not suffer from laziness (31:27).** Here we have a collection of four separate **proverbs**, some of which practically repeat previous examples, that form an intense criticism of sloth.⁴⁹⁷

The lazy person claims, “There’s a lion on the road! Yes, I’m sure there’s a lion out there” (26:13 NLT). This verse is identical to **22:13** in content and very close in actual wording. The proverb ridicules **lazy people** for using the thin excuse for avoiding work. While it is true that **lions** could be found in ancient Isra’el, **they** were not so numerous that **they** could be a legitimate excuse not to leave one’s house. Thus, both **proverbs** represent **the lazybones** as suffering from an irrational fear. What better reason could a person have for staying at home and not going to work than having **a lion** eat him alive at the marketplace!

As a door swings back and forth on its hinges, so the lazy person turns over in bed (26:14 NLT). The second **proverb** makes fun of the tendency of **lazy people** to spend too much time **in bed**. **The proverb** is quite clear: **The lazy person** is attached to **his bed** like **a door to its hinges**.⁴⁹⁸ **They** may move, but **they** go nowhere, **they** make no progress. **Both** are anchored. **The sluggard** makes no progress because **he** is firmly fixed to **his** comfort zone.

Lazy people take food in their hand, but don’t even lift it to their mouth (26:15 NLT). The third **proverb** in this collection is a near repetition of **19:24: The lazy person buries his hand in the dish, but doesn’t even bother to bring it to his mouth.** The sage mocks **the lazy person** depicting **him** as even too **lazy** to eat. This humorous portrayal is certainly an exaggeration. It probably was meant more widely for anyone who starts a project but lacks the energy to finish the job; the example being that **he** refuses to lift **food** to **his mouth**. Any thought of exerting **himself** exhausts **him**.

Lazy people consider themselves smarter than seven wise counselors (26:16 NLT). The problem with **lazy people**, and probably the reason **they** perpetuate **their** self-destructive behavior, is that **they** believe **they** are **wise in their own eyes (3:7a and 26:12)**. As such, **they** are unwilling to hear the criticism of other people.⁴⁹⁹ In conclusion, while there is **hope** for **a fool** to be saved from being a deluded **fool**, there is no **hope** for **the sluggard** to be saved from **his** delusion. **There is more hope for fools than for people who think they are**

wise (26:12). The number **seven** symbolizes the perfection of **the wise counselors' advice.** That is probably why **King Artakh'shasta seven counselors** in **Ezra 7:14** (this number according to Persian tradition also seen in **Esther 1:14**) **to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Torah of your God, which is in your hand** (see the commentary on **Ezra-Nehemiah Bi - King Artakh'shasta's Letter to Ezra**).⁵⁰⁰

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for always being so awesome and wonderful! What a comfort to know that **You** never **sleep nor slumber**, but are always watching over me. **Behold, the Keeper of Isra'el neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalms 121:4).** Lord, help me not to be **lazy** about using my spiritual gifts for **Your Kingdom.** Sometimes **the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41).** But I do love **You.** **Your** steadfast love and infinite **wisdom** are so encouraging, causing me not to be **lazy** but to work hard for such a wonderful heavenly **Father!** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*