

DILIGENCE

1. WHAT general command has God given concerning labor?

“Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work.” **Exodus 20:9.**

2. Instead of living upon the earnings of others, what instruction is given?

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather *let him labor, working with his hands* the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.” **Ephesians 4:28.**

3. What general rule does Paul lay down upon this subject?

“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that *if any would not work, neither should he eat.*” **2Thessalonians 3:10.**

4. In what language does he condemn idleness?

“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, *working not at all*, but are busybodies. Now them that are such *we command and exhort* by our Lord Jesus Christ, *that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*” **Verses 11, 12.**

5. What example did the apostle himself set in this matter?

“Neither did we eat any man’s bread for naught; but *wrought with labor and travail night and day*, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.” **Verse 8.**

6. What labor was appointed man in consequence of the fall?

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.” **Genesis 3:19.**

NOTE — A life of laborious and perpetual toil, in a world cursed with weeds, thorns, and thistles was appointed to man in consequence of the entrance of sin. This was a part of the curse. And yet even this was appointed in love, and, under existing circumstances, is a blessing in disguise. It was a discipline rendered necessary because of sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of industry and self-control, and to teach lessons on overcoming evil. Were not man called to labor thus, his sins and miseries would be multiplied many fold.

7. What are some of the results of industry?

“He that tilleth his land *shall have plenty of bread.*” **Proverbs 28:19.** “The hand of the diligent *maketh rich.*” **Proverbs 10:4.** “The soul of the diligent shall be *made fat.*” **Proverbs 13:4.**

8. What results from slackness and indolence in business?

“He *becometh poor* that dealeth with a slack hand.” **Proverbs 10:4.** “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and *hath nothing.*” **Proverbs 13:4.**

9. What does Solomon say concerning diligence in business?

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” **Ecclesiastes 9:10.** “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.” **Proverbs 27:23.** “He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.” **Proverbs 10:5.**

NOTE — “The way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words,—*industry* and *frugality*; that is, waste neither *time* nor *money*, but make the best of both. Without industry and frugality nothing will do, and with them everything.” *Benjamin Franklin.*

10. What does Solomon say of the industrious woman?

“*She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.* Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.” **Proverbs 31:27, 28.**

11. What has Paul said of the professed Christian who does not provide for his own family?

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, *he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*” **1 Timothy 5:8.**

12. What picture has Solomon given of the slothful man?

“I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.” **Proverbs 24:30, 31.**

NOTES — “The parent who does not teach his child a trade, teaches him to be a thief.” *Brahmanic Proverb.*

“When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers therefore are the founders of human civilization.” *Daniel Webster.*

“If a man be indolent, the best discipline to which he can be subjected is to suffer the evils of penury.” *Wayland.*

“Nothing can be done with a man who will not work. We have in our scheme of government no room for the man who does not wish to pay his way through life by what he does. . . . Capacity for work is absolutely necessary, and no man can be said to live in the true sense of the word if he does not work.” *Theodore Roosevelt.*

“Luck is waiting for something to turn up. Labor, with keen eyes and strong will, will turn up something. Luck whines. Labor whistles. Luck relies on chances. Labor, on character. Luck slips down to indigence. Labor strides upward to independence. Luck lies in bed, and wishes the postman would bring him news of a legacy. Labor turns out at six o’clock, and with busy pen or ringing hammer lays the foundation of a competence.” *Cobden.*

13. In spiritual matters, what is also necessary?

“And beside this, *giving all diligence*, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge. . . . Give *diligence* to make your calling and election sure.” **2Peter 1:5–10.**

NOTE — In temporal matters the difference between a prosperous man and a sluggard lies principally in the improvement of opportunities. One grasps these, while the other is too indolent to do so. In the gaining of eternal life this same principle applies. God has placed salvation within the reach of all. None need be lost. Christ died, for all, but all will not be saved, for, some do not care enough for eternal life diligently to lay hold of it.

NEAT be your farm; ’tis long confessed
The neatest farmer is the best;
Each bog and marsh industrious drain,
Nor let vile balks deform the plain,

Nor bushes on your headland grow,
Nor briers a sloven culture show.
Neat be your barns, your houses sweet;
Your paths be clean, your dooryards neat;
No moss the sheltering roof enshroud,
No wooden panes the windows cloud;
No sink drains should above ground flow,
Nor weeds with rankling poison grow;
But flowers expand, and fruit-trees bloom,
And fragrant shrubs exhale perfume.
Neatly enclose your garden round;
Smooth, enrich, and clear the ground;
For if to taste and profit you incline,
Beauty and use you always should combine.