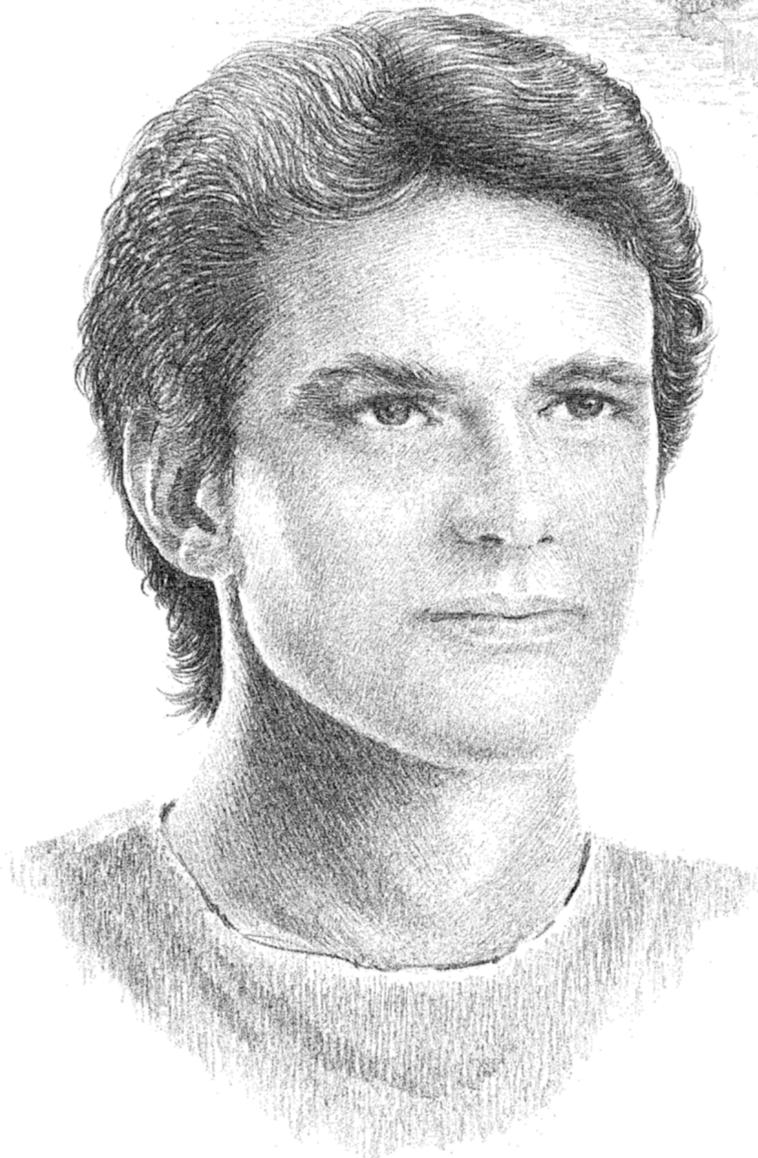


GOD'S BLESSING OF IDENTIFYING AND CONQUERING SLOTHFULNESS

LESSON 14

SAMUEL

A lifetime of diligent service



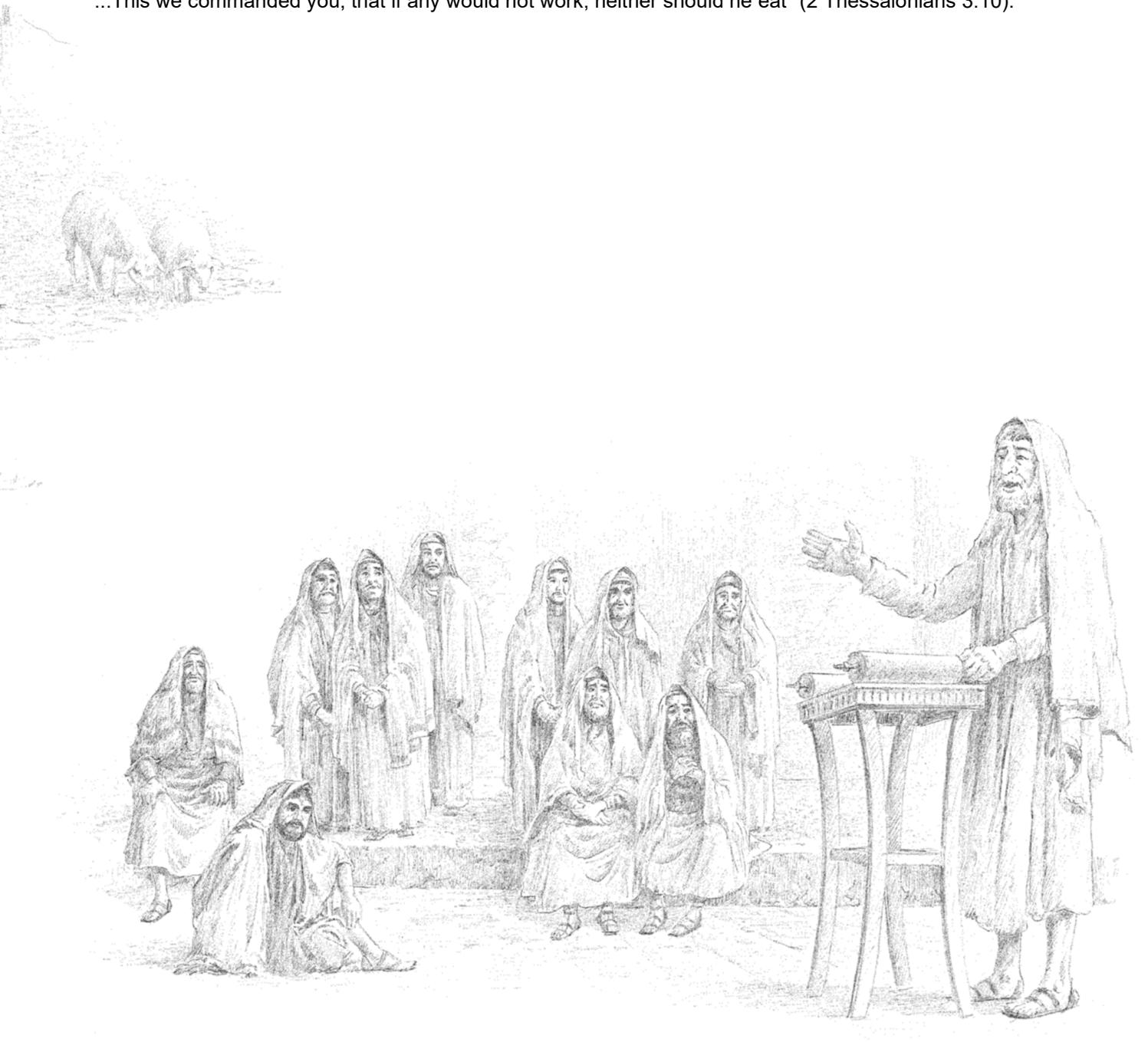
HE CONVEYED GOD'S WARNING TO A SLOTHFUL FATHER

"For I [the Lord] have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knows; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (1 Samuel 3:13).

GOD'S BLESSING OF IDENTIFYING AND CONQUERING SLOTHFULNESS

DILIGENT ALWAYS

"...This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).



HE CHALLENGED A SLOTHFUL NATION

"...I will teach you the good and the right way: Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:23-24).



CAN YOU DETECT AND OVERCOME SLOTHFULNESS?

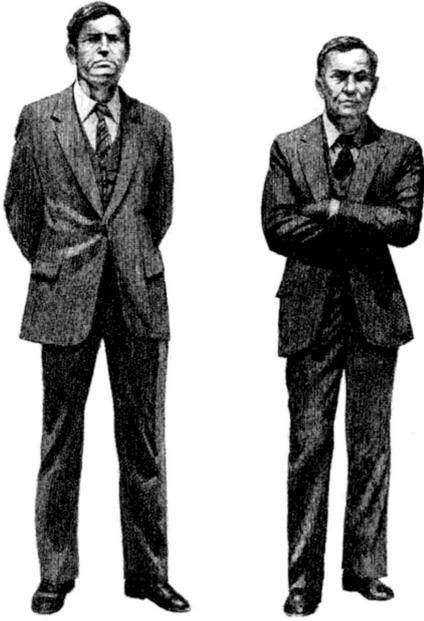
PERSONAL EVALUATION:

TRUE / FALSE

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. A slothful man is one that really does not want to get anything out of life. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The main occupation of a sluggard is sitting around watching others do the work. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Because a slothful man skillfully gets out of work, he avoids pressures in his life. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. A slothful man will not usually work for somebody else, but he will work for himself. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. A slothful man will not work, nor will he give excuses for not working. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. A slothful man is very aware that he is slothful. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. If a slothful man is hired, he will bring his employer neither gain nor loss. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. A slothful man finds every job difficult, even eating his food. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. The slothful man continues to live in a world of unreality. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. One way to conquer slothfulness is to give a man the responsibility of having his own business. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. If a slothful man is to be helped at all, his food supply must be taken from him. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. God says that a diligent man is not able to learn anything from the life of a slothful man. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. For an employer to get anything out of a slothful man, he must give him continual producing. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. A sluggard is just an ordinary person who makes little surrenders to himself. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. A sluggard is a very weak-willed person. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. The mind of the slothful is as sluggish as his body. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. God does not have any counsel for a sluggard. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. One way to help a sluggard is to show him cause-and-effect sequences. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. A sluggard likes to begin things but not to finish them. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. A sluggard will appreciate one who prods him to work. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| TOTAL CORRECT | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

EVALUATION SCORE:

- 20-18 correct =
17-10 correct =
9-0 correct =



WHICH ONE IS THE SLOTHFUL MAN?¹

SEVEN SYMPTOMS OF A SLOTHFUL MAN

1. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT HE IS SLOTHFUL

Slothfulness is a by-product. It is not a goal which the slothful seek after. Furthermore, it is completely rationalized in the mind of the sluggard. Thus, a slothful person will reject the label of being a sluggard.

He will assure you that he would be very willing to work if there were fewer obstacles in his path. He is only waiting for more favorable working conditions. In the meantime, he rehearses the reasons why he is unable to begin the projects which he knows must be done.

These reasons include the false notion that too much work injures one's health, that there is an easier way to do things, and that he is smart if he finds them. He reminds himself of the dangers of overexertion and the possibility of blunting his lifestyle by unnecessary labor. He is quick to explain his views to any who wonder why he is not working at the moment. *"The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit [eyes] than seven men that can render a reason"* (Proverbs 26:16).

The sluggard does not understand the value of time or the control of seasons. His basic philosophy is to live for the moment and let the future take its own course.

The slothful person does not consider that he must one day give account to God for the way that he has used his time. He looks at nightfall as a justifiable reason for sleep, not for examining whether he has earned it.

He looks at winter as an intrusion upon his life, not a time during which he can enjoy the fruit of his labors. Therefore, the sluggard loses the freedom to make his own choices and becomes a slave of the diligent, by whose industry he will be kept alive. *"The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute"* (Proverbs 12:24).

2. HE MAKES *LITTLE* SOFT CHOICES IN LIFE

Slothfulness comes on gradually. It happens to normal people who begin making little surrenders in daily decisions.

These little surrenders seem totally harmless — staying in bed just a little longer, taking a little more rest during the day, waiting a few more minutes before starting a project, or spending a little more time in idle chatter. *"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travels, and thy want as an armed man"* (Proverbs 6:10-11).

These daily surrenders come from making the soft choices in life, such as a refusal to be subject to adverse working conditions. *"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing"* (Proverbs 20:4).

Soon the little choices which are carefully reasoned away become a habit of life. *"Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger"* (Proverbs 19:15).

3. HE DOES NOT VALUE THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME OR SEASONS

The sluggard is not a self-starter. To him one day is as good as another. What he does not do today can just as easily be done tomorrow.

4. HE WILL NOT FINISH TASKS

A slothful person is lethargic in everything he does. Each job becomes a mountain in his path, not a door of opportunity.

If he is visited by success, he does not recognize or value it. It simply means more work. Thus, he allows opportunities to slip by and half-completed jobs to spoil. *"The slothful man roasts not that which he took in hunting; but the substance of a diligent man is precious"* (Proverbs 12:27).

Even the maintenance of what he has becomes a burden to him. *"By much slothfulness the building decays; and through idleness of the hands the house drops through"* (Ecclesiastes 10:18). *"I*

¹ Answer to question on page: The symptoms of a slothful man are not usually recognizable by outward appearance.

went by the field of the slothful... 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).

5. HE LIVES IN A WORLD OF WISHFUL THINKING

When the sluggard is not sleeping he is desiring to do things and to get things. The tension between his restless mind and his inactive body produces destructive frustrations. *"The desire of the slothful kills him; for his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all the day long..."* (Proverbs 21:25-26).

His desires are also destructive because they are related to his own sensual pleasures. These indulgences in turn produce more sluggishness. *"A slothful man hides his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again"* (Proverbs 19:24). *"As the door turns upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed"* (Proverbs 26:14).

6. HE BRINGS PAINFUL DAMAGE TO HIS EMPLOYERS

A slothful employee is not just unproductive, he is destructive. His presence on the job is worse than

his absence from it. His lack of initiative and follow-through becomes very costly to those who are counting on him. *"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster"* (Proverbs 18:9).

At first, employers may try to adapt to his slothfulness by transferring him to a less strategic position. This damages his self-esteem and prompts him to give reasons why things did not work out as they should have, thus creating disloyalty and spreading discontent. *"As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him"* (Proverbs 10:26).

7. HE IS THE VICTIM OF SELF-INDUCED FEARS

Slothfulness results in fears which are then reinforced by more slothfulness. These fears are based on the fact that a sluggard is a realist — up to a point. He knows that he must have a source of food. Rather than stealing it, he will beg for it. His lack of food is a result of making the soft choices and of the fears which rationalized his choices. *"The slothful man says, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets"* (Proverbs 22:13). As an escape from his fears, he will resort to more sleep.

HOW SLOTHFULNESS DEVELOPS

A discouraged wife wondered if her family would ever be free from financial pressures. She was working to help support the family, because her husband could never seem to get the right employment. On two occasions he had used the family savings for businesses which had failed.

The following sequence defines the causes which produced their financial pressures.

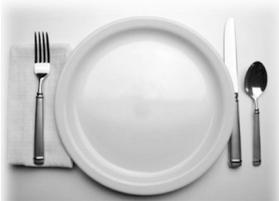
God's reproofs for slothfulness are very painful. A sluggard has trouble all through his life. For this reason, we must conquer slothfulness in ourselves and avoid hiring a sluggard. *"The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns..." (Proverbs 15:19).*

INWARD CAUSES	RESULTING CONFLICTS	RELATED SCRIPTURE
1. During his youth, the husband had his personal wants fulfilled without any effort on his part.	He found ways to manipulate people and facts in order to get what he wanted. Conflicts with his conscience resulted.	<i>"The desire of the slothful kills him; for his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all the day long..." (Proverbs 21:25-26).</i>
2. After sliding through school, he searched for the easy job that paid maximum wages for minimum effort.	His slothfulness caused strong reaction from those who were responsible for his production.	<i>"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster" (Proverbs 18:9).</i>
3. Pressure from employers caused him to start his own business and to be his own boss.	He willingly believed "get rich quick" schemes and went into debt to finance his new venture.	<i>"He that hastes to be rich hath an evil eye, and considers not that poverty shall come upon him" (Proverbs 28:22).</i>
4. In order to insure success, he bought expensive clothes and even a car and gave gifts to rich friends.	His wife reacted to his extravagance and tried to warn him about his business associates.	<i>"...He that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want" (Proverbs 22:16).</i>
5. After failing in business, he is now forced to get a job in order to pay back his debts.	His heart and mind are not in his work; thus, he is under greater pressure now than in previous jobs.	<i>"...The slothful shall be under tribute" (Proverbs 12:24).</i>
6. He views his job as temporary and keeps looking for the "big opportunity" of a position that brings money and prestige.	His lack of achievement and his financial pressures seriously damage his self-image. He views labor with contempt.	<i>"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread..." (Genesis 3:19).</i>

HOW TO CONQUER SLOTHFULNESS

There is hope for the sluggard, based on the fact that God gives instructions to him and about him. There are also other Scriptural principles that directly relate to slothfulness, from youth to adulthood.

1. COUNTERACT SLOTHFULNESS WITH HUNGER



God's primary cure for slothfulness is hunger. *"...If any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10).*

This is consistent with the requirement which God established after Adam and Eve sinned. *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground..." (Genesis 3:19).*

There is value in every person's experiencing hunger, especially one who tends to be slothful. A beginning point in conquering slothfulness would be a three-day fast, for the purpose of studying God's principles and examples of diligence. (See Matthew 6:16-18.)

2. LEARN THE PRINCIPLES OF DILIGENCE



The ultimate goal of a slothful person must be to develop diligence. This is precisely the instruction of God. *"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6).*

The ant illustrates the basic characteristics which are lacking in those who are slothful — initiative, self-direction, respect for seasons, the ability to finish jobs, and the foresight that is necessary in planning for the future.

The ant illustrates the basic characteristics which are lacking in those who are slothful — initiative, self-direction, respect for seasons, the ability to finish jobs, and the foresight that is necessary in planning for the future.

After studying the ant, it would be wise to read the biographies of great Christians in order to learn how their diligence was developed by obedience to God's Word.

3. REALIZE THAT SLOTHFULNESS DEVELOPS IN STAGES



Slothfulness is not confined to just a few or a certain type of persons. Anyone can become its victim. Its gradual development

begins unnoticed; and if left unchecked, slothfulness will disable those who obey its promptings.

• LATENT SLOTHFULNESS

Latent slothfulness is the inward tendency to reject God's requirement for diligent labor. This tendency requires instant obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

• INITIAL SLOTHFULNESS

Initial slothfulness is selecting the soft choices in daily decisions. This type of slothfulness requires accountability to others for the completion of projects.

• DISABLING SLOTHFULNESS

Disabling slothfulness is allowing little surrenders each day to become a habitual way of life. This slothfulness requires the discipline of going without food in order to clarify goals and to reach objectives.

4. LEARN THE DISCIPLINE OF RISING EARLY



The definition of the Hebrew word translated *diligently* is "to be up early at a task."

This discipline strikes at the very heart of slothfulness. *"How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" (Proverbs 6:9).*

If necessary, be accountable to others for getting up at a given time. Resist the temptation to get just a little more sleep. Do not even learn how to use the "doze" button on your alarm clock. When you wake up, get up!

A practical way to establish accountability for rising early is to have someone call you on the telephone, or you agree to call someone when you are up, or you plan to meet someone for a time of devotions.

GOD'S WARNINGS ON SLEEP



too little, but that we get too much.

A proper amount of sleep is essential for good health. Lack of sleep is one of the consequences of business problems or of doing evil. However, God's primary concern for sleep is not that we get

- **BEWARE OF THE BONDAGE OF SLEEP**

"As the door turns upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed" (Proverbs 26:14).

- **BEWARE OF SLEEP THAT DISABLES**

"Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger" (Proverbs 19:15).

- **BEWARE OF LOVING SLEEP**

"Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty..." (Proverbs 20:13).

- **BEWARE OF SLEEP THAT ROBS**

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travels; and thy want as an armed man" (Proverbs 24:33-34).

- **BEWARE OF SLEEP THAT DISAPPOINTS GOD**

"How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" (Proverbs 6:9).

- **BEWARE OF A LITTLE EXTRA SLEEP**

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travels, and thy want as an armed man" (Proverbs 6:10-11).

- **BEWARE OF INAPPROPRIATE SLEEP**

"He that gathers in summer is a wise son: but he that sleeps in harvest is a son that causes shame" (Proverbs 10:5).

- The second coming of Christ is even more certain.

- The maximum number of productive years is established by God.

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10).

- Days must be counted.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

- Time requires accountability.

- Time is entrusted to us for God's work.

"...The night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

- Time is unrecoverable.

There are several practical projects that will reinforce our respect for time and guard us from wasting it.

For one week, keep a detailed record of what you do every fifteen minutes. At the end of the week, go back and evaluate how many of the 168 hours were used for sleeping, eating, resting, entertainment, and conversations, and how many hours were used for productive work and achievement. The results may shock you. Thereafter, keep a daily journal of goals and achievements.

5. LEARN TO RESPECT TIME



Life is a race against time. We will only win the race if we realize the following:

- Time is limited.
- Death is certain.

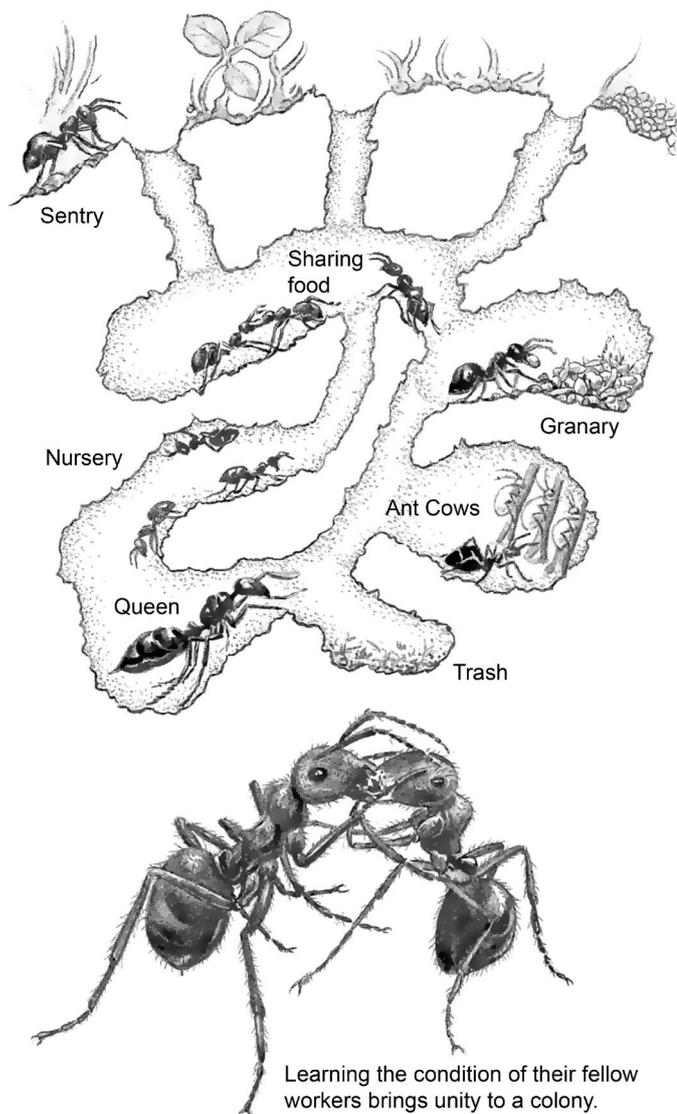
TIME

...is no respecter of persons: No one receives more hours in a day than another.

...is not recoverable: Every hour that is lost is gone forever.

"Go to the Ant, Thou Sluggard. . .

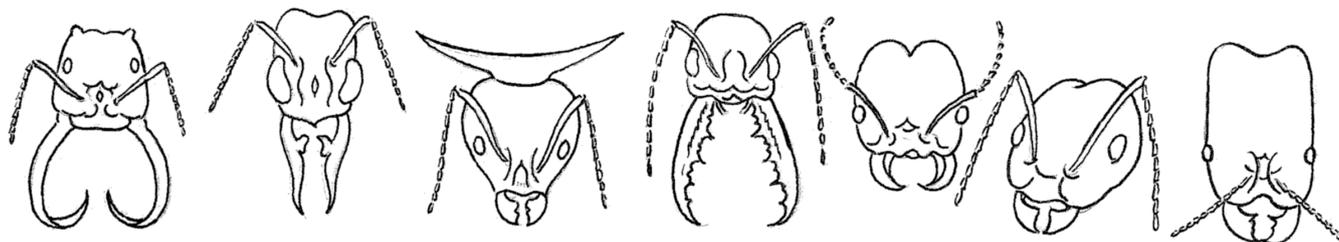
"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest" (Proverbs 6:6-8).



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ANT

WHO PERSUADES ANTS TO WORK?

While the queen ant is the center of attention and the mother of most of the ants in a colony, she is not the



The many faces of the ant

chief ruler. Instead, work is initiated by servant-leaders who lead by example. These servant-leaders are older ants who begin each new activity in the colony by doing the work themselves. Younger ants imitate the servant-leaders and join in the task at hand. There are no supervisors, chiefs, or officers among the ants.

WHAT CHARACTERISTIC OF LEADERSHIP MUST AN ANT HAVE?

The worker ants that search for food leave a trail of tiny drops that contain a scent common to the whole colony. Other workers follow this trail to locate food and return to the nest. It is important that a scout never mislead its fellow workers by crossing over its own trail. To do so would confuse the followers and cause them to travel in circles until they died from exhaustion.

HOW DO ANTS PROVIDE FOR THEIR "POOR"?

There are no "poor" ants in an ant colony. Ants readily share their food with one another without concern for themselves. This generosity is possible because of a social stomach, or crop, that stores food before it is digested. When two ants meet, the food from the crop is brought up and shared. Those who have an abundance of food voluntarily give to those with less, until all have shared equally.

HOW DO ANTS REPORT NEWS?

Although researchers are not clear on how this process fully operates, it is evident that the food from the social stomach carries with it chemicals that report information about what is happening in every part of the nest. Food picked up from the nursery workers includes a nursery report on the conditions there. Food shared by scouts communicates what new sources of food are being brought back to the nest. This sharing of food acts just like a newspaper to keep everyone in the nest informed about the conditions of their fellow workers.

DO ANTS HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL?

Ants determine the difference between good and evil strangers by their sense of smell. When two ants approach one another, they carefully touch each other with their antennae to determine whether they are friend or foe. If friendly, they caress one another and share food. If not, they either flee or defend themselves.

THE INDUSTRY OF THE ANT

DO ANTS REALLY HARVEST CROPS?

Up until the late 1800's, many thought that Solomon had exaggerated the industry of the ant. In 1871, however, a species of ant was found that not only harvests grain but also winnows it and treats it to prevent germination during storage. Harvester Ants have also been known to carry spoiled seeds to dumping grounds, where they sprout and create small fields which are cultivated and later harvested. The grain is stored in large underground granaries, where it is actually milled and converted to a type of bread.

WHAT SACRIFICE WILL ANTS MAKE TO SALVAGE DAMAGED PROVISIONS?

If water creeps into a granary of the Harvester Ant, the seeds must be dried or they will rot. The ants carry every seed to the surface, where it is dried in the sun and then returned to a fresh storage place. In a large colony, this task may take days.

HOW ARE ANTS LIKE DAIRY FARMERS?

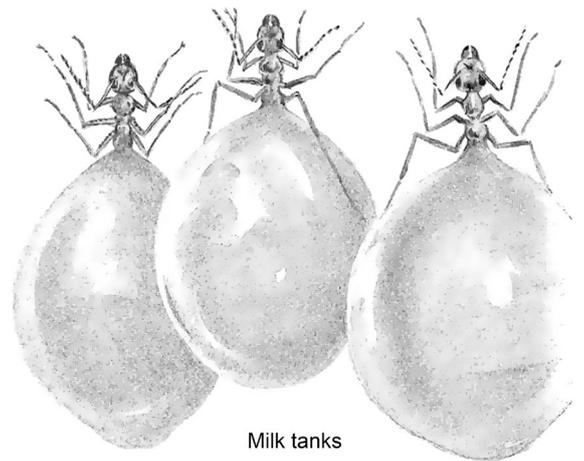
An insect called the aphid secretes a sweet sticky substance called honeydew, which is greatly prized by the ant. Just as dairy farmers maintain herds of cows, ants maintain herds of aphids. Certain worker ants act as "cow herders" and look after the aphids by moving them from plant to plant and by protecting them from predators. In the fall, the worker ants collect the aphid eggs and guard them over the winter. In the spring, the newly hatched aphids are then brought out of the ant nest and placed on plants to feed.

HOW DO ANTS PRESERVE THE MILK THEY GATHER?

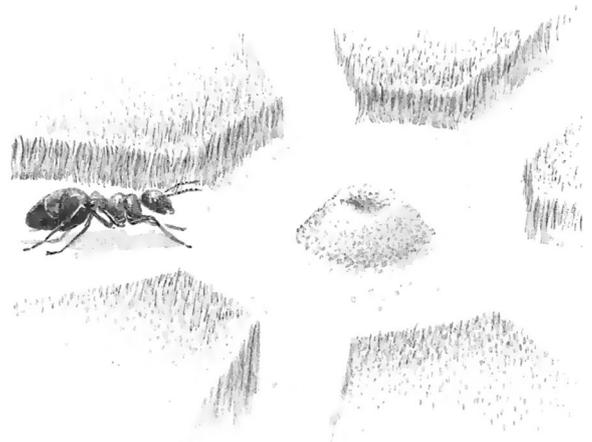
The milk of the aphid is stored in large tanks, just as dairy farmers store cow's milk. Ants, however, use living tanks. A few workers are allowed to gorge themselves until they become so large that they are unable to move. They hang suspended from the ceiling of the nest until the milk is needed. They are then pumped dry to feed the rest of the colony.

WHAT CROPS DO ANTS RAISE?

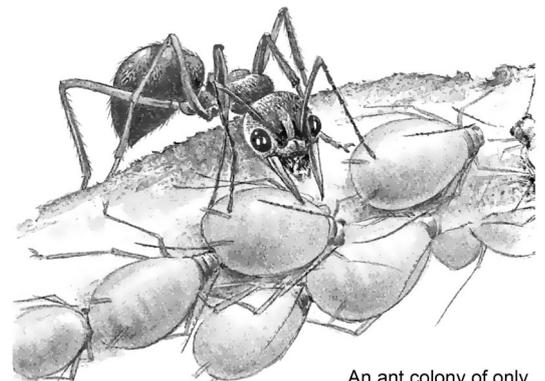
Several species of ants are fungus farmers. They gather leaves and grass which are chewed into a moist mash and stored in fields deep inside the nest. The fungus that grows from this compost is harvested by the ants for food. Some of the underground fields, which are cultivated to keep out undesirable fungi, have been measured to be over 100 square meters in area.



Milk tanks



Harvester Ants prepare immaculate nests with well-groomed trails leading to their many sources of grain.



An ant colony of only a few thousand ants may collect from three to six pounds of honeydew in a summer.



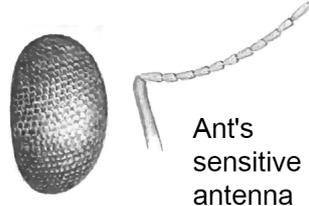
A single colony of fungus farmers may tend over 1,000 individual eardens. some larger than a football.

What God Reveals About the Ant

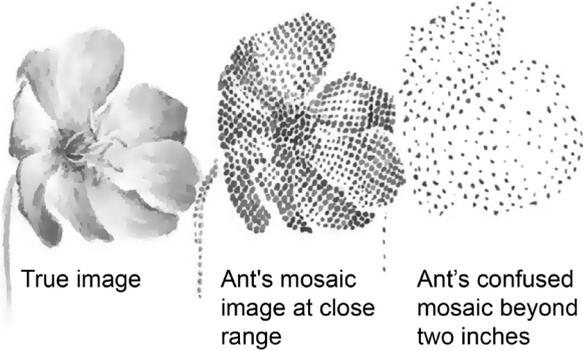
"There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer" (Proverbs 30:24-25).



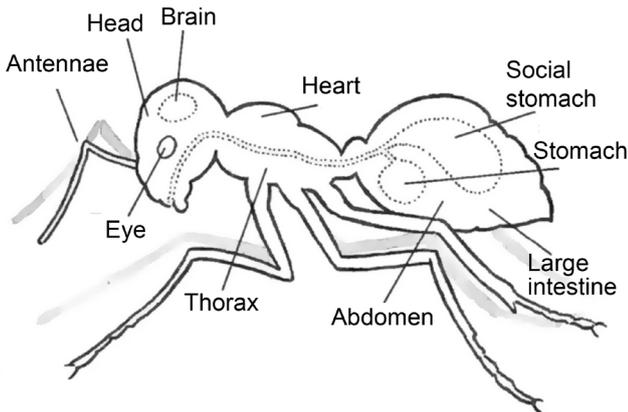
The smallness of the ant is no indication of its significance



Ant's compound eye
Ant's sensitive antenna



True image
Ant's mosaic image at close range
Ant's confused mosaic beyond two inches



Ants are so tiny that they cannot swallow solid food. Instead, they squeeze it in a pocket located behind the jaw and swallow only the juice.

THE DETAIL OF THE ANT

WHY DOES GOD CALL THE ANT LITTLE?

In comparison to the things of the earth, the ant is indeed little. Even the largest of the queens is not over 5 centimeters in length. The pharaoh ant is smaller than the dot of an "i" and weighs perhaps less than .03 gram. The average ant is so tiny that its life can be ended with the slightest pressure of a human's toe.

The ant's size, however, is no reflection on its significance. Over 8,000 species of ants have been identified, more species than any other insect or animal; and the total number of ants on the face of the earth is staggering. No other creature the size of the ant exhibits so much energy or organization.

WHEN DO ANTS CARE ABOUT THEIR APPEARANCE?

Ants returning from the field are very concerned about their cleanliness. They are greeted by younger worker ants at the entrance to the nest. These younger ants lick the older ones clean in a manner similar to a drive-through car wash. The antennae are given special attention because of the many segments which must be kept clean. If the joints of the segments become sticky and clogged with dirt, the ant may lose the use of its major sensory organ.

WHEN ARE THE ANT'S EYES A HANDICAP?

Most ants have compound eyes. Compound eyes are made up of hundreds of fixed eyelets, each with its own non-focusing lens and light receiver. Because of this, the ant sees a mosaic rather than a single image. At close range, the mosaic resembles the true image. At greater distances, the mosaic becomes a confused pattern of light which the ant's mind cannot sort out. Beyond even two centimeters, the ant is virtually blind, except for an awareness of light and dark.

HOW DOES THE ANT FIND ITS WAY IN A JUNGLE OF GIANTS?

While almost useless for vision, the ant's eyes are polarized like sunglasses. This enables the ant to determine the position of the sun, even on cloudy days. Ants use the sun's position as a reference for navigation, just as sailors use the stars. By walking in a direction which keeps the sun at the same angle, the ant is able to walk in a straight line through any maze of grass and sticks. If an ant is covered for a period of time by a box and then released, it will deviate from its original course by the exact angle that the sun moved during the ant's entrapment.

HOW DO ANTS HEAR WITHOUT EARS?

Like most insects, ants have no ears. Yet they hear by sensing sound vibrations through their feet, antennae, and tiny hairs that cover their legs and body.

Ants even sing to one another by rubbing parts of their abdomen together to create a high-pitched hum. Other ants hear these vibrations through the ground and often become excited and work more vigorously.

THE STRENGTH OF THE ANT

HOW MUCH CAN THE ANT LIFT?

Although by human standards the ant is very weak, compared to its own weight the ant is stronger than any man. A Leaf Cutting Ant may carry up to 50 times its own weight over a hundred meters. That is equivalent to a 90-kilogram man carrying five tons on his back for a distance of 27 kilometers. The real strength of the ant, however, lies not in its individual performance but in its cooperative strength. In a single summer, a large colony may excavate 13,500 to 18,000 kilograms of earth to make its nest and carry 2,200 kilograms of material back into the nest for food.

HOW FAR DOES THE ANT WALK IN A DAY?

The ant may make as many as four round trips a day to food sources which may be over 120 meters from the nest. That is roughly equivalent to a man's walking 100 kilometers. If the ant had the stride of a man, it would be capable of bursts of speed in excess of 100 kilometers an hour and would walk normally at a speed of thirty kilometers per hour.

HOW LONG CAN THE ANT WORK?

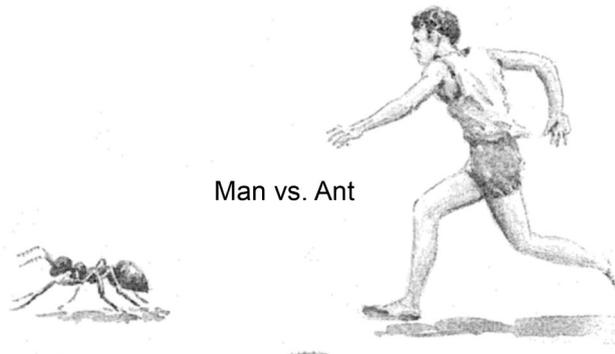
Bees live only five or six weeks before they work themselves to death. Ants live and work for years before wearing out. Young ants usually begin working as assistants in the nursery and then move to other jobs as they grow older. By the time a worker reaches the age of five or six years, it is considered old and takes on the role of a servant-leader in the colony.

WHICH ANT IS STRONGER THAN AN OX?

If an animal is tied and cannot otherwise flee, it can easily be overcome and pulled to the ground by a species of ant called the Driver Ant. These ants migrate in long columns, eating every piece of flesh in their path. There have been reports of caged leopards being reduced to bones overnight; and an elephant that could not escape was completely consumed in three days. Even the mighty ox is no match for the Driver Ant if it cannot flee.

WHY MUST THE ANT PREPARE FOOD IN SUMMER?

The activity of the ant, like other insects, is affected by the temperature. As the nest cools in the fall, ants become weaker and are unable to provide for themselves. Therefore they must gather food during the warm months while they have the strength to do so. Ants apparently are not bothered by freezing weather, because they hibernate during the coldest months. In the spring, as temperatures warm, they become active long before food is plentiful and must rely on what has been stored the previous summer.



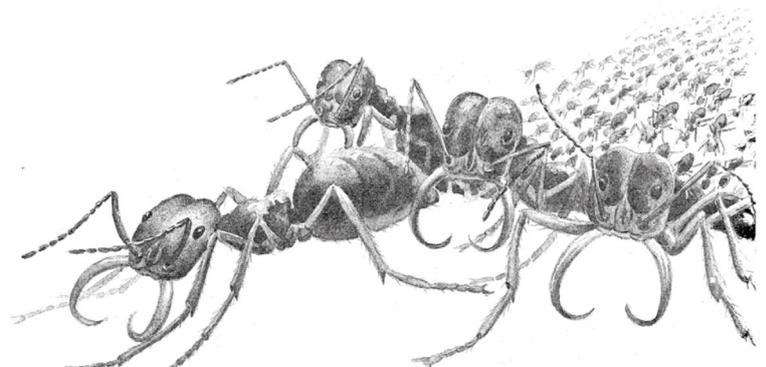
Man vs. Ant



A leaf with legs?



Ounce for ounce, a man would need a bulldozer to mate the combined strength of a colony of ants.



A column of Driver Ants may be so long that it takes over two weeks for the column to pass.

BE COMMITTED TO DILIGENCE

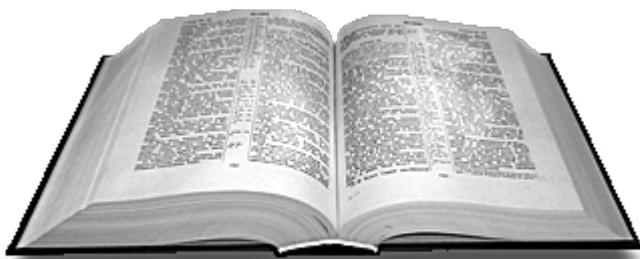


ITS REQUIREMENTS

1. Be diligent to remember the truths that God has shown you. (See Deuteronomy 4:9.)
2. Be diligent to teach God's Word to your children and grandchildren. (See Deuteronomy 6:7.)
3. Be diligent to keep all of God's commandments. (See Deuteronomy 6:17.)
4. Be diligent to guard your affections. (See Proverbs 4:23.)
5. Be diligent to add to your faith. (See II Peter 1:5.)
6. Be diligent to make your calling and election sure. (See II Peter 1:10.)
7. Be diligent to minister to other Christians. (See Hebrews 6:10-12.)
8. Be diligent in seeking the Lord. (See Hebrews 11:6.)
9. Be diligent to remove roots of bitterness. (See Hebrews 12:15.)
10. Be diligent to avoid swindlers and frauds. (See Proverbs 23:1-3.)
11. Be diligent to know the condition of those under your spiritual care. (See Proverbs 27:23.)

ITS REWARDS

1. You will be rich.
"...The hand of the diligent makes rich" (Proverbs 10:4).
2. You will be given authority.
"The hand of the diligent shall bear rule..." (Proverbs 12:24).
3. You will enjoy your possessions.
"...The substance of a diligent man is precious" (Proverbs 12:27).
4. You will be fulfilled.
"...The soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Proverbs 13:4).
5. You will be creative and resourceful.
"The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness..." (Proverbs 21:5).
6. You will obtain favor.
"He that diligently seeks good procures favor..." (Proverbs 11:27).
7. You will be given honor.
"Sees thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings ..." (Proverbs 22:29).



Personal Commitment to Conquer Slothfulness

I purpose to know the symptoms of slothfulness and to develop discipline by refusing to make those little daily surrenders which lead to slothfulness. I also purpose to make the most of each day which God entrusts to me.

Date _____

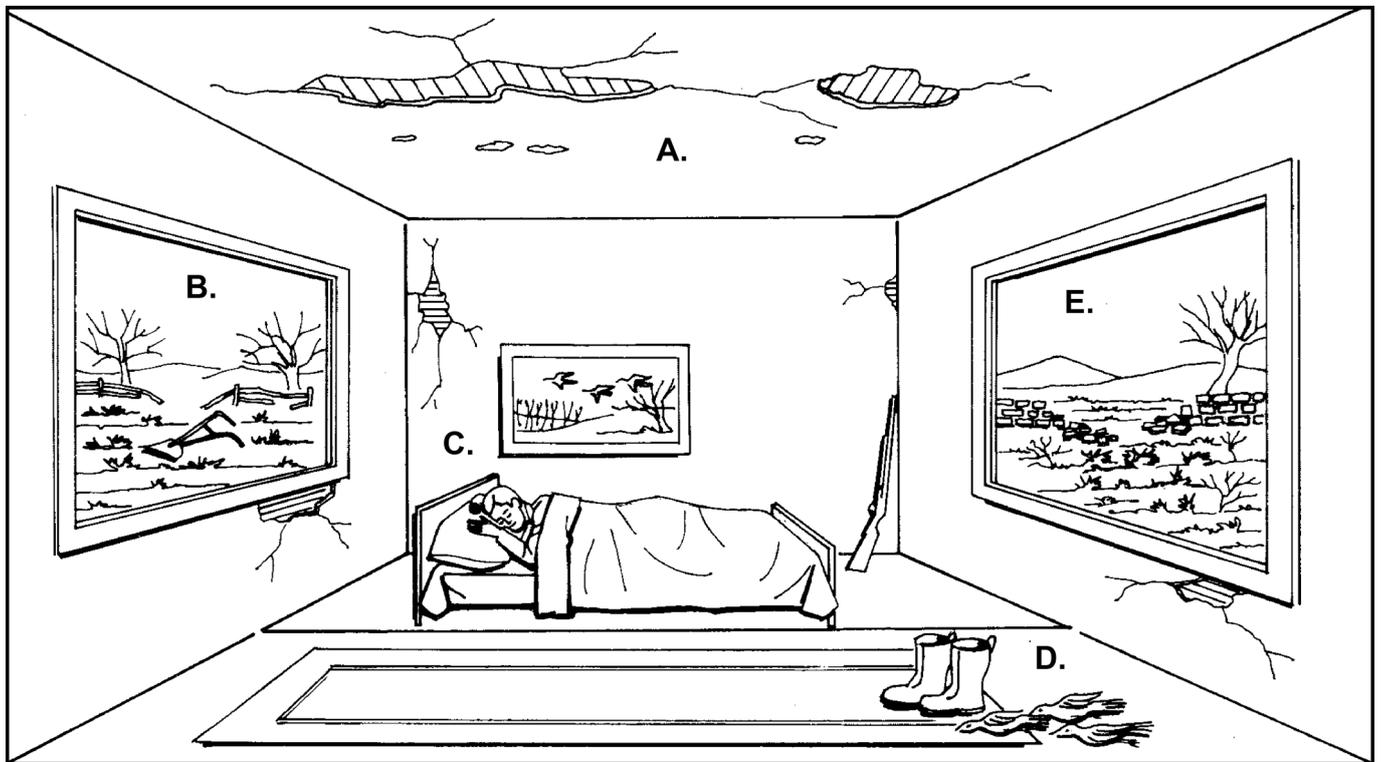
Signature _____

CAN YOU DETECT THE SYMPTOMS OF A SLUGGARD?

This is an excellent quiz to do with your family to picture what the Bible tells us..

Match each piece in the puzzle with the verse it illustrates.

- 1. "As the door turns upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed" (Proverbs 26:14).
- 2. "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Proverbs 20:4).
- 3. "...The field of the slothful... 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).
- 4. "The slothful man roasts not that which he took in hunting..." (Proverbs 12:27).
- 5. "By much slothfulness the building decays; and through idleness of the hands the house drops through" (Ecclesiastes 10:18).



WHO PASSED THE "SLEEP TEST" IN THE BIBLE?

Match each statement with the person to whom it refers.

1. I got up very early in the morning, so that I could get alone with My heavenly Father.

2. I was not alert to the schemes of wicked men. As a result, an innocent man was condemned. I spent the night fasting and waiting for his deliverance.

3. I had a great deal of responsibility. However, I regularly got up early in the morning to pray for my family.

4. God promised me continuous victories in battle. In spite of this reassurance, it was my practice to get up early in the morning and begin my campaigns.

5. I needed direction from God for a major decision. I asked God to work out certain circumstances, and I got up early in the morning to check them out.

6. God asked me to perform a very difficult task — surrendering my most cherished affection. I got up early in the morning to begin carrying it out.

7. God gave me the responsibility of communicating His truth to the ruler of the land. In order to effectively carry this out, I got up early in the morning.

8. God asked me to anoint the ruler of the nation. I got up early in the morning in order to carry out His instructions.



A. **DARIUS**
(See *Daniel 6:18-19*)

B. **MOSES**
(See *Exodus 8:20; 9:13*)

C. **ABRAHAM**
(See *Genesis 22:3*)

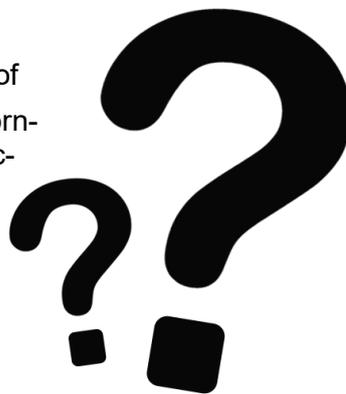
D. **SAMUEL**
(See *1 Samuel 9:26*)

E. **JOSHUA**
(See *Joshua 6:12; 8:10*)

F. **JESUS**
(See *Mark 1:35*)

G. **GIDEON**
(See *Judges 6:38*)

H. **JOB**
(See *Job 1:5*)



WHO FAILED THE "SLEEP TEST" IN THE BIBLE?

Match each statement with the person it best describes.

1. God warned me that my task was both dangerous and delicate. He gave me precise instructions for my journey. I made the mistake of stopping to rest under an oak tree, and it cost me my life. Who am I?
2. It was the time that leaders go out to battle. Instead, I stayed home to get a little more sleep. It was obvious that I did not need it because I could not sleep; so I went for a walk and fell into terrible sin. Who am I?
3. I was startled by the words, "O sleeper, get up and call on your God." This was a rebuke to me, but it revealed that my slothfulness was a by-product of my rebellion against God. He severely disciplined me. Who am I?
4. I, too, was slothful in praying. Rather than being spiritually alert as I should have been, I fell asleep. As a consequence, I fell into the very temptation that I was warned about. Who am I?
5. I had a habit of falling asleep when I should have been fleeing from temptation. My enjoyment of inappropriate sleep cost me my spiritual and physical vision. Who am I?
6. I fell asleep at a time when I should have been listening to instruction. My sleep was so sound that I caused a shocking incident and disrupted the meeting. Who am I?
7. My slothfulness was compounded by drunkenness. At a time of great danger to my family, I was sleeping. When I woke up, God punished me with a heart attack. Who am I?
8. A slothful person does not anticipate future needs, and that was precisely my problem. Because of it, I lost the opportunity of a lifetime. Who am I?
- A. **Jonah**
(See *Jonah 1:6*)
- B. **Eutychus**
(See *Acts 20:9*)
- C. **David**
(See *II Samuel 11:2*)
- D. **Samson**
(See *Judges 16:19*)
- E. **Nabal**
(See *I Samuel 25:36-38*)
- F. **Peter**
(See *Matthew 26:40-43*)
- G. **A foolish virgin**
(See *Matthew 25:5*)
- H. **Unnamed prophet**
(See *I Kings 13:14-24*)

