

Diligence

Lesson 1: What is Diligence?

1. Introduction

Hebrews 6:11, 12

Definition of SLUGGISH: _____

When you look at what the Bible says about it, you begin to discover that there are hundreds of verses about being diligent or about not being lazy.

If you just asked around, it would be hard to find lazy people, because nobody is going to admit that they are lazy.

But if there are so many scriptures about being diligent, who did God write them for?

The Lord is obviously addressing a big issue. It is a big problem. There are hundreds of verses about it.

Maybe there are a lot of people not being diligent and are living lazy lives.

Hebrews 6:11

Who is this for? – All of us!

Hebrews 6:11

How long do you have to be diligent? – _____

Hebrews 6:12

Hebrews 6:12 – New International Version

We do not want you to become lazy . . .

Hebrews 6:12 – The Message Bible

Don't drag your feet.

2. Patience, diligence, and perseverance

Hebrews 6:12

There is a word here that goes along with diligence. It is _____

The way we use the word “patience”, people have the idea that it means a passive waiting. People think it means to just sit down and wait. But that is not what this word means.

Definition of PATIENCE: _____

Through faith and perseverance, you inherit the promise.

Does that sound like diligence? – Yes

You will inherit the promises, not just through faith but through _____

There are some people who think they can just “believe God” and do nothing. But the Bible paints a different picture.

You need faith and diligence.

James put it this way – _____

- Yes – you believe God.
- Yes – you speak His Word.
- But there are also things like getting up early and staying up late.
- Going when you do not feel like going.
- Doing it as long as it takes – even though you wish it was done five days ago.

Galatians 6:9

What does it look like when someone loses heart? – They get tired of doing it, give up, and quit.

Hebrews 6:13-15

PATIENTLY ENDURED means _____

After he patiently endured, he got it!

Does it say he got the promise in a day? A week?

We know from other places in the Bible that Abraham received the promise by faith. But here in Hebrews it reveals that it was not just faith. It was faith and perseverance or diligence – day in, day out, week after week, and month after month.

After faith with perseverance and diligence, Abraham and Sarah got it – Isaac was born!

It is never too late for you. It is never too hard for God. Nothing is impossible!

But it is going to take faith and _____

That is what separates the men from the boys.

A lot of people can believe God for three days or even a couple of weeks.

But when time goes on and the symptoms are still there or the money is still not there – month after month, you can get weary.

3. Abraham

With Abraham, it was years between when God spoke to Him until He received the promise.

Abraham and Sarah had some rocky moments trying to believe God. They even laughed at God!

But they overcame those things and received the promise.

Hebrews 11:6

Diligently seek him.

We live in a lazy generation filled with conveniences.

Some of it is okay. But some of it has contributed to _____

In Africa, India, and China we see people being raised from the dead. There are people with missing limbs growing them back on! Why don't we see that here?

One reason is that the people in those countries walk for days in extreme heat to even get to the meeting. People in this country do not want to go across the street.

When people get hungry enough for the things of God, we will see it.

4. Definition of diligence

Definitions of DILIGENCE (taken from the Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible):

- _____

“Vehemently” means with intensity and passion.

Do you know that you need to be passionate about the things of God?

- Fervent

Romans 12:11

NOT LAGGING is also translated – not tardy or not late

Diligence is never late. It is on time or early.

Some people think being spiritual is just going to church, praying, and reading your Bible.

But that is not all that it takes to be spiritual. If you are walking in the flesh you are lazy. If you are spiritual, you are not – you are diligent.

You have a choice to walk in the flesh, or you can walk in the Spirit.

Every day you have opportunities to yield to the flesh or to the Spirit.

The more you yield to the flesh – the lazier you become and the lower you drop your standards. The more spiritual you are – the more diligent you are.

Your flesh wants to be lazy!

Your flesh wants to lie in the bed and not get up.

Your flesh wants to just let things go. That is how sin is too – “Just let it go. It’s no big deal.”

Ezra 7:23

If it is done for the Lord, how should it be done? Sloppy? Carelessly? No – Diligently!

- _____

This means completely.

- _____

If it is done diligently, it is done speedily.

One of the literal definitions of diligence (in the Hebrew) is – _____

That means early.

Diligence means getting things done early.

You will find that this is a consistent quality of diligent people.

You do not have to wait for diligent people.

Anybody can get hung up on something and be late occasionally. But diligent people are prompt and early.

Lazy people are consistently late and always have excuses.

- _____
- Prompt

One definition says it means “very promptly”.

- Energetic
- _____

If God calls you to do something, you should not drag around, do it half-heartedly, or do it with a “that’s good enough” attitude.

5. Be diligent with the call of God on your life.

James 4:14

We must be diligent with the calling of God on our lives.

You are only here for a short time. We need to be diligent to fulfill God’s purpose for our lives.

6. Jesus told us to be diligent.

Matthew 22:37

Does this sound like fervency to you? Does this sound like someone who is passionate?

This is diligence.

Diligence

Lesson 2: Living a Diligent Life

1. Introduction

Hebrews 6:11, 12

These verses are the foundation of what we are learning about diligence.

2. Work

Let's look at the previous verse.

Hebrews 6:10

“Work” is a good Bible word.

The words work and labor appear very often along with the word ministry in the Bible.

Often the word “work” is translated “ministry”.

There are a lot of people talking about “their ministry”, but they are not working.

Definition of MINISTRY: _____

This verse says God does not forget your work and your labor.

God loves work! He invented it. It was His idea.

Men are supposed to work. Women are supposed to work. Children are supposed to work.

We have a generation today who are clueless.

Dad works a 10-hour day and then mows the lawn, but a 16-year-old boy is on the couch playing video games.

This is ignorance and the dad may not know this, but it is very bad for the boy.
If he continues like this, he will get a job and think that he can behave this way on the job too.

That is why children need to be taught to work. If they are taught when they are young, it will be an easy transition into the workplace.

When I was growing up, I worked and I didn't get paid for everything I did. – There are many young people – the first thing they want to know if you ask them to do something is how much money they are going to get.

Parents – you are not doing your children any favors by pampering them, not ever giving them any duties or tasks, and not requiring anything out of them. You are setting them up for failure.

Hebrews 6:10-12

We know that we receive the promises of God through faith. But here in Hebrews, the Word of God reveals that we need diligence with our faith.

3. Laziness

We began this lesson talking about work.

Let's learn about the opposite of diligence, which is _____

In places where the government provides most everything, people are not living a diligent life. As a matter of fact, they become lazy.

People have lost their incentive to be diligent.

Diligent people live with an awareness that they have a limited number of days.

It is good to ask yourself – “What I am doing right now that is it making a difference? Am I doing anything to advance the Kingdom of God?”

Genesis 2:15

The word “keep” is translated _____ in other places.

God has given us some things to “keep”. These are things that we are responsible for. We must be diligent.

When we give into the flesh and become lazy, it leads to procrastination. When we procrastinate, it is never a good thing.

- _____

To procrastinate means we are putting everything off “until another time”

“I’m tired.” – Your flesh is always tired. It will tell you that all day long if you listen to it.

What did God tell Adam? – To tend and keep the garden of Eden. It means to be diligent!

But what did Adam do when the serpent came? – He stood behind his wife saying and doing nothing.

One of the words for laziness means – _____

Nobody wants to admit laziness. But we have all been lazy at one time or another. We have all given into the flesh.

But you have a choice to walk in the Spirit or walk in the flesh.

When you walk in the flesh you are lazy. You procrastinate.

When you walk in the Spirit you are diligent!

- _____

Proverbs 22:13

What does this have to do with a man being lazy? – This is an excuse for not going outside and going to work.

Laziness always has an excuse for not doing today, not doing it now, putting it off, or not doing it at all.

Proverbs 26:14

The door is moving, but it is not going anywhere. The lazy man turns from side to side in his bed, but he is not going anywhere.

Proverbs 26:15

You might think that nobody is that lazy, but there are people that lazy.

Laziness does not start out that way. It begins with little excuses and over time they grow bigger.

There are many people who are crystal clear about what they want, but they are not interested in what it takes to get it.

The Bible talks about diligence being a key factor from getting from what you want to having it.

- _____

Proverbs 26:15

This is a characteristic of lazy people – Every little thing bothers them. It irritates them. They don't want to be bothered with anything.

•

Proverbs 26:16

What does this mean? – Lazy people get good at reasoning.

Seven wise men may give a reason for doing something, but a lazy person will still try to argue his case.

In his or her own mentality, they are wiser than all these other people. Nobody really understands.

“I know the pastor, my wife, and all of my good friends say one thing – BUT . . .”

People like to imagine that they and God have a separate relationship from the rest of us.

They think they have _____ from everyone else.

They are saying that they can ignore God’s will, ignore the Bible, and they are still okay with God.

People who practice laziness are like this.

•

“I know the Bible says if you don’t work, you don’t eat, but God sees my heart.”

That is not true! If it is in you, it will come out of you.

If it never comes out of you, then it is not in you.

Matthew 22:37

If you love God with all your heart, you will not be lazy. If you love God with all your heart, nobody has to keep telling you to give it your all.

Laziness reveals heart problems.

When you love God with all your heart, you will do whatever it takes.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

The Apostle Paul was a worker. Nobody would call him a lazy man. He had a great ministry. As a matter of fact, he had one of the greatest ministries of all time.

He was an apostle, prophet, and a teacher.

If anybody had an excuse not to get their hands dirty it would have been him, because he really did get caught up in heaven. He really did see Jesus.

What was Paul saying here? – “When I came and preached to you, nobody paid my bills. I took care of myself.”

God did not call you to be dependent on someone else. He did not create you to be a dependent beggar.

You are supposed to have your own clothes, your own food, your own money, your own place, and your own stuff.

If you have not arrived there yet, don't be depressed about it. _____

It is God's will for you to have your own stuff.

Make work an important part of your life. Work, labor, diligence, getting up early, staying up late, and going when you don't feel like it are important.

1 Thessalonians 4:11

We are not supposed to just come and meet on Sunday mornings.

“Well, I love God and I come to church.”

But what about your ministry? What is your service for the Kingdom?

If it takes you more than twenty seconds to think about your answer, you need to get diligent about serving Jesus!

4. What will happen to you if you begin to live a life of diligence?

- _____

Is it possible that a lazy person can change?

We are talking about someone who is lazy and not doing anything productive. Can that person become one of the sharpest, most diligent, and most reliable people in the whole church? Is it possible for someone to change that much? – Yes!

You can change. You can be different.

Maybe you are famous for being late, but you can change.

Maybe everyone knows how unreliable you are, but you can change and become someone that people can count on.

- Being diligent in one area of your life carries over into other areas of your life.

Proverbs 27:23

This is about your finances. You do not have cows and animals. But you have income.

You need to use diligence to know what is going on with your money.

You cannot let things go and be sloppy.

Some people are praying for a financial miracle, but they are in that place because they have not been diligent.

Finance is one example. But this works in every area of life.

It is like cleaning out a closet in your house. You clean out one and you are inspired to clean more.

It is the same spiritually. You become diligent in one area and see that part of your life change, so it inspires you to move onto the next area of your life.

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Lesson 3: What is your area of service?

1. Introduction

Hebrews chapter six has been our foundation text.

Hebrews 6:10

God loves work. He invented it. It was His idea.

God is talking about ministry in this verse. Ministry involves work and labor.

If someone claims they have a ministry and there is no work going on, they do not have a ministry.

2. Discovering what God has called you to do for Him.

When we talk about being diligent, we also need to ask ourselves this question – Be diligent at doing what?

We are not supposed to just come and meet on Sunday mornings.

But what about your ministry? What is your service for the Kingdom?

Mark 13:34

Who did Jesus give work to? – Answer: Each (The King James Version says, “every man”.)

Who did He give work to? Was it just to the pastors, preachers, prophets, children’s workers, and church staff? – No! He gave work to every man.

What has the Lord given to every man? – Answer: _____

3. What is your work?

“I work hard making a living.”

But is that your service for the Kingdom?

Some of it could be, but a lot of times it is not. It is just for the purpose of paying your bills.

Do you want to go your entire life and never do service for the Kingdom? Have you found your work for the Kingdom?

We have millions of believers who have not even found their church, much less their work.

They are living like they are going to do this forever.

They get up, go to work, come home, feed the kids, go to bed and then do it all again the next day. These people also do not have any service for the Kingdom.

If you do happen to find these people in church, their primary focus is for somebody to help me bless me, feed me, counsel me, talk with me, and listen to me for as long as I want to talk.

People do not have any concept about being in the Kingdom. We are so far away from being about the Master's business.

I should not judge anybody else, but I can see to it that I find out what my work is in the Kingdom.

It is sad that there are many people in church who are not doing anything and others began their work and then quit.

For whatever reason, they do not like getting to church early. They do not like staying late. The ministry is too hard, etc.

Not everyone is called to be a preacher. But everyone is called to serve.

4. Once you find out what your work is, you must assume responsibility.

Some do not like to take responsibility. If something goes wrong, they like to blame others.

People like this always ask – “What is this church doing about the poor? What is this church doing about missions? What is this church doing about the teenagers?”

These are the wrong questions. – You should be asking – “What am I doing? What is my service?”

Everybody is supposed to have service in the local church for the Kingdom.

Galatians 6:4 – New Living Bible

Pay careful attention to your own work. for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't have to compare yourself to anyone else.

Pay careful attention to YOUR OWN work . . .

How many people are not doing this? They are paying attention to everybody else's work.

Every born-again person is called to the ministry. They have their work and service to do.

Everyone is called to the ministry.

What is ministry? – _____

If people really understood this, they would be lining up on Sunday morning saying –

- “Let me work in the nursery. Please.”
- “Let me ride the bus with the children.”
- “Can I please be a greeter? Let me hold those bulletins.”
- “Let me help with the children.”
- “Would you let me do that please?”

When you change a poopy diaper at home, you do it because it needs to be done. But when you change a poopy diaper in church, you have an eternal reward!

You are saved by faith. but all of us will still get a reward for what we do in this life for the Kingdom!

What is your job? What is your service? Whatever you are doing for the Lord, do it diligently! Do it vehemently with intensity and passion!

5. God rewards diligence.

We need to do everything like this in the local church.

- Are you working in the nursery like this?
- Are you greeting like this?
- Are you worshipping like this on the team?
- Are you distributing food at the food pantry like this?
- Are you vacuuming the floor like this?

Is vacuuming the floor a ministry?

Psalm 84:10

Psalm 84:10 – The Message Bible

I'd rather scrub floors in the house of my God than be honored as a guest in the palace of sin.

Why? Because all that other stuff is not going to matter at the end. But when you stand before God, scrubbing the floor in the house of God will matter!

Hebrews 6:10

- God remembers every time you came early to set up.
 - God remembers every dirty diaper you changed.
 - God remembers every time you loaded the truck with groceries.
 - God remembers when you helped the family get a ride to church.
 - God remembers when you vacuumed the floor.
-

Hebrews 6:11**Colossians 4:17**

He had to receive it first.

He _____ it. Then he had to _____ it.

The New International Version says – *See to it that you complete the work . . .*

Be sure to finish the work the Lord gave you.

Be serious about finding your work for the Lord. Do not let another day pass by and just go on living without working for the Lord.

- _____
- You can be early.
- _____
- You can be vehement.
- You can be passionate.
- You can be earnest.

-

- You can be speedy.
- You can be excellent.

In a few days you will hear the Lord say, “Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things. I will make ruler over much. Enter into the joy of the Lord.”

Matthew 9:35

Jesus worked hard. He was diligent with his job in the Kingdom.

Matthew 9:36, 37

We are not short on church members, those who know Greek and Hebrew, or those who can prophesy.

Matthew 9:38

6. Diligence and prosperity

Proverbs 6:6

Have you ever heard of a lazy ant?

Has anybody ever told you – “I have the laziest ants at my house. They won’t even take any food. You can leave food lying around for three or four days and they will not even come and get it.”

Look at the wisdom that you can see in an ant.

Proverbs 6:7

Who makes the ants get up and go to work in the morning? They do not have an ant time card that they punch in with.

The government is not making them go to work. Their boss is not making them go to work.

Why do they all roll out and just work? – Because God made them that way. God’s wisdom is in them.

Proverbs 6:8

They are working every season.

If you leave a muffin on the ground, it is an ant opportunity.

If two ants find out about it, the next thing you know there are thousands of ants! – Why? Because they all work. None of them lie around and say, “Let the other ants do it. I don’t feel like it today.”

Proverbs 6:9, 10

There is a lot said about sleep in connection with laziness.

There is a time to rest. But there is also a time to get up and go!

If you do not get up and go when it is time to get up and go, you will never prosper. You will never be successful.

Proverbs 6:10, 11

The more you yield to the flesh, and the lazier you become, the worse you feel.

It is not like this – The more you sleep in, the more you miss your appointments, the more you goof off and do not go to work, the better you feel and the more confidence you have.

You do not feel good about sleeping in and missing things. Even if you are tired, and you take care of business, you feel good about it.

Being diligent helps your faith. You know you have obeyed God and done everything He told you to do. Now you can stand in faith and believe that He will bless you!

Colossians 3:22

Some people read this and think it does not apply to them. They are not anybody’s slave or servant. Then why is this verse here in the Bible?

Every employee is a servant. You are serving the owners of the company you work for. You are serving them in some capacity.

Colossians 3:22

The New International Version says – *not only when their eye is on you*

The Message Bible says – *don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best.*

Colossians 3:23

This is a characteristic of laziness – You only work when people are looking at you.

Another characteristic of laziness – You work completely different when someone is watching you than when they are not.

This describes huge portions of the modern workforce.

As Christians, we are told by our Master that we ought to work a certain way.

We are to work heartily. Doesn't that sound like diligence?

We are to do our work with intensity, passion, speedily, promptly, and heartily.

- As believers we should be working like this whether people treat us right or they do not treat us right.
- Whether they pay us good or they do not.
- Whether they appreciate us or they do not.

Do it as to the Lord.

- As though you were driving nails for the Lord
- As though you were bagging groceries for the Lord

If you are bagging the Lord's groceries, you are not going to put His bread on the bottom.

You cannot hide laziness. You may think nobody sees, but they do.

The same is true with diligence. You may think nobody notices your hard work. One day the Lord will recognize you.

God is not unrighteous to forget. He remembers.

He takes it personally because while you were working diligently you were doing it for Him!

This gives Him the right to promote you even if your boss does not.

When you do your job as unto the Lord, you take it out of the realm of the company. Now God takes it personally.

Colossians 3:23, 24

What is happening while you do your job? – _____

Matthew 25:23

If you are faithful in the little things, God will make you ruler over much.

Next time you pick up the shovel, put on that uniform, make those phone calls, you need to decide – “Today, I do my job as unto the Lord.”

When I do this, I take it out of the realm of the natural into the spiritual.

Proverbs 10:4

God’s Word needs to be in our mouth. _____

7. Being a good steward is a characteristic of a diligent person.**Proverbs 10:5****Proverbs 24:30****Proverbs 24:31-34**

Who is poverty coming upon? – _____

Did you notice something about the lazy man? – Everything was overgrown and things were broken down.

Did you ever notice that about the city? In the neighborhoods with high crime, poverty, drugs, and other problems, everything is overgrown and broken down.

Never get in the habit of not fixing things. It is not good and it is a poverty mentality.

Fixing things that are broken is a _____

If you talk to people who live in a place where nothing is taken care of, things are overgrown, and stuff is broken, they will tell you the reason is a lack of money. But that is not true.

You do not have to be rich and have the best things in the world to be diligent. God wants you to be blessed, but it is what you do with what you have. It is all about being a good steward of what you have now.

For example – Do not ask God for a new car if you aren't properly taking care of the one you already have.

When you don't take care of things, it is a "give up" attitude. If you take care of what you have now, you may not be rich, but you are acting in faith.

Do not be satisfied with broken things. Fix it, get rid of it, or replace it – Why? Because it is affecting the environment of your house. It is a poverty mentality to live with everything broken down and growing over.

This is the same for people who do not have jobs. You should get up early like you have one. Go look for one.

This is an act of faith and it pleases God.

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Lesson 4: Do it now and do it well

1. Introduction

Hebrews 6:10

Work is God's idea. Work pleases Him and He remembers our righteous work.

Jesus said the harvest is ripe, but the laborers are few.

We should work. It says here that God will not forget your work. We make sure to have some work for Him to remember.

How can He bless nothing?

2. You must give the Lord something to bless.

You must put your hand to something. You must give him something to increase. Something to multiply.

Deuteronomy 23:20

Deuteronomy 15:10

Deuteronomy 28:8

We believe that God blesses us! But His blessing comes in direct correlation to what you set your hand to do.

What if you are not setting your hand to anything? – _____

Diligence gives God something to bless,

Deuteronomy 28:12

Before being able to lend and not borrow, there is the phrase – _____
Some Christians do not want to be blessed.

They say things like, "I do not care about having money. If I have enough for a place to live and some food, I do not want any more."

That is selfish and spiritually lazy.

There is a Kingdom of God that needs to be advanced. There are a lot of people who still need to hear about Jesus. God has given us the direction to take this Gospel to the whole world.

Deuteronomy 30:9

God blesses what you set your hand to do – _____

3. Do it now and do it well.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – The Message Bible

Whatever turns up, grab it and do it. And heartily!

Do it. Do it now. Do it well.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – The New Living Bible

Whatever you do, do well.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – Contemporary English Version

Work hard at whatever you do.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – Holman Christian Standard Bible

Whatever your hands find to do, do with [all] your strength.

Do it now. Do it well. Whatever your hand finds to do.

- This includes some things that people would consider menial.
- Not just the big and important jobs.

Definition of HEARTILY: _____

The mentalities of doing things well, being prompt, and acting professional have been lost in our society in many places.

If diligence means prompt and speedily then:

- _____

Definition of PROCRASTINATION: The voluntary, irrational delay of an intended task despite knowing it will cause negative consequences. It is not laziness, but rather a failure of self-regulation and discipline.

•

Do you know that it is pride and selfishness to make people wait for you all the time?

You are acting like your time is more valuable than everybody else's time and that it is perfectly fine for everyone else to have to wait for you all the time.

4. The parable of the ten virgins.

Matthew 25:1-4

They were diligent.

Matthew 25:5-10

Do you know you can live ready? God uses people who are ready.

Some people have this attitude – “When God gives me an opportunity, or something comes my way, then I will get ready.”

But that is not faith. That is unbelief.

Instead, you need to live ready. _____

Being ready for your time is an act of faith. Preparation and making an effort are parts of being diligent.

Diligence is the will of God!

5. Things are piling up and I am falling behind.

Ecclesiastes 5:4

Do it now and do it well.

What about people who never have time for anything? They always have too much to do and never enough time. They are always falling behind. Things are piling up.

These people are not diligent in every area.

If you do not have time to do what God wants, then you are wasting time somewhere else.

Ecclesiastes 5:4 – The Message Bible

When you tell God you'll do something, do it--now. God takes no pleasure in foolish gabble. Vow it, then do it.

6. Not being diligent can be the reason for a lack of some things in your life.

For example – A lack of diligence may be the reason you have not found a spouse.

It could be the mercy of God, because you are not ready yet.

What kind of person are you looking for? A slob? A lazy bum? They are not looking for that either!

If you are looking for someone sharp and has got it together, you must be that in order to attract that.

1 Timothy 5:4

1 Timothy 5:9, 10

Paul is talking about financial aid in this passage.

Specifically, he is talking about financially helping widows.

What is he saying? – You don't just help them because they are a widow.

There is an entire structure of financial support in our society today based simply on need.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

Before you help anyone financially you should see what they are doing about work.

Some people will not work, even if they are presented with an opportunity. They would rather someone else pay all their expenses while they do nothing.

You should not give these people money.

If the Apostle Paul could build tents while he was holding meetings, we should work too!

1 Timothy 5:10, 11

What does that mean? – Do not support the younger widows. They need to go to work.

1 Timothy 5:12, 13

What do you do when you have nothing to do? – You think about yourself.

That is one of the benefits of being busy on a job. You are thinking about the customer, the inventory, and the next task. The entire time you are working at your job you are not thinking about yourself.

The people who are working, busy, and thinking all day about drill bits, delivering packages, staff meetings, or a new computer project are the ones who will prosper and be successful.

1 Timothy 5:13

Definition of BUSYBODY:

- To be working around about, instead of at one's own business.
- Not busy about your own business, but over-busied with the business of others.

When you are a busybody, you are meddling in other people's matters and not taking care of your own business.

7. It is a difference between walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16

How do you keep from fulfilling the lust of the flesh? – _____

When you are “busy” walking in the Spirit, you will not yield to the flesh.

When you are busy working, you are not going to be sitting at home looking at pornography on the computer.

Many sins have happened because people were bored.

What comes when you are bored? – _____

2 Samuel 11:1, 2

David was at home when he should have been out in battle. David was bored and it led to temptation. He was at home, doing nothing.

What if he had been out in the battle? What if he had been strategizing a battle plan, checking the weapons, and talking to his generals? What if he had been working? – He would not have been tempted. He would not have sinned.

If you are working where God wants you to be, you are in the right place at the right time. If that is true, while you are working, you are not in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Working diligently keeps your mind occupied. It keeps your soul occupied. It keeps your body occupied. Add to all of that – if you are obeying God with your work you are walking in the Spirit.

8. Laziness

Hebrews 6:10

God is not going to forget your work and your labor.

“Well, Pastor, I am retired.” – But you are not retired from the Kingdom of God!

Everyone is supposed to be working.

Hebrews 6:11, 12

Diligence and faith go together.

Laziness and faith do not go together.

Diligence is spiritual. Laziness is not spiritual. It is the flesh.

Let's remind ourselves of the definition of DILIGENCE:

- Vehemence
- _____
- Enthusiastic
- Earnestness
- _____
- Eager
- Determined

When God tells us to be diligent, He is telling us to be enthusiastic, eager, determined, and passionate. As opposed to what? – Laziness

Definition of LAZINESS: _____

A lazy person does not work and does not want to work. They are not enthusiastic about anything. They are not stirred up about anything.

What else does diligence mean?

- Promptly

- _____

- At dawn

- _____

When it comes to the things of God, I should be enthusiastic, passionate, determined, prompt, and speedy.

We are also supposed to do everything as unto the Lord. That means I need to be enthusiastic, passionate, determined, prompt, and speedy when I sweep the floor, stock a shelf, or take care of a customer.

This is a big part of our witness to those around us. People watch what we do, more than they listen to what we say.

If we are lazy on the job, it is a bad witness to everyone who works with us.

Proverbs 20:4

Why didn't the lazy man plow? – Because it was winter. It was too cold.

He may feel justified in having not plowed, but it still does not put food on the table.

9. The lazy mind is creative about coming up with excuses as to why we are not doing it today or why we are not taking care of it now.

- _____

Proverbs 26:13

We are not going to invest money, we are not going to put our time into it, we are not going to invest effort – because of what might happen.

- _____

Ecclesiastes 11:4

He who observes the wind will not sow, And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

The lazy man is not saying that he will never work. He is just saying, “Not today. Not right now. I am waiting for a better and more perfect time to do it.”

What if you do not sow? — _____

Ecclesiastes 11:4 – The Message Bible

Don't sit there watching the wind. Do your own work. Don't stare at the clouds. Get on with your life.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 – The English Version

If you wait until the wind and the weather are just right, you will never plant anything and you will never harvest anything.

Waiting for everything to be perfect is an indication of laziness.

Waiting for the perfect circumstances causes days, months, or even years to go by. You could still be waiting, even after years.

This is an indication of laziness and a failure to be diligent. It is a failure to step out.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 – Easy-To-Read Version

There are some things you cannot be sure of. You must take a chance. If you wait for perfect weather, you will never plant your seeds. If you are afraid that every cloud will bring rain, you will never harvest your crops.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 – The Living Bible

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

There are millions of people in the world who can tell you all the things they want to do for the Lord. They can share incredible and exciting plans with you. They have great vision. But twenty years later, they still have not done anything.

It reveals laziness and a lack of faith. The entire point of having faith is to step out when everything is against you.

Many Christians are waiting to start a business, take their first mission trip, or give a large gift to a ministry.

If everything is perfect before you give a large offering, there is no faith in that!

God blesses your work and labor with diligence! He does not bless your waiting around for everything to be perfect.

Nothing in the ministry would ever begin if we waited for perfect conditions.

There are people looking for the perfect man or woman. Instead, you are going to have to trust God.

It is too cold. It is too hot. I do not have enough experience. I do not have enough money.

Waiting, waiting, waiting and nothing is happening!

10. A diligent person pursues God.

Hosea 6:3

You are not just waiting around for something to happen. You are pursuing God. You are going after the things of God!

Definition of PURSUE:

- _____
- To chase
- _____

Luke 11:9, 10

Luke 11:9, 10 – Amplified Bible

So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives; and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds; and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened.

John 8:31, 32 – King James Version

... If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

How do you know the truth? Is it just going to fall on you one day? Are you just going to “all of the sudden be free” if you are patient and wait?

You must “continue” in the Word.

Definition of CONTINUE:

- To stay in a given place with expectancy
- _____

- Dwell

- _____

- Remain

- _____

- Tarry

This is diligence.

James 1:2

Falling into various trials describes imperfections. – Too hot, too cold, things not perfect, people not acting right, do not feel like you are strong enough, do not feel like you are ready.

There are lots of reasons why you do not feel like it is time and you want to wait.

What did God say about that? – Count it all joy!

Why? – Because God wants to use you anyway. God says that it is time!

God has the ability. God has the skills. God has the contacts. He can give you everything you need.

Imperfect circumstances are not the problem. The problem is – are you willing to step out?

If you are willing, it is going to take some diligence.

If God told you to do something, He asked in spite of all your imperfections.

Also, if He asked you to do something, it means he is dedicated to help you.

James 1:3, 4

If you will stick to it and you are diligent, what will happen? – You will be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

This means you will be mature and have everything you need in life.

Diligence

Lesson 5: Diligent until the end

1. Introduction

Hebrews 6:10

God is not going to forget your work and your labor.

Notice that this verse is about ministering to people and helping people.

Hebrews 6:11, 12

Definition of DILEGENCE:

- Vehemence
- _____
- Enthusiastic
- Earnestness
- _____
- Eager
- Determined
- Promptly
- _____
- At dawn
- With speed

This list describes a spiritual person.

Being lazy, sloppy, and late are all characteristics of the flesh. They are not godly characteristics. They are not like God.

Can you imagine God being sloppy and letting things go?

2. Diligent until the end

Hebrews 6:11

Diligent until the end.

This is a quality of diligence.

We are going to see this time and time again in the verses we look at.

How long are we supposed to be diligent? – Until the end

We could also say – _____

Hebrews 6:11, 12

Notice the writer of Hebrews does not just say “faith” will inherit the promise. He said it will take faith and patience.

Definition of PATIENCE:

- _____
- To be long tempered

What does it mean if someone is short spirited or short tempered? – They give up easily. They would be considered a quitter.

Why would someone be a quitter? – Because they are tired of it, fed up with it, and upset about it. So, they quit.

People quit jobs. They quit churches. They quit marriages. They quit believing God.

Why? – _____

What happens when you get mad, tired, and give up? What happens when you quit? – You do not inherit the promise.

It is not enough to have faith. It is not enough to just believe God. You need to believe God until it is done.

You must stay with it _____

A lot of people can believe God for a few days. But when things get tough, many people quit.

What happens when people quit? – Many times, they move out of the will of God. They leave the place God put them.

There are millions of Christians who are out of the will of God because they quit something out of offense, anger, or impatience.

Patience also means: _____

It is not passively waiting. It is hanging in there. It is not giving up until it is done!

All these verses remind us of diligence:

Hebrews 3:6

Hebrews 3:14

Hebrews 4:14

3. It takes more than faith.

Hebrews 6:12-15

How did Abraham obtain the promise? – _____

He patiently endured – sounds like diligence.

We all want to obtain the promise, but we must have faith and diligence.

“I tried tithing for three months and it didn’t work.”

This is wrong thinking. The Word of God has already been tried and tested – it works!

If you “tried” and it did not work, _____

You do not “try” tithing. You do not “try” living by faith – You do it!

Because you believe the Word so much, you will do it month after month. You will keep doing it, even if it looks like things are getting worse.

You believe and have diligence – then you will obtain.

Hebrews 10:35, 36

You need faith and endurance to obtain your promise.

If you do not have endurance, it does not matter how much faith you have. You need both.

If you quit and stop being diligent, your faith is not going to do you any good.

You cannot afford to be short spirited.

What if you stand and stand for three months? Then you get mad, worn out and you quit. What result do you get? – You get the same result as if you had never stood in faith at all!

Don't throw all of that away!

You already have three months invested in it. Your miracle could be today.

Just stand and keep standing.

For how long? – _____

Hebrews 10:36

Hebrews 11:6

Who is he going to reward? – Those who diligently seek Him.

4. Running your race

Hebrews 12:1

Why do you have to lay aside the weights?

Have you ever seen someone running a long-distance race with a backpack on? They may be able to run that way for a little while, but after the race goes on, every little thing feels heavier and heavier.

There are millions of people who used to be excited about the things of God, and they do not even go to church anymore. They have not been to church in years. Why? – they were not willing to get rid of stuff in their lives and run the race.

They did not lighten their load.

Hebrews 12:1

What helps you run with endurance? - Focus

Hebrews 12:2

If you are going to diligently run your race, you must be dedicated to getting the weights off your life.

If you are going to obtain your promise, you must have faith and endurance. You cannot give up. You must be diligent until the end.

5. Jairus

An example of this is found in the story of Jairus.

Jairus was one of the rulers of the synagogue.

His daughter was very sick near death.

He came to Jesus and asked Him to come and heal her. Jesus agreed and they went on their way to his house.

On the way a servant came and informed Jairus that his daughter had died and that they should not bother Jesus anymore about it.

Did Jairus have faith to go to Jesus? - Yes

Did he have faith for his daughter to be healed? – Yes

What did Jairus need at this point? – _____

Jesus said, “Do not be afraid; only believe!”

What was Jesus saying? – “Jairus, listen to Me. You have faith. You have come this far. Do not give up now. Just stick with it until the end!”

You need faith and endurance. This enables you to be diligent until the end.

6. Jesus is a finisher!

Hebrews 12:2

Philippians 1:6

What did He say on the cross? – _____

We are all so happy that Jesus did not quit. Jesus wants you to be a finisher too! He wants you to be a person of diligence and to stick with it until the end.

Ecclesiastes 7:8

7. The rewards of diligence

Hebrews 6:12

Hebrews 6 goes on to tell us about Abraham.

Hebrews 6:15

It took a while. There were several years that went by for Abraham.

But he was diligent and believed God year after year.

Does it pay to be diligent? Do you have something to look forward to when you live a diligent life? – Yes!

Abraham received the promise after he _____

Hebrews 10:35

Hebrews 11:6

You need faith for whatever you do.

If you do not pray in faith, it does not please God.

If you do not sow your seed in faith, it does not please God.

Hebrews 11:6

You must believe two things when you seek God.

First, you must believe He is.

Many Christians believe that God is all powerful and all knowing. They believe that He is God Almighty. They believe in Him and believe He is God. But they do not believe the next part. But the next part is also mandatory.

You must believe that:

- _____
- He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

The reward is blessing, goodness, increase, promotion, and your needs being met.

You must believe that when you seek God diligently, He will deliver you, protect you, heal you, fill you with the Spirit, prosper you, give you a good marriage, and gets your kids living right.

Many Christians believe God is, but they do not believe he is a rewarder and gives good things to those who diligently seek Him.

Who is God going to give good rewards to? – _____

- Those who seek Him and keep on seeking Him.
- Those who stand and keep on standing.
- People who believe and keep on believing.

Before we look at the rewards of diligence, let's look at the rewards of laziness.

Proverbs 24:30-34

What are the rewards of laziness in these verses?

- Everything is overgrown.
- _____
- The lazy person becomes poor.

Proverbs 19:15

What is the reward of laziness? – You are going to go without. You are going to want. You are going to lack.

Proverbs 10:4

What is a reward of laziness? – _____

Proverbs 20:4

This is laziness, but you could also call it procrastination. If you are lazy others will have plenty and you will not.

What are the rewards of diligence?

Proverbs 10:4

It says here that diligence makes you rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

This is redemptive substitutionary language.

Just like Jesus became sin so that you could be righteous and he bore your sicknesses so that you can be healed, He became poor so that you could be rich!

1 Timothy 6:17

That is not barely getting along. That is enjoying things!

Proverbs 12:24

Definition of RULE: _____

If you are diligent, you will be promoted and you will come to a place where you are in charge of some things, instead of always being under someone else.

8. Spending your time

A large part of being diligent is using your time wisely. A large part of being lazy is wasting your time.

When you are diligent with what God gave you to do, there will be times you want to go and do other things, but you cannot. You are focused on what God has for you to do.

But this is also true – _____

Ezekiel 16:49

When we have extra, what should we be thinking?

There are a lot of people who never consider helping the poor. They are missing opportunities that God is giving to them.

This verse also talks about abundance of idleness.

What do you do all day when you are doing nothing? Let's follow the progression.

- _____
- If God told you to work, and you decide to stay home and do nothing, you are now out of the will of God. You are not “where” you are supposed to be, even if it is your own house!
- If you are out of the will of God, this is right where the devil wants you. You have actually invited the devil to come into your life. You chose to live outside of God's will. You are inviting the devil to come and tempt you.

9. Being bored

What else happens when you have abundance of idleness? – _____

Did you know that if you are bored, you are outside of God's will for your life?

"I don't have anything to do." – That is a lie!

You know you have something to do – You just do not want to do it.

You open the door to the devil, and it leads to sin.

10. What is the future like for a diligent person?

2 Chronicles 15:7

2 Chronicles 15:7 – The Century Version

Be strong and don't slack off, your work will be rewarded.

2 Chronicles 15:7 – Contemporary English Version

So you must be brave. Don't give up! God will honor you for obeying him.

Proverbs 11:18

Proverbs 28:20

Proverbs 28:20 – The New Living Bible

The trustworthy person will get a rich reward . . .

Proverbs 28:20 – Young's Literal Translation

A steadfast man hath multiplied blessings . . .

Proverbs 28:20 – The Message Bible

Committed and persistent work pays off . . .

It pays to serve God!

Diligence

Lesson 6: Labor of love

1. Introduction

Hebrews 6:10, 11

God is not going to forget your work and your labor.

Notice that verse ten is about ministering to people and helping people.

You are supposed to be diligent until the job is done!

Hebrews 6:12

In the previous lesson we learned about the rewards of diligence.

2. More rewards of diligence.

-

Proverbs 11:27

Favor is like oil to an engine. It is like blood to your body.

You can bang your head, trying to push through life or you can have favor.

Favor opens doors for you.

Who is getting favor? – _____

We could say it this way – “diligently seeking God’s way”. God’s ways are good.

What is favor? – When someone wants to do something for you, and they cannot explain why.

If you will obey God, seek His ways, and diligently follow what He wants you to do, He will cause people to give you favor.

-

Proverbs 10:4

Proverbs 12:24**Proverbs 12:27****Proverbs 12:27 – The Amplified Bible**

The slothful man does not catch his game or roast it once he kills it, but the diligent man gets precious possessions.

Psalm 112:1-3

Why would God want you rich?

- _____
- You could help brothers and sisters in need.
- _____
- You could clothe people.

God's will is for you to have ability in these areas.

It comes through diligence.

3. Ruth

Ruth is an excellent example of someone who was diligent and received rewards.

Here story begins on a sad note. Ruth's husband died.

The head of her family, her mother-in-law's husband, is dead. Her sister-in-law's husband is dead.

In those days (and in the eastern world) a family without any men was a terrible thing. They could very possibly starve to death.

The girls were still with their mother-in-law and she told them, "There is no need to stay with me. There is nothing here for you. Go back to your people so that you can live."

One of the girls kissed her goodbye and left. But Ruth stayed with her.

Ruth 1:15

Isn't that interesting? She went back to her old gods.

There are Christians like this. They get out of the will of God for their lives, and part of the reason is they leave or distance themselves from godly influences.

God put them with people they are supposed to be with, but they make a choice to run with other people.

Proverbs 13:20

The Bible is true! You cannot walk with just anybody and be okay. You need to be around where God put you! You need to be with the people He put you with.

This is true with the church. You need to be in the church where God called you.

You cannot travel from church to church. That is outside of God's will.

When you are in your place, that is where you have the full blessing of God and where you will reach your full potential.

That is why the devil will try to get you out of your place. It is in your place where you are anointed, strong, and able. He wants to separate you from the ministries and people God intestinally joined you to.

There was no money. It did not look like any future was there, but she knew in her heart that she had found the right place.

Ruth 1:16

She is a single woman. She is a widow. She is about to leave the country where her family lives. She has hooked up with a woman who has no money and no future. However, she said, "I am here. Don't ask me to leave."

Ruth 2:2

In other words – "I cannot just sit around waiting for something to happen. I must get out there and work."

She was diligent.

She did not say – "I cannot work THAT KIND of a job. I have skills."? – NO! She was willing to work and do anything.

Ruth 2:3

Ruth went and did something. Then God did something.

God cannot guide an idle Christian.

Ruth did not have a “word” from the Lord to go and work. She just thought it was better to do something.

Ruth 2:5

What did Boaz notice about Ruth? – _____

Ruth 2:6, 7

She worked all day long in the hot sun. She was diligent.

What happened because of her diligence? – _____

Ruth ended up with Boaz and lived like a queen the rest of her life!

Nothing would have happened for Ruth if she had just sat in her house.

What about when God tells you to do something? What should you do when His Spirit speaks to you to do something?

Luke 12:58, 59

Here Jesus tells us to “make every effort”. The King James Version says – *give diligence . . .*

What do we learn from this? – We need to diligently do our part before we can expect God to do His part.

When God tells you to do something, many times it is time sensitive. That means you have a window of opportunity.

Diligence is called for. You must do it now! – _____

Also, when you act immediately on something God told you to do – it is faith!
Waiting around and procrastinating is unbelief.

Being led by the Spirit of God involves Him and you!

Luke 15:8

King James Version

... and seek diligently till she finds it?

The Message Bible

... looking in every nook and cranny until she finds it?

New Living Translation

... Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it?

What happens in the next verse? – She finds it! Her diligence pays off.

What if she had not found it in three hours? – She would keep looking.

What if she had not found it in three weeks? – She would keep looking.

Why? – _____

“Pastor, I have been believing God for my healing for five months. I haven’t seen anything yet. What should I do?” – Keep doing it, until it is done.

4. Elijah

What about Elijah when he prayed for rain? What if only prayed once?

He was diligent and God rewarded him.

5. Paralyzed man and his friends

What about the four men who carried their paralyzed friend and tore a hole in a roof? What if they gave up when they could not get in the house the first time?

God rewarded their diligence.

Hebrews 11:6**6. Labor of love****Hebrews 6:10**

We have already studied this scripture. But look at this phrase – “labor of love”. It is important to understand that the entire Bible is inspired by God.

That is true for every verse and every chapter in the Bible. In Romans chapter sixteen, Paul spends most of the chapter greeting people.

Romans 16:12

That is good for them! They are mentioned in the Bible as people who labored for the Lord.

Romans 16:12

Persis did not just labor. _____

There is a difference. There is a difference in fervency. There is a difference in diligence.

There are different commitment levels among believers. There are different commitment levels to the Lord.

John 14:31

Jesus is saying, "Let's get up and go."

Where is He going? – To the cross. He is going to bear the sins of mankind.

How far did His commitment go? – _____

How far was Jesus willing to go to please the Father? – All the way.

How far was Jesus willing to go for us? – All the way.

He gave everything He had!

He gave it all. He walked it out. He went all the way. He went to Hell for us.

The commitment level of Jesus is unquestioned. He has proven His commitment to the Father and to us.

Even now, the Bible tells us that He lives to make intercession for us. Every moment of every day He is making intercession for us! He is pleading our case before the Father. His blood is speaking our innocence.

You cannot dispute that Jesus is committed.

What is your commitment level?

7. How far are we willing to go for Him?

2 Timothy 3:1, 2

What will men love most? – _____

Their commitment is going to be to themselves.

2 Timothy 3:2-4

All this stems from loving yourself more than anything or anybody else.

Whatever you love the most is what you are going to be committed to the most.

We have many Christians who are highly committed to their own pleasure.

We must watch that this does not get into our lives. The world is constantly moving in the direction of self-gratification.

People are very committed to their own pleasures. They give their time, resources, and fervency.

What will they stay up all night for, travel for, and spend their money on? – Their own pleasures.

People will be lovers of their own pleasure, more than lovers of God.

I must love God more than I love myself. This means I must love and desire what He wants for me more than what I think I want for myself.

It also means that I am committed more to what He wants for me than I am to what I want for myself.

Unfortunately, we have millions of Christians who say they love the Lord and they are trusting Him to take them to heaven when they die, but the extent to their commitment to God is to come to church a couple of times a month.

- _____
- There are some whose commitment level is just a little bit higher. They may come to church more often, but do not ask them to do anything.
- There are others who come most of the time and they will do a little bit. But don't ask them to do more than that.

You cannot interfere with dinnertime or when they play golf. But if they can work it around their schedule and it does not interfere with other stuff, they might do it.

Why are some people like this? – Because that is as high as their commitment level to God goes.

They think that it has to do with giving to the church and to the pastor, but it has to do with how far they are willing to go with God.

That is all they are willing to give to God. Their commitment level only goes that far.

- There are not many of them, but there is a group of Christians who are fully committed.

This elite group of Christians are willing to do for Jesus what He did for them – go all the way!

However, there are many who think they are more committed than they actually are.

They say things like – “Anything Jesus wants me to do; I will do it!”

But they are deceived. Because even with small things they do not stick with it.

John 13:36, 37

When Peter said this, do you think he believed it?

Yes! Peter believed that his commitment level went all the way.

John 13:38

There is a lot of talk in the Body of Christ today.

8. There are going to be “commitment tests” in your life.

- The disciples were tested in the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36-43

Why is this important? – Because this was prophetic for Peter. He could not stay awake. That was the small test. He denied Jesus. That was the big test.

If you cannot pass the small tests, you are kidding yourself if you think you are going to pass the big ones.

- Joshua and Caleb

Numbers 14:1, 2

Joshua and Caleb were not like this. They said, “Let’s go and take the land!”

Why don’t people step out to obey God? – They are living in fear.

Joshua and Caleb saw the giants, just like everyone else. But they did not care!

Why? – Because God said, “Joshua and Caleb, I need you.” They said, “Yes Sir!”

Everyone else is bailing out saying – “It’s too hard. It’s too big. We cannot do it.”

After this, they had to put up with that complaining bunch of people for forty years while they wandered around in the wilderness.

Numbers 12:23, 24

How far did Caleb's commitment level go? – _____

Because his commitment went all the way, God took him all the way!

Numbers 12:24

Deuteronomy 1:36

- Elisha

Elijah told Elisha to leave him alone several times, but Elisha would not leave his side.

2 Kings 2:1, 2

2 Kings 2:4

2 Kings 2:6

2 Kings 2:9

Did his diligence pay off? – He received a double portion!