

## Gleanings from the Book of Proverbs: A Productive Life

Scripture Reading: Psalm 1:1-6

This “wisdom psalm” shows the choice and the destiny of each individual. We should not love and trust the world of the ungodly and its influences. Rather we should love and trust God and His word. We should walk in His counsels. Then we shall have prosperity in this life (Psalm 1:3) and in the life to come (Psalm 1:4-6). How perfect, that Psalm one is the first of the psalms! It establishes our focus and priority (Deuteronomy 6:4-6). Psalm one is paralleled by I John 2:15-17.

Psalm 1:3 shows the stability and prosperity of those who delight in God’s word and constantly meditate upon it.

- A tree planted
- Lots of water (irrigation canals)
- Fruitful
- Green and flourishing (does not wither / fade)
- Prosperous in all ways

As this psalm describes a prosperous / productive tree, so we will be prosperous / productive when we love God and prioritize our life according to the Scriptures. “Prosperous / Productive” does not imply that people become rich and powerful by the world’s standards. A productive life must be seen from God’s perspective (Matthew 5:1-16; Galatians 5:19-26; Luke 12:15-48; Revelation 2:8-11). As we consider the Book of Proverbs for this study, we must note that productivity is associated with character. There are so many references, we can’t study them all at one time. So let’s make note of the character references and create lists which can be studied and given to meditation, over a long period of time. [Note: The wording of the KJV is only being used.]

### **The Sluggard and the Slothful**

These two English words have roots that refer to two different creatures: A slug and a sloth. A slug is a worm-like creature that creeps around, in and under the dirt. They are like a snail without the shell, maybe having some crude form of shell. The Hebrew word for “sluggard” is sometimes also translated “Slothful.” The English word for “*Slothful*” directs our attention to the sloth. This is a slow-moving tree-dwelling mammal that has a very slow metabolism. They not only move extremely slowly. They sleep about 15-20 hours a day. One of the Hebrew words, translated “*slothful*,” means “*slack, negligent, idle, and deceitful*.” So, the Book of Proverbs is certainly giving us a simple but clear view of this kind of character, of which God disapproves.

## **Sluggard**

Proverbs 6:6-11  
Proverbs 10:26  
Proverbs 13:4

Proverbs 20:4  
Proverbs 26:16

## **Slothful**

Proverbs 12:24,27  
Proverbs 15:19  
Proverbs 18:9  
Proverbs 19:15,24

Proverbs 21:25  
Proverbs 22:13 (cp. Ecclesiastes 11:4)  
Proverbs 24:30-34  
Proverbs 26:13-15

## **The Diligent and the Righteous**

The root word of “righteous” is “right.” The book of Proverbs reveals what right behavior looks like. Diligence, discipline, faithfulness, and perseverance are qualities that are associated with those who are righteous. These qualities do not give you righteousness with God. That can’t be earned. Only Christ can give us His righteousness (Romans 3:10-26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:7-9; Titus 3:5). Some people, who are not followers of Christ, can have these qualities, at least to some degree. Nevertheless, righteous behavior should be the evidence of those who are right with God through Jesus Christ our Lord (II Corinthians 5:14-17; Galatians 5:13-26; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14; 3:8 | John 2:1-6 cp. Psalm 15:1-2; 24:3-6).

### **Diligent Behavior**

Proverbs 10:4-5  
Proverbs 11:27  
Proverbs 12:24,27  
Proverbs 13:4

Proverbs 21:5  
(*hasty / make haste* cp. Proverbs 28:19-20,22)  
Proverbs 22:29  
Proverbs 27:23-27

### **Righteous Behavior**

Proverbs 10:16,21  
Proverbs 11:18,30  
Proverbs 12:10-14 (*stewardship / kindness / honesty*)

Proverbs 12:12; 21:26  
(*Greed / Covetousness* cp. Proverbs 1:10-19)  
Proverbs 15:19

**The value and blessing of Labor** – Before sin came into the world, work was a blessed privilege. It’s harder now (Genesis 1:26 – 3:24). Nevertheless, work is still a blessing. Solomon asked and answered the question, “*What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?*” (Ecclesiastes 1:3; 3:12-13; 5:12; 12:13-14). Let us close with a few statements from the Book of Proverbs on good, honest labor.

See Proverbs 10:16; 13:11; 14:23; 16:26; 21:25; 23:4-5.