

Message 3 (9/15 Saturday Morning Section-2)

CHARACTER

Lesson Five

DILIGENT--NOT SLOTHFUL

Burden to Impart:

All those who love the Lord should exercise themselves to build up a diligent character, for diligence is the most important characteristic of a servant of the Lord. Because laziness issues from self-love and self-pity we should strongly stand against any laziness in our character or work. Laziness robs our time and leads us to poverty and begging (Prov. 20:4). We should learn from the bees and the ants in God's creation who work diligently each day and even store up something for tomorrow (Prov. 6:6-11) or to give to someone who is in need (Eph. 4:28). Diligence should be the characteristic that describes our way of life and work.

Memory Verse: "And we sent with them our brother, whom we have proved to be diligent in many things, many times...." (2 Corinthians 8:22).

Facts to Teach:

1. The most important characteristic of a servant of the Lord is diligence. Diligence is the word that describes the character of his service and work. Diligence includes earnestness, thoroughness, perseverance, and carefulness. When one does a task with his heart and interest in it, he will do it with diligence. In order to be useful to the Master every servant of the Lord must be diligent.
2. Laziness is the opposite of diligence. Laziness is condemned in the Bible. Laziness results from self-love and self-pity. The Bible puts laziness together with gluttony and sleep (Tit. 1:12) because this is all that the lazy person wants to do.
3. The lazy person finds any excuse not to work. "The sluggard (lazy person) will not plow by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Prov. 20:4). Because of his desire to sleep and rest instead of work, the lazy person is brought to poverty (Prov. 6:10-11). This is often the reason people steal things, because they are too lazy to work for them. This is why the Apostle Paul said, "Let him who steals steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his own hands that which is good, that he may have to share with him who has need" (Eph. 4:28).
4. Two examples of a diligent worker in the insect kingdom are the ant and the bee. Both the ant and the bee are hard workers. They are always going, moving, and working. They do not just work enough to feed themselves for each day. They work hard enough to get a little extra food. Then they carefully store it up in their home so that they can have something to eat when the cold winter comes. The Bible tells the lazy person to go to learn from the diligent ant (Prov. 6:6-11).
5. The diligent person will gradually prosper. "In all labor there is profit" (Prov. 14:23). He will prosper in wealth, in knowledge and wisdom, and in spiritual riches as well. Diligence builds up a reserve.
6. The woman who lost one of her silver coins searched diligently until she found it (Luke 15:8). If she only looked for the lost coin in a lazy way she never would have found it. But she lit a lamp, swept, and looked diligently until she found it.
7. Joseph diligently stored up the extra grain in Egypt during the seven years of plenty. Then when the seven terrible years of drought and famine followed, none of the people in Egypt died of hunger, neither did Joseph or his family, the Jews. The diligence of the younger brother saved his family's lives.

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Lesson Five (continued)

Ideas:

1. Have a treasure hunt.
2. Slothbusters--Have each child do at least one thing during the week without being told.
This should be something he does not already do without being reminded.