

WISDOM IN THE WORK-PLACE

*In 1989 Mikheil Gorbachev lifted the oppression from Christians in the Soviet Union
Gorbachev reportedly told Russian leaders "Why do we oppress the very people who do not absent themselves from work? Who are not alcoholics and who give us a productive days work. We need their strength"*

After decades of repression, the light of the gospel shone in the work-place, and resulted in massive change.

Some think of work as a curse God has placed on humans due to the fall, but in Genesis the Lord gave mankind work to do before the fall - Gen 2:15 *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."*

In Genesis 3 the curse changed the nature of mankind's work – bringing sweat & frustration

WORK is a gift from God

1. Working with INDUSTRY (*being conscientious*)

In Proverbs – diligence is required

In contrast - the folly of indolence:

Prov. 20:4 *"A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.*

- **The results of being lazy**

I. Laziness causes problems in the work-place

Prov. 18:9

"One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys"

Laziness (getting an order out) - lose a good customer etc.

Not bothered by mistakes!!

The **CEO of a major organisation**: *"In choosing staff, attitudes are more important than skills. Skills can be taught but attitudes are not easily changed"*

Linked to IRRESPONSIBILITY

Prov. 10:5 *"He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son,
but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son"*

II. Laziness is an irritation to the employer

Prov. 10:26 *"As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so is a sluggard to those who send him"*

III. Laziness results in unrealized Expectations

Prov. 13:4 *"The sluggard craves and gets nothing,
but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied"*

Our country has become great on the back of **hard yakka**

One **older** businessman ... significant **change** in employees...

Prov 21:25-26 *"The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing"*

(witness – joyful willingness to "go the extra mile")

IV. Laziness brings unexpected poverty

Prov. 24:34 *“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest - and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man”*

Solomon's advice:

Prov. 6:6

"Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!"

On a missions trip to Ecuador – contrast: sloth / ant

(VIDEO)

The ant - does not need to be **goaded**, or organised by an **overseer**, is **disciplined** and displays great **foresight** in planning for the future.

... sad commentary ... need insects to teach us wisdom!

- **The rewards for being diligent**

In contrast:

The diligent worker will receive favour and promotion

Prov. 12:24 *"Diligent hands will **rule**, but laziness ends in slave labour"*

Prov. 17:2 *"A wise **servant** will rule over a disgraceful **son**, and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers"*

Prov. 22:29

"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings"

The diligent worker is likely to become wealthy

Prov. 10:4 *"Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth"*

Prov. 21:5 *"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty"*

Col.3:22-24, *"Slaves, obey your earthly masters in **everything**; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with **sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord**.*

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving ..."

2. Working with INTEGRITY (being consistent)

Prov. 11:3 *"The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity"*

- **Employees**

Prov. 21:3 *"To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice"*

Employees are **paid for their time** – **stealing** from your employer

Attitude of being **disgruntled + critical + manager bashing!**

Phil.2:14-15 *"Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you **shine like stars in the universe**"*

1 Thess.4:11-12 *"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may **win the respect** of outsiders"*

MARKED BY:

- **Faithfulness**

Prov. 20:6 *"Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a **faithful** man who can find?"*

Prov. 25:13 *“Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a **trustworthy** messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters”*

➤ **Honesty**

Prov. 16:13 *“Kings take pleasure in **honest** lips; they value a man who speaks the truth”*

Prov. 19:22 *“What a man desires is unfailing love (**loyalty**); better to be poor than a liar”*

➤ **Servanthood** (respect for management/boss)

Prov. 27:18 *“He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who looks after his master will be honored”*

(not sucking up to the boss!)

Phil. 2:4 *“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others”*

1 Pet 2:18 *“... submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh”*

➤ **Peace**

Prov. 28: 25 *“A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper”*

▪ **Employers and Business People**

I. **Integrity above wealth**

Prov 22:1 *“A **good name** is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”*

Prov. 10:2 *“Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death”*

➤ **Honest**

Prov 11:1 *“The LORD abhors **dishonest scales**, but accurate weights are his delight.”*

➤ **Fair**

Prov 16:8 *“Better a little (**profit!**) with righteousness than much gain with **injustice.**”*

Prov 29:14 *“If a king judges the poor with **fairness**, his throne will always be secure.”*

Col. 4:1 *“Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven”*