

Increasing Your Productivity

Proverbs 6:6-8

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

The Ways of the Ant

For financial success, you need to protect your resources, and you also need to increase your productivity. *Proverbs* uses the ant and the sluggard to illustrate the two opposite sides of productivity. Both provide insights and definite principles about career building.

Ants are a very good illustration because they are abundant in the world. Their social behavior is some of the most complex among insects. The way they work together and individually provides an example of how to increase productivity.

Ants work without the need of an overseer.

...which having no guide, overseer or ruler... (v.7)



Among ants, there is no boss that oversees the entire colony. The individual workers do not receive broadcasted instructions on what to do.

Yet, they build and maintain their nests, excavate tunnels and chambers, defend their territories, and gather food.

To be most successful in a career, you must learn to be a self-starter. You should develop the skill of working without the need of someone telling you what to do. Your workplace may require that you have a supervisor, but you are able to work without one.

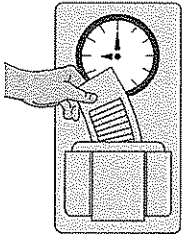
There are some people who **need** to have an overseer to make sure they are doing the right

1. Go to the ant, thou _____; consider her ways, and be _____:
2. Which having _____ guide, _____, or ruler,
3. Provideth her meat in the _____, and gathereth her food in the _____.

For financial success you need to:

4. Protect your _____.
5. Increase your _____.

work and that they are keeping at it. The time clock is a very important tool for these people. They "clock in" at the beginning of the workday, and at the end of the workday they "clock out." There is nothing wrong with this system, but if you want to advance in your career, you must demonstrate the fact that you have a greater motivation for work than simply putting in your time or receiving the approval of your supervisor.



As you achieve an ever-higher level of productivity, opportunities for advancement will come your way. Notice the following three types of workers:

Idle workers – The overseer has to find them and keep them "on task."

Ready workers – They are willing to work, but the boss has to point out what needs to be done and show them how to do it.

Independent workers – They know what work needs to be done and they do it. The independent worker does not wait for the boss to give him a task; he looks for it. This type of person does not wait for a raise. He simply works at increasing his net worth. He knows that the more a person is worth the more he will get paid.

6. *Proverbs* uses the ant and the sluggard to illustrate the two _____ sides of productivity.
7. Among ants, there is no _____ that oversees the entire colony.
8. To be most _____ in a career, you must learn to be a _____-starter.
9. You should develop the skill of working _____ the need of someone telling you what to do.
10. There are some people who need to have an _____ to make sure they are doing the right work and that they are keeping at it.
11. As you achieve an ever-higher level of productivity, opportunities for _____ will come your way.

Three types of workers:

12. Idle workers – The overseer has to _____ them and keep them "on task."
13. Ready workers – They are willing to work, but the _____ has to point out what needs to be done and _____ them how to do it.
14. Independent workers – They _____ what work needs to be done and they _____ it.

Ants work for the future.

...provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. (Prov. 6:8)

The ant does not dwell on the past but rather stays focused on the future. A wise counselor once told me, "Every time you come to a major decision in life, ask yourself:

- ▶ How will this decision affect me in one year?
- ▶ How will this decision affect me in ten years?
- ▶ How will this decision affect me in eternity?"

Many people tend to live in reaction to their past. They dwell on failures and disappointments. They limit their future because of their past.

Like the ant, we should stay focused on the future and make preparations. By changing our present actions and attitudes, we will greatly affect our future accomplishments.

We are not to focus on who we used to be. Instead, we are to be attentive to how Christ is changing us. *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (I Peter 2:10)*

1. An ant does not dwell on the past but rather stays focused on the _____.

Questions you should ask when making a major decision in life:

2. How will this decision affect me in _____?
3. How will this decision affect me in _____?
4. How will this decision affect me in _____?"
5. By changing our present _____ and _____, we will greatly affect our future accomplishments.



Warnings to the Lazy

Proverbs 6:9-11

- 9) How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
- 10) Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:
- 11) So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

A slothful person is not totally worthless. He can serve as a good illustration of bad character! He stands in complete contrast to the industrious qualities of the ant. This passage gives three warnings to the sluggard (lazy).

Don't make laziness your main pleasure.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

"This was a good day today!" When our children heard us say this they always knew we meant that it was a good day of work. This is one of the ways we emphasized the pleasure of work in front of each other and our children.

When you ask some people, "What are you doing these days?" they like to reply, "As little as possible!" For years I have heard people say, "I work 50 weeks of the year so I can enjoy my two-week vacation."



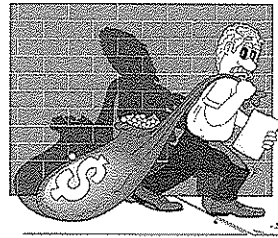
Beware of characterizing your work week between "Monday blues" and "TGIF" (Thank God, it's Friday). To increase productivity, you first need to eliminate the praise of laziness.

Poverty comes quickly to the lazy.

So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth...

One that travelleth is an expression describing a "highwayman" – one who robs people on a public road. In this case, the robber is poverty. This is again a picture of someone losing his resources.

It is like a man walking down the road with a bag full of gold coins. The bag is precious to him because it represents his entire life savings.



Yet, as he walks along, he thinks nothing of allowing a coin to drop on the ground every 50 feet. Each time he thinks nothing of it because, after all, "It's only one coin."

At the end of the trip, he is totally broke, and he doesn't know why. Has he been robbed? No, but he might as well have been! He is a victim of his own doing, and poverty quickly overtook him, one coin at a time.

Poverty creeps up on the slothful and they don't see it coming. They think that somehow everything is going to work out. Suddenly they are caught and they can't figure out why they are so unfortunate. They think that successful people are just "lucky," and they feel "robbed."

Poverty is devastating to the lazy.

...and thy want as an armed man.

Just because a person is unproductive, it doesn't mean that he lacks the desire for nice things. No one has greater wants than the lazy person. Inactivity allows plenty of time to dream about what it would be like to be rich. In our day, television has enhanced this dream in full color!

Add the availability of "easy credit" to this desire for possessions, and we have a formula for financial ruin. To make things worse, once the person becomes depressed about his financial plight, his desire for material things increases.

This situation is pictured for us in the words of Proverbs 21:25,26: *The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor. He coveteth greedily all the day long...*



It is like a person sitting in his easy chair when suddenly an armed guard knocks down the door. Without saying a word, this huge, muscular guard grabs the man and imprisons him. He is now trapped and he doesn't know why.

There is no trial and no chance to appeal. He is imprisoned by his own lack of productivity. The first part of Proverbs 6 ends with this sad picture.



These are foundational principles that everyone should know. Simply stated, you are to protect your resources and increase your productivity. Doing these two things helps you lay a solid financial foundation in life.

The principles are simple, yet a large portion of the working population ignores them. If you apply them to your career, you will find that they put you into a coveted minority of people who experience success and contentment in their work.

1. How long wilt thou sleep, O _____? when wilt thou _____ out of thy sleep?
2. Yet a little sleep, a little _____, a little folding of the hands to _____:
3. So shall thy _____ come as one that travelleth, and thy _____ as an armed man.
4. A _____ person is not totally worthless; he can serve as a good illustration of bad character!
5. He stands in complete _____ to the industrious qualities of the ant.
6. To increase productivity, you first need to eliminate the praise of _____.
7. _____ creeps up on the slothful and they don't see it coming.
8. No one has greater _____ than the lazy person.
9. Inactivity allows plenty of time to _____ about what it would be like to be _____.
10. *The desire of the _____ killeth him; for his hands refuse to _____.*
He coveteth _____ all the day long. (Proverbs 21:25,26)

Three Warnings to the Lazy:

11. Don't make laziness your _____
12. Poverty comes _____ to the lazy.
13. Poverty is _____ to the lazy.



Proverbs 6 identifies two career destroyers – divisiveness and immorality. Both can have noble excuses. A person who creates discord can say that he is just telling the truth, while the adulterous person says that he acted out of “love.” Yet, both of these actions involve one person causing harm to another. God says that anyone guilty of either

divisiveness or immorality will have to suffer the consequences of harming another human being.

Remember this truth about sin:

Sin always takes you farther than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay and costs you more than you want to pay.

1. A person who commits adultery is destroying _____ life and helping to _____ someone else’s.
2. He will _____ the _____ of society and destroy his career.
3. King David’s oldest son, _____, raped his half sister, _____.
4. Immediately his “love” turned to _____.
5. The _____ for Amnon’s small amount of pleasure was extremely _____.
6. The story of Amnon illustrates how immorality can bring an untimely end to a _____ and also to a person’s _____.
7. God says that anyone guilty of either divisiveness or immorality will have to _____ the _____ of harming another human being.

The truth about sin:

8. Sin always takes you _____ than you want to _____.
9. It keeps you _____ than you want to _____.
10. It _____ you _____ than you want to _____.

Four reasons why immorality is a bad business decision:

11. There are always _____ to immorality.
12. The consequences are far greater than the _____.
13. The pleasures are _____, but the consequences are _____.
14. Consequences often include _____ harm.



Quiz IV

1. Immorality _____ away an individual’s enthusiasm and achievement.
2. When business people get caught in this trap, they are turning their backs on their full _____.
3. You should never be _____ to get out from under your authority.
4. No one should ever think that they are beyond yielding to _____.
5. A *strange woman* uses a man’s _____ to her own advantage; she feeds his pride with _____.
6. Immorality begins like a small _____.
7. We are told in Scripture not to _____ one person with another; we should compare a person only with his own _____.

Three proactive safeguards to help you stay morally pure:

8. Always remain _____.
9. Be on constant _____.
10. Live by well-defined _____ of conduct.

Three warnings to protect against immorality:

11. Beware of _____.
12. Beware of an uncontrolled _____ life.
13. Beware of “_____ with _____.”

The truth about sin:

14. Sin always takes you _____ than you want to go.
15. It keeps you _____ than you want to stay.
16. It _____ you _____ than you want to pay.

Four reasons why immorality is a bad business decision:

17. There are always _____ to immorality.
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19. The pleasures are _____, but the consequences are _____.
20. Consequences often include _____ harm.

(5 points each question)

SCORE _____

