

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“In diligence, be not slothful ...”

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Paul writes these words along with the exhortation to be “fervent in spirit”, characterizing what the Christian’s service to the Lord should be. God does not want us to serve Him void of enthusiastic fervor. Lackluster service is demeaning to the excellence that our Lord deserves. Being slothful in our service to the Lord can not be tolerated. It only leads to ruin.

The Book of Proverbs provides us with a descriptive profile of the slothful person. The lazy person can come up with all kinds of reasons for not going out to work. He says, “There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets” (Proverbs 22:13). His fears have already pronounced a death sentence. Forget the possibility that the lion might have already had breakfast this morning, this man will not go to work. Again, “As the door turneth upon its hinges, so doth the sluggard upon his bed” (Proverbs 26:14). The slothful person does a lot of turning, but never progresses to achieving important goals.

Surely we can see that the slothful person is busy: busy in making excuses and working hard

to avoid doing the work that is needed to be pleasing before God.

By contrast, the diligent is motivated by a sense of need. “The appetite of the laboring man laboreth for him; For his mouth urgeth him thereto” (Proverbs 16:26). He not only works, he works wisely. “Prepare thy work without, and make it ready for thee in the field; and afterward build thy house” (Proverbs 24:17). Before he begins setting up house, he makes sure he has the goods to sustain a household. Unlike he slothful fellow, the diligent works responsibly until he enjoys the intended use of his possessions: “The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, but the precious substance of men is to the diligent (Proverbs 12:27).

Judge your spiritual service. Do you continually find excuses for not growing in your knowledge of God’s word, and teaching the lost? Do you find new ways to excuse yourself from Bible study periods and worship services? Or, are you motivated by love for God and the lost to set aside those “lion in the street” excuses and fervently serve, learn, teach and grow?

Are you among those who only talks about serving the Lord, but never hits the floor working? Do you try to construct your spiritual house upon the quick fix emotional highs, or do you work wisely by first preparing a field of deep rooted faith in a “thus saith the Lord” upon which you can depend for true sustenance?

Sometimes we wonder, why is it that more productive work is not being done in furthering the kingdom of God? The Lord of harvest has always needed more reapers to go to work in his vineyard (Matthew 9:37). So, it might be we never have enough workers who actually roll up their sleeves and get the work done. We might quickly blame the lack of accomplishment upon people not being busy. But let us remember that even the slothful are “busy”. They are just “busy” in areas that are not productive for their well-being or for furthering God’s word.

Let us be diligent and fervent in working for the lord, not be “busy” in inventing various ways for not working for Him.