

# Abide in Me

**John 15:4**  
*Bible studies for disciples  
who make disciples*



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*Get Wisdom*  
**The Slack and Sloth of the Sluggard**  
Selected Proverbs

Few things may seem more irrelevant to hard-working Americans than the topic of sloth. In Proverbs the sluggard is guilty of sloth. However, sloth refers to more than just laziness. The sluggard is without feeling. Ultimately, the problem with sluggards is that they are prone to spiritual apathy and inactivity.

**READ THE FOLLOWING PROVERBS AND PRACTICE YOUR OBSERVATION SKILLS**

**Proverbs 6:6-11**

<sup>6</sup> Go to the ant, O sluggard;  
consider her ways, and be wise.  
<sup>7</sup> Without having any chief,  
officer, or ruler,  
<sup>8</sup> she prepares her bread in summer  
and gathers her food in harvest.  
<sup>9</sup> How long will you lie there, O sluggard?  
When will you arise from your sleep?  
<sup>10</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to rest,  
<sup>11</sup> and poverty will come upon you like a robber,  
and want like an armed man.

- Circle *ant* in verse 6.
- Place a box around *O Sluggard* in verses 6 and 9.
- Underline *robber* and *armed man* in verse 11.

**Proverbs 10:26**

<sup>26</sup> Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,  
so is the sluggard to those who send him.

- Place a box around *sluggard*.
- Double underline *like* indicating a comparison.

### Proverbs 18:9

<sup>9</sup> Whoever is slack in his work  
is a brother to him who destroys.

- Circle the word *slack*.
- Underline the word *destroys*.

### Proverbs 19:24

<sup>24</sup> The sluggard buries his hand in the dish  
and will not even bring it back to his mouth.

- Circle the word *sluggard*.

### Proverbs 24:30-34

<sup>30</sup> I passed by the field of a sluggard,  
by the vineyard of a man lacking sense,  
<sup>31</sup> and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns;  
the ground was covered with nettles,  
and its stone wall was broken down.  
<sup>32</sup> Then I saw and considered it;  
I looked and received instruction.  
<sup>33</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to rest,  
<sup>34</sup> and poverty will come upon you like a robber,  
and want like an armed man.

- Circle *sluggard* in verse 30.
- Underline *robber* and *armed man* in verse 34.

## EXPLORING THROUGH DISCUSSION

1. The sluggard is mentioned 14 times in Proverbs. Using the passages above, create a short profile of the sluggard.
2. Read Proverbs 6:6-11. In what ways is the ant a model for human activity?
3. Sluggards cannot do in the summer what ants can do. What is that? Sluggards cannot do in summer what ants do come winter. Why is that?

4. The passages above serve as strong warnings to the sluggard. Why are the corresponding warnings so strong?
  
5. What is the reason for the three-fold repetition of *little* in Proverbs 6:10 and 24:33?
  
6. What is your typical picture of laziness?
  
7. What are other ways that we tend towards sloth that we would never think of as being lazy?
  
8. In what ways can we be convicted of sloth in our spiritual lives?
  
9. Read Matthew 25:14-30. What did the servant who was given only one talent fail to do and why was his judgment so harsh?
  
10. How does the gospel free us from being either a sluggard or a workaholic?
  
11. How should Christians view our work and labor so that we are delivered from a mere materialistic point of view or driven by more than monetary gain?
  
12. What is the central message you can draw from this study and how can you personally apply it to your own life?

