

SLUGS DON'T MAKE IT TO HEAVEN

TEXT: (Proverbs 26:13-16, NIV)

¹³ A sluggard says, "There's a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!" ¹⁴ As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed. ¹⁵ A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth. ¹⁶ A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven people who answer discreetly.

INTRODUCTION

1. "Don't you remember the rule we had when we lived with you? 'If you don't work, you don't eat.' And now we're getting reports that a bunch of lazy good-for-nothings are taking advantage of you. This must not be tolerated. We command them to get to work immediately—no excuses, no arguments—and earn their own keep. Friends, don't slack off in doing your duty.

If anyone refuses to obey our clear command written in this letter, don't let him get by with it. Point out such a person and refuse to subsidize his freeloading. Maybe then he'll think twice. But don't treat him as an enemy. Sit him down and talk about the problem as someone who cares" (II Thessalonians 3:10-15, MSG).

2. "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*" (I Thessalonians 5:14, KJV).
3. "No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds" (I Timothy 5:9-10, NIV).

I. THE GOOD SOLDIER

1. "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 2:3, NIV).
2. "A sluggard says, 'There's a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!' As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed" (Proverbs 26:13-14, NIV).

A. Endures Hardness

1. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9, NIV).

B. Avoids the Snares of This Life

1. "No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer" (II Timothy 2:4, NIV).
2. "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2, NIV).
3. "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30, NIV).
4. "Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us" (II Timothy 2:11-12, NIV).

II. THE UNASHAMED WORKMAN

1. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15, NIV).

2. "A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven people who answer discreetly" (Proverbs 26:16, NIV).
3. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid" (Romans 6:1-2, KJV).

A. Present Yourself to God as One Approved

1. "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:11-13, NIV).
2. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship" (Romans 12:1, NIV).
3. "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2, NIV).

B. Correctly Handle the Word of Truth

1. "A workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15, NIV).
2. "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (II Timothy 4:2-4, NIV).
3. "A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth" (Proverbs 26:15, NIV).
4. "You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong" (Hebrews 5:12-14, NLT).

III. THE VESSEL OF HONOR

1. "In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work" (II Timothy 2:20-21, NIV).

A. Purged of Impurities

1. "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful" (II Timothy 2:22-24, NIV).
2. "Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly" (II Timothy 2:16, NIV).

3. This reminds me of how Lot nearly lost everything by hanging out in the the wrong place.
4. “[God] rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)” (II Peter 2:7-8, NIV).
5. “Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth” (II Timothy 2:16-18, NIV).
6. “How the gold has lost its luster, the fine gold become dull!” (Lamentations 4:1, NIV).

B. Useful to the Master

1. “In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” (II Timothy 2:20-21, NIV).

CONCLUSION:

1. “The servant given one [talent] said, ‘Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent’” (Matthew 25:24-25, MSG).
2. “But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! [You slug] You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’” (Matthew 25:26-30, ESV).