

Laziness
Proverbs 6:9-11
Charlie Brackett

Proverbs 6:9-11 has an important lesson for us:

How long will you lie down, O sluggard?
When will you arise from your sleep?
"A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest" -
And your poverty will come in like a vagabond,
And your need like an armed man.

Solomon raises here a provocative question to one who is reclining in sleep. "When will rest be over? When will you arise?" He is not asking the question of one who is resting from his labors. He speaks to the sluggard, an habitually lazy person. It is not wrong to rest from labor, in fact, it is beneficial, even necessary. Our Lord Himself did from time to time. But, there are those who sleep when others work. They have not labored and neither need nor deserve the rest. These are the ones that Solomon addresses.

Verse 10 provides the answer to his question, the kind of answer that might be expected from a lazy person. "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest." Can't you hear the response, sleepily made. "Just a little more! Don't awake me now." The kind of sleep he pleads for is habitual in nature. The body has long since been satisfied with what it needs to function normally. It doesn't need rest, yet calls for more out of habit only.

Rather than yielding to the plea, Solomon points to the folly of such rest. Two terrible consequences will come to the sluggard. Poverty and need, or as the King James version styles it, poverty and want. Poverty will come in with the swiftness and inevitability of a vagabond, that is, like an irresponsible traveler with no home to call his own. He will come quickly and he will come certainly. And need will come with poverty. Like an armed robber who cannot be resisted, need will descend upon the man who sleeps his life away instead of making due provision to satisfy his needs.

The apostle Paul said to those in the church at Thessalonica, "...attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need." (1 Thessalonians 4:11,12) and to those in Ephesus, "Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need." (Ephesians 4:28)

May the Lord help us to always be willing to arise from rest and to be diligent in doing that which is productive and good.