Proverbs: Work

***Introduction***

*Remember Creation/Fall*

Genesis 1:28 “God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."”

Genesis 3:17 “To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, `You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.”

*Remember Jesus*

Romans 5:6 “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

1. **Work & Laziness**

We have been created and redeemed to bear fruit; to be productive; to work (though note: ‘work’ does not mean ‘paid employment’- though, of course, it includes this).

6:6 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! 7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, 8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. 9 How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- 11 and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

22:13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!" or, "I will be murdered in the streets!"

David Atkinson: “Laziness is an abandonment of responsibility – a failure, often, of love.”

If Jesus had given in to laziness; there would be no salvation.

1. **Work & Wealth**

Question: Are riches my only motivation in work? Am I pursuing riches so that my decisions about work serve that end?

Why do people want to get rich? Security, reputation, comfort/pleasure. For example:

18:11 The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it an unscalable wall.

However, remember:

23:4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. 5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

22 The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.

How should we think about wealth? Great saying of Agur:

30:7 "Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: 8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. 9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, `Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.

1. **Work & Motivation**
2. ***We are created to live in this world!***

14:23 All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

12:11 He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

Practise daily faithfulness

1. ***Consider your vision***

16:26 The labourer's appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.

1. ***Prioritise effectively***

24:27 Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.

1. ***Remember what matters most***

27:23 Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; 24 for riches do not endure for ever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.

1. ***Use your wealth to be generous***

22:9 A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.