

# San Juan church of Christ

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## What Does God's Word Say About... Diligent Workers

XNU22R2454

Throughout the Bible, diligent workers are commended for their labors. Jacob was a outstanding herdsman. In Gen. 31:38-39, Jacob reviews his work with Laban. Not only had Laban's herds increased under Jacob's care, Jacob was able to claim that there were no miscarriages in the twenty years that he worked for Laban. Laban did not suffer normal losses to his flocks and Jacob replaced all of the flock that was taken by wild animals from his own funds.

There are other diligent workers mentioned in the Scriptures. Potiphar was able to trust his slave Joseph with everything he owned (Gen. 39:6). Ruth worked all day to pick up grain that the workers dropped in the field, and then threshed the grain after nightfall so that she and her mother-in-law could eat (Ruth 2:17). Jehoiada's workmen were so faithful in their duties that no one had to audit them (2 Kings 12:9-15). Daniel's enemies in the government could not find anything to charge against Daniel before the King (Daniel 6:4).

Workers who are like these people are very rare in our world. Perhaps we are not training our young people (and old as well) to be diligent in their labors. Our society glorifies getting by with minimal effort. Production is accepted as long as it is good enough. Solomon urges us to learn from the ant. "Observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest" (Proverbs 6: 6-8). Solomon also warns us "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man" (Proverbs 6:10-11).

Mankind has always labored from the beginning when Adam and Eve were given the charge to care for the garden in Eden, which God had planted (Gen. 2:15). Therefore, men were designed by God from the beginning to work.

As Paul preached the gospel, he did not simply talk about what people should do, he actually lived the life God expected from Christians (1 Thess. 2:8-12). Paul, as he preached, worked with his own hands (1 Cor. 4:11-12). He taught the good news during the day and made tents at night (Acts 18:2-3).

Too many laborers are lazy and negligent in their duties because of poor work habits. When we don't complete the assigned task or give our jobs our best effort, then we cannot expect to profit (Proverbs 10:4). So many people want more than they have, but they are not willing to put forth the effort in order to prosper (Proverbs 13:4). Laziness not only harms the slothful worker, but is destructive to the business that is dependent on them (Proverbs 18:9).

According to Scripture, a Christian must work and not depend on others [i.e. government] to supply their needs. Paul wrote "For we heard that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all but acting like busybodies" (2 Thess. 3:11). Solomon also said not to be lazy in the upkeep of your own property which is as destructive as being negligent with the property of others (Proverbs 24:30-34). Paul said "if anyone does not provide for his own [relatives], and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).

Just as the ant spoken of earlier, we must also work with a vision of what might come next. There are going to be times when everything will seem to come in abundance and profits come easily (Phil. 4:12). A Christian knows that wealth is fickle at best. Bad times can and do come so we need to prepare for hard times while the times are good (Proverbs 10:5). Paul instructed, "He who steals must steal no longer [i.e. from government programs] but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need" (Eph. 4:28). "And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, ...so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need" (1 Thess. 4:11-12). This is the command that we have from God's word.

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