INTRODUCTION

Being diligent in a new task may be easy. However, as the project continues, you may grow hot and tired, or think of something else you would rather do. You may become discouraged, consider quitting, and wonder if it really matters if you finish. Yes, it does matter that you complete what God has assigned to you and He will give you the energy to do so. Ask God for diligence and choose to be faithful even in the small, daily jobs such as picking up toys, learning to read, or emptying the trash. Just as God enables you to be diligent in doing the small tasks, He will be faithful to provide the energy to complete the bigger jobs as well.

DILIGENCE

Visualizing each task as a special assignment from the Lord and using all my energies to accomplish it
What is Diligence?

Read aloud, study, and discuss what diligence means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of diligence is visualizing each task as a special assignment from the Lord and using all my energies to accomplish it. Understanding the importance of the tasks God has given to us motivates us to work as hard as we can. When “special assignments” are something we really want to do, we somehow find the time and energy to do them. We ignore distractions as we give the task our wholehearted attention. We rise in the morning ready to accomplish the job before us, and we are eager to talk to others about the goal. Does that sound like a motivated person? Yes! All our energies are funneled into the assigned task—this persevering, focused drive is diligence.

The opposite of diligence is slothfulness. A slothful person may not see the task as a “special assignment” from God or understand why the job is important, or he may simply not care! Without a vision for the purpose or importance of the task, he lacks the desire and energy to accomplish his assignment. A lazy person may not understand how chores help his family to function effectively. A slothful student may not comprehend how working diligently on schoolwork now will yield valuable learning and wisdom to lead a productive life. His focus is on himself and doing as little as possible. He is apathetic about achieving anything for himself, for others, or for God. If you lack energy, concern, or motivation about your tasks and responsibilities, ask God to change your heart and give you a vision and understanding of the importance of your work. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18a).

One example of a “special assignment from the Lord” is your schoolwork. God wants you to learn to read so that He can speak to you through His written Word. He wants you to study science so that you can see His awesome power and intricate design in creation. He wants you to learn history so that you can know how He has worked in the past. He wants you to be skilled in math so you will know how to function effectively in everyday life (cook, build, etc.). God has called you to do great things. What task is before you right now? Are you giving all your energies to accomplish it?
Diligence in Scripture

Read aloud and discuss each verse, question, and concept.

Proverbs 2:1–6 says, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” What a privilege to study the rich truths of God’s Word, hide them in your heart, and apply them to daily life! These truths are priceless treasures, far above the value and beauty of rubies and diamonds. As you dig deep into God’s Word, see Who God is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will be a radiant expression of His love. He will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

We see examples of diligence in God’s character in the following ways:

• The beauty and intricacy of creation is an incredible display of God’s marvelous work. (See Genesis 1:31a.)

• God is powerful and able to accomplish what He has purposed to do. (See Jeremiah 1:12 and Psalm 18:32.)

• God is our strength. (See Psalm 18:32.)

• God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt. (See Jeremiah 32:21.)

• God will complete His work in us. (See Philippians 1:6.)

• Jesus finished His work with excellence, fully accomplishing our salvation. (See Hebrews 9:11–14.)

• The Holy Spirit diligently fulfills His role in the Godhead by teaching us and bringing to our minds what Jesus has said. (See John 14:26.)

DILIGENCE IN MY LIFE

Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out diligence daily.

• What fact would help me keep going when I feel like giving up? (See Galatians 6:9.)

• Do I seek to diligently grow in faith? (See II Peter 1:5–7.)

• What projects have I started that need to be finished? (See Proverbs 12:27.)

• Do I think through the best way to complete a task, or do I just rush to get it done? (See Proverbs 21:5.)

• When I am working, do I remember that God is watching and He is the One I need to please? (See Ephesians 6:6.)

• What are things that distract me from what I’m supposed to do? (See Nehemiah 6:3.)

DILIGENCE KEY VERSE

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Colossians 3:23
Bible Story
NOAH FINISHES THE ARK

Noah was a man who walked with God despite a wicked culture of people who thought evil continually. In the midst of the corruption and violence, God spoke to Noah, giving him a big, difficult assignment that would preserve life on the earth. This task would not be easy. Building an ark was an enormous assignment and required hard, physical labor. Much diligence would be required to understand the building instructions for this three-story ark: laying out a plan of action, gathering the materials, cutting timber and fashioning many boards, fitting them together, creating the window and door, covering the ark with pitch, storing enough food for both man and beasts, bringing in the animals, and moving into the completed construction with his family. All the while, Noah was also preaching God’s mercy and judgment to all, but the message fell on deaf ears. He did not have Godly friends to encourage him to keep up the good work. However, Noah was confident that God had called him to this task. If God called him, then God would enable him to do the job. Noah was committed and accepted God’s strength to reach the finish line of a long, hard assignment.

BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS
Read Genesis 6:9–17 together and discuss the following questions:

1. **What special assignment did God give to Noah?**
   (See Genesis 6:14a.)
   What tasks have your parents assigned to you today? What are some ways you can diligently accomplish these tasks?

2. **What were the instructions God gave Noah for building the ark?**
   (See Genesis 6:14b, 16.)
   What instructions have your parents given you on how to do your work today?

3. **If a cubit is 18 inches, how big was the ark?**
   (See Genesis 6:15.)
   The energy to do small or large tasks comes from the Lord. When was the last time you were given a big assignment?

4. **What else did God assign Noah to do along with building the ark?**
   (See Genesis 6:19.)
   What kind of attitude do you have when the job you are given becomes larger and requires more work?

5. **How did God make sure Noah, his family, and the animals would all be cared for while in the ark?**
   (See Genesis 6:21.)
   As you are diligent to complete an assignment, what are ways you and others personally benefit from finishing the task well?

6. **What did God do when Noah’s job was finished?**
   (See Genesis 7:5, 16–17a.)
   God provides all you need to accomplish His work and invites you to be part of it. Have you thanked God for the energy He has given you to diligently finish today’s work?
Memory Verse
COLOSSIANS 3:23

Play the game together to help the children commit Colossians 3:23 to memory. In the section “Doers of the Word,” have the children record how they will apply the verse to their lives.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

COLOSSIANS 3:23

MEMORY VERSE GAME

Category Stand-Ups
Call out a category. Some examples of categories would be “everyone who is wearing blue,” or “everyone who likes spaghetti,” or “everyone who is younger than 8 years old.” When the category is called, those who fit the description stand up and say the verse together. Continue to play until the verse is memorized and everyone can say the verse without looking at it.

DOERS OF THE WORD
In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “do my work when no one else notices,” or “shovel the snow with all my energy,” or “take out the trash diligently.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to ______________
________________________________________
________________________________________
I ask that You would develop diligence in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.
INTRODUCTION

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the diligence key verse and definition as you find them in the word search below. The underlined words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards.

Colossians 3:23

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

Diligence

Visualizing each task as a special assignment from the Lord and using all my energies to accomplish it.

If finding the underlined words is too difficult or frustrating for your child, assign only a few words to find, such as “the” and “Lord.” Younger children could point to the ABC’s. Older children may enjoy the extra challenge of finding all the words instead of only the underlined words.
INTRODUCTION
This month we are asking the Lord to develop diligence in our lives. What a privilege to respond to the work He is doing to change us into the image of His Son! Today we are going to make a special snack called “ants-on-a-log.” Ants are diligent creatures and their example reminds us to allow the Lord to build diligence in our lives and overcome laziness.

Supplies:
- Trimmed celery stalks
- Peanut butter or cream cheese spread
- Butter knife
- Raisins

Instructions
Wash and cut a celery stalk into thirds. Allow the children to use a butter knife to spread peanut butter (or cream cheese) into the hollow of the celery. Once the hollow is filled with peanut butter, instruct the children to place little “ants” (raisins) on top of the peanut butter.

The diligence of an ant causes her to toil throughout the summer to store food for the winter. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest” (Proverbs 6:6–8). It is significant that these creatures do not need to be told what to do, nor do they need to check one another to make sure their tasks are completed. Although ants are small in size, the needs of the entire colony are met as they diligently work together. These little insects are able to lift fifty times their own body weight! What an example they are to us. We, too, should use all our energies to accomplish the tasks given to us.
“And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth” (Genesis 7:5–6).
“To The Work!”

Sing “To the Work!” and read about the diligence of the hymnwriter, Fanny Crosby.

The evening flicker of a nearby street lamp filtered through white curtains into a Victorian sitting room. It had been a busy, full day, and the industrious lady was still hard at work. “Fanny! Sit back and rest!” Fanny Crosby smiled as she thought how many times people had told her to do that. Despite being blind since infancy, she was known to be a hard worker and remained busy at whatever her hands found to do.

One work that God had gifted Mrs. Crosby with was writing poetry. Often, poems formed themselves quickly in her mind. Other times it was not easy. Mrs. Crosby noted, “There are some days, or at least hours, when I could not compose a hymn if all the world were laid at my feet as a promised recompense.” Yet, even in those uninspiring times, she was diligent to accomplish her tasks. Mrs. Crosby wrote hymns for a music publishing house, and they counted on her to supply poems, whether she felt like writing or not. She asked the Lord for inspiration. Eventually, the words would come. Mrs. Crosby not only wrote what was asked of her, but she also wrote additional options of poems from which her employers could choose.

Mrs. Crosby wrote “To the Work!” in 1869 at the age of 49. More than a decade later, at age 60, she was still “to the work!” This diligent, blind woman ministered at four missions in New York. Undeterred by the unpleasant stench common among those with poor hygiene due to their difficult circumstances, Mrs. Crosby willingly sought to help the downcast. “It is the most wonderful work in the world, and it gives such an opportunity for love. That is all people want—love.” With love as her motivation, energy for her work abounded. “Love counts more than anything else. It is wonderful!” she exclaimed.

Mrs. Crosby’s diligence brought her before influential people, including four American Presidents. President Cleveland wrote her a letter in honor of her 85th birthday which said,

> It is more than fifty years ago that our acquaintance and friendship began; and ever since that time I have watched your continuous and disinterested labor in uplifting humanity, and pointing out the way to an appreciation of God’s goodness and mercy…. As one proud to call you an old friend, I desire to be early in congratulating you on your long life of usefulness, and wishing you in the years yet to be added to you the peace and comfort born of the love of God.

What a commendation to a life diligently lived! The next time you have a task to do, remember the example of a sightless lady who completed her tasks with enthusiastic diligence!
To the Work!


1. To the work! to the work! we are servants of God, Let us follow the path that our Master has trod; With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew, Let us do with our might what our hands find to do.

2. To the work! to the work! let the hungry be fed, Let us follow the path that our Master has trod; With the cross and its banner our glory shall be, While we herald the findings, “Salvation is free!”

3. To the work! to the work! there is labor for all, For the kingdom of life let the weary be led; In the name of Jehovah exalted shall be in the home of the faithful our dwelling shall be And we shout with the ransomed, “Salvation is free!”

4. To the work! to the work! in the strength of the Lord, And a robe and a crown shall our labor reward When the kingdom of darkness and error shall fall; And the home of the faithful our dwelling shall be And we shout with the ransomed, “Salvation is free!”

To the Work!

William H. Doane (1832–1915)

Fanny J. Crosby (1820–1915)

Hymn Sheet Music

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Chorus

Toil-ing on, toil-ing on, Toil-ing on,
Toil-ing on; Toil-ing on, Let us

hope, let us watch, And la-bor til the Mas-ter comes.
and trust, and pray,