

# Diligence

vs. Slothfulness

**Diligence is accepting each task as a special assignment from the Lord and using all my energies to do it quickly and skillfully.**

## Definition

Several Hebrew and Greek words are translated *diligence* in the Bible. They communicate such concepts as rising early; searching out with painstaking effort; being earnest, eager, and determined; working swiftly, skillfully, and efficiently; and pursuing a task promptly and energetically. One of the richest word pictures for diligence is found in the Hebrew word *charuwts*. It signifies a trench that is dug or gold that is mined.

The California Gold Rush of 1849 provides a powerful illustration of diligence. Men living on the East Coast dropped everything and rushed out to the West Coast to dig for gold.

They worked swiftly and thoroughly without regard for personal weariness or sacrifice. They were motivated to work because they visualized what they could do with the gold they discovered. If this same energy and motivation is invested in every project that we undertake, the quality of diligence will be seen and honored.

## The Great Rewards of Diligence

Valuable rewards are promised to those who are diligent. For

example, diligent workers will receive riches, leadership, favor, a standing before rulers, an understanding of the meaning of life, or honor from God.

- “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men” (Proverbs 22:29).
- “The hand of the diligent shall bear rule” (Proverbs 12:24).
- “The hand of the diligent maketh rich” (Proverbs 10:4).

## The Biblical Encouragement to Be Diligent

God encourages us to have diligence in the following areas:

- Resolving legal disputes (See Luke 12:58.)
- Carrying out leadership responsibilities (See Romans 12:8.)
- Doing good works (See I Timothy 5:10.)
- Seeking the Lord (See Hebrews 11:6.)
- Watching over fellow believers (See Hebrews 12:15.)
- Making your calling and election sure (See II Peter 1:10.)
- Developing Godly character (See II Peter 1:5-7.)
- Working for personal peace and purity (See II Peter 3:14.)



**H**old back nothing!

The diligent man gives himself completely to a task in order to accomplish it. He is rewarded with an audience before great men and rulers.

*“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.”*

—Proverbs 22:29

**“Absence of occupation is not rest; A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.”**

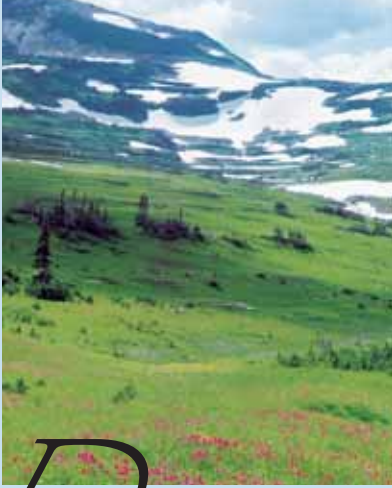
—William Cowper



**W**hen we are motivated by love, our labor becomes rest.

**“Whoever loves much does much.”**

—Thomas á Kempis



## The Key to Developing Diligence

True diligence requires an expenditure of energy that is opposite to our human nature. We naturally tend to make soft choices and let others do the hard work. Whenever asked to carry out a difficult task, we usually ask ourselves two questions: “What will I gain if I do it?” or “What will I lose if I do not do it?” God provides answers to these questions in the following passage of Scripture.

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23–24).

Therefore, our motivation for diligent labor is to realize that we do not work for just an earthly employer, but that we are actually employed by the Lord Jesus Christ. He will make a thorough inspection of all that we do and reward us for diligence, not only in this life, but throughout all of eternity.

Because Jesus Christ is our employer, we do not need to worry if we are not recognized for extra effort that we invest in quality work, nor do we need to wonder whether He will see if we overlooked or avoided details that might not be noticed by others. With this understanding, we should be motivated to fulfill the instruction of Ecclesiastes 9:10:

Rarely is the **beaver** inactive. It constantly builds, maintains, works ahead, and cares for its family. Even after its own dam and lodge are established, the beaver keeps busy building additional dams and lodges for future generations.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”

If you have failed to demonstrate diligence in all your projects, then you have not adequately represented the Lord Jesus Christ Whom you serve. You have also disappointed those who were expecting more diligence and productivity from you. It would be wise for you to ask forgiveness of the Lord and those whom you have disappointed and to purpose now to develop true diligence in every task that is set before you.

### Personal Evaluation

#### How diligent are you?

- Do you complete an assigned task quickly and enthusiastically, or do you reluctantly fit it into your schedule?
- Do you plan ahead in order to do a job in the quickest and most efficient way?
- Do you redeem valuable minutes by moving quickly on the job, or do you walk slowly?
- Do you look forward to going on to a new job or to resting after a job?
- Do you complete chores so thoroughly that your parents consider you a diligent worker?
- Do you do a job to first please the Lord and then your employer?
- Do you go the extra mile, working wholeheartedly to complete each job?
- Do you use every minute of company time to make your employer successful?

**D**iligence is doing a task with the motivation of love and an attitude of joy.

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”—Colossians 3:17

“The lazy Christian hath his mouth full of complaints, when the active Christian hath his heart full of comforts.” —Thomas Brooks

“Learn to tell the difference between activity and work.” —John Wanamaker

