

Proverbs 19:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

Analysis

Slothfulness produces a spiritual stupor ('deep sleep') that blinds one to reality and urgency. The sluggard lives in a dream world, oblivious to approaching consequences. The inevitable result is hunger—both physical want and spiritual poverty. This verse connects laziness with its natural consequences in God's moral order. Work is not a curse but part of God's creational design (Genesis 2:15), and refusal to work brings self-imposed suffering. The Reformed tradition has always emphasized diligent labor as a calling and means of glorifying God. Sloth is ultimately a sin against the Creator who fashioned us for purposeful activity.

Historical Context

Agrarian Israelite society required consistent labor for survival. Those who refused to work during planting and harvest seasons would inevitably face starvation, making this proverb a practical warning with immediate consequences.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. In what areas of life are you tempted toward slothfulness rather than faithful diligence?
2. How does understanding work as a divine calling transform your daily labor?

Interlinear Text

עַ צְלָה	תַּפֹּ יֵל	תַּרְדֵּמָה	וְנַפֶּשׁ	רָמִיָּה	תִּרְעָב:
Slothfulness	casteth	into a deep sleep	soul	and an idle	shall suffer hunger
H6103	H5307	H8639	H5315	H7423	H7456

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 23:21 (Parallel theme): For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

Proverbs 20:13 (Parallel theme): Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

Proverbs 24:33 (Parallel theme): Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (Parallel theme): For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.