

# Proverbs 24:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

## Analysis

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Verses 30-34 form an observational parable about laziness. 'I went by the field of the slothful' (אִישׁ-שֶׁעֵצֵל עִבְרָתִי/al-sedeh ish-atsel avarti, by the field of a lazy man I passed) begins the lesson. 'And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding' (וְעַל-כֶּרֶם אָדָם חָסַר-לֵב/ve'al-kerem adam chasar-lev, and by the vineyard of a man lacking heart/sense) parallels sloth with foolishness. Laziness flows from lack of wisdom. The observer notices and learns from another's failure—wise people learn from others' mistakes. Proverbs repeatedly condemns laziness (6:6-11; 10:4-5; 12:24, 27; 13:4; 19:15, 24; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 26:13-16). Work is God's gift and calling, established in creation before the Fall (Genesis 2:15). After the Fall, work became harder but remained essential. Paul commanded: 'if any would not work, neither should he eat' (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Israel's survival depended on diligent agricultural work. Neglected fields meant famine. The agricultural calendar demanded timely planting, tending, and harvesting—laziness brought disaster. Proverbs uses agricultural imagery throughout because audiences intimately understood farming's demands and consequences. Later, Israel developed broader economic activities—crafts, trade, administration. Yet the principle remained: diligence brings prosperity; laziness brings poverty (Proverbs 10:4). In the Greco-Roman world, slavery enabled some to live without working. Paul confronted believers in Thessalonica who quit working, expecting Christ's imminent return (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). Early

monastic movements sometimes struggled balancing contemplation with work—Benedict's Rule emphasized 'ora et labora' (pray and work). The Protestant work ethic, rooted in Reformation theology, emphasized vocation as divine calling. Modern welfare states sometimes enable laziness, though Christians should distinguish between helping those truly unable to work versus enabling the able but unwilling.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. What 'fields' in your life show neglect—career, finances, relationships, health, spiritual disciplines?
2. How can you learn from others' laziness rather than repeating their mistakes?
3. What motivates you more effectively: gratitude for God's calling or fear of poverty's consequences?

## Interlinear Text

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עַל	שָׂדֵה הַ	אִישׁ	עָצִל	עָבַר רִתִּי	וָעָל	כִּי	רֵם
H5921	<b>by the field</b>	<b>of the slothful</b>	H6102	<b>I went</b>	H5921	<b>and by the vineyard</b>	
	H7704	H376		H5674		H3754	
אֶדָּם	חֲסֵר	לֵב:					
<b>of the man</b>	<b>void</b>	<b>of understanding</b>					
H120	H2638	H3820					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 12:11** (Parallel theme): He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

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