Theme: Diligence is the path God has designed for blessing in every area of life, and by grace the wise person walks it, forming a diligent soul over time.

I. Growing Carrots

A. As a young boy near Chicago, I planted carrots

B. I proceeded to not look at them for months!

C. In early winter, I announced I was checking on my carrots – it was a bountiful crop (NOT!!!)

D. I was a silly young child – but Proverbs warns us that many of us approach life this way!

E. The Wisdom of Diligence!

II. The Wisdom of Diligence

A. Diligence is a key part of wisdom!

the hand of the diligent makes rich. Proverbs 10:4

the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. Proverbs 13:4

The hand of the diligent will rule Proverbs 12:24

the diligent man will get precious wealth. Pro 12:27

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance Pro 21:5

1. Diligence is a key theme of wisdom!
2. Diligence leads to many blessings
   a. Diligence is a key theme because in God's wisdom and providence, diligence brings blessings!
   b. Diligence leads to wisdom, financial blessing, freedom, and abundance in every area of life!
   c. If you would like these great blessings, you must walk the path of diligence!

B. Diligence – and its opposites

A slack hand causes poverty (10:4)

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing (13:4)

the slothful will be put to forced labor. (12:24)

Whoever is slothful will not roast his game (12:27)

everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. (21:5)

1. A wide variety of words to contrast with diligence
   a. Slack, sluggard, slothful, and hasty – opposites!
   b. Diligence is NOT slack towards its responsibilities and work but works energetically to fulfill them.
   c. Diligence is not sluggish, craving a crop without the labor of sowing.
   d. Diligence is not slothful, unwilling to even do the bare minimum, but energetically works consistently.
   e. Diligence is not hasty, constantly rashly making promises and abandoning them, but carefully and consistently plans and follows through.
2. A lack of diligence leads to many problems
   a. Diligence leads to wisdom, financial blessing, freedom, and abundance in every area of life!
   b. A lack of diligence leads to a lack of wise character, unfulfilled desires, financial poverty, and bondage – in every area of life!
   c. If you would like to avoid these great problems, you must walk the path of diligence!

III. Walking In the Way of Diligence

A. The goal is to shape a diligent soul!

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. Pro 13:4

1. Some translations translate as ‘desires’, ‘cravings’, or appetites in this verse.
2. The ESV is literal here – the soul is in view
3. This is not just about external actions, but about the slow, lifelong formation of my soul!
4. If I walk the path of wise diligence, over time it will shape my soul in a way that leads to wise desires and actions which lead to blessing in all of life!

B. Areas to grow in diligence

1. Bible reading and prayer
2. Church involvement
3. Physical health
4. Vocation (present or future)
5. Rest and vacation
6. Marriage relationship
7. Children

C. Practices to shape a diligent soul

1. A diligent person prioritizes and plans for what is most important

   The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. Proverbs 21:5

   a. To fail to plan is to plan to fail!
   b. We need to plan for what is most important and then make everything else fit around that.
   c. Example: family life, Church, and sports with kids
      1. With 4 kids, if we did not prioritize and then make plans in accordance with that, we would have been overwhelmed!
      2. We laid out clear rules – no regular Sunday games, only 2 sports per year – to protect our priorities.
   d. If we do not prioritize and plan, then we will be forced to hastily react in the moment – which leads to poverty regarding what is most important.
   e. Ask the Spirit to help you think through and prioritize what is most important for you.
   f. Then ask the Spirit – and perhaps a wise friend – to lay out plans to protect what is most important.
   g. Often, the most important step in developing a diligent soul is what we choose to cut out of life to make room for our real priorities!

2. A diligent person consistently gives attention to that which seems small, knowing this leads to blessing.

   I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, [31] and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. [32] Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. [33] A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, [34] and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man. Proverbs 24:30-34

   a. We all want a rich harvest to provide for us!
   b. But to receive these things the diligent person pays close attention to the small details, caring for the ground, the vines, and the walls.

c. The foolish sluggard wants the rich harvest of food and drink but does not labor throughout the year in the small details that God has ordained to produce the final results!

d. The sluggard is like me as a child, expecting a harvest of carrots after months of ignoring them!

e. Our culture loves the big, flashy moment, but God has designed the universe so that it is the small, quiet, out-of-the-spotlight actions that have the greatest impact over the long haul.

f. The diligent person knows the key is doing the small thing consistently, not doing big things randomly.

3. A diligent person is patient, knowing blessing usually is the result of long-term sustained effort, not periodic actions.

   Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds, [24] for riches do not last forever; and does a crown endure to all generations? [25] When the grass is gone and the new growth appears and the vegetation of the mountains is gathered, [26] the lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field. [27]There will be enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household and maintenance for your girls. Proverbs 27:23-27

   a. We all want clothing, food, and provision!

   b. But to receive these things, the diligent person is patient, paying attention to the fields, flocks, and herds over time, knowing this will provide in the end.

   c. The foolish sluggard wants the result without patient, sustained, hard work over a long period of time!

   d. The diligent person realizes we need to plant and care for the grass, to feed the sheep, to produce the wool, so that we can get a sweater!

   e. This is increasingly hard in our Instant age – but diligence requires patience!

4. A diligent person plans to live to be a blessing

   The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. Proverbs 21:5

   Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Ephesians 4:28

   a. A diligent person plans so that they can have abundance, which enables them to not only take care of their needs but to be able to help others.

   b. Because God is a God Who overflows and gives, we are called to be givers, not takers.

   c. This not only applies to material blessings, but to every area of life.

   d. The longer we walk the path of diligence, the more blessing we will have to share with others.

IV. Applying the Word

A. Where is the Lord calling me to grow in diligence?

1. Some potential areas

   a. Bible reading and prayer

   b. Church involvement

   c. Physical health

   d. Vocation

   e. Rest and vacation

   f. Marriage relationship

   g. Children

2. What ONE area do I want to become more diligent?
3. As we come to the Table, ask for grace to become more diligent in this one area.
4. Later today, take a few minutes to create a simple plan to begin tomorrow.
5. Let the Spirit reveal if other things need to be removed to allow this area to flourish.

B. The Table of Grace

1. Beware of legalism – we are saved by Jesus' diligence, not our own!
2. Beware of false condemnation – we live by grace!
3. We are invited to this Table to receive grace for forgiveness and grace for growth in godliness.
4. Diligence in worship – The Apostles' Creed
   a. Reminds us of Jesus' diligent work for us!
   b. Also, diligence in repeating the central truths of the faith rather than the latest trend.

The Wisdom of Diligence

Proverbs 10:4; 13:4; 12:24; 12:27; 21:5
November 1, 2026
Communion
Psalm 90:16-17
Teaching keywords: Character; wisdom and knowledge; calling and work; blessing

May the Lord reveal His work to you, and His glorious power to your children. [17] May the favor of the Lord our God be upon you and may He fully establish and bless the work of your hands.
Psalm 90:16-17

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
Proverbs 10:4

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. Proverbs 13:4

The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.
Proverbs 12:24

Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.
Proverbs 12:27

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.
Proverbs 21:5