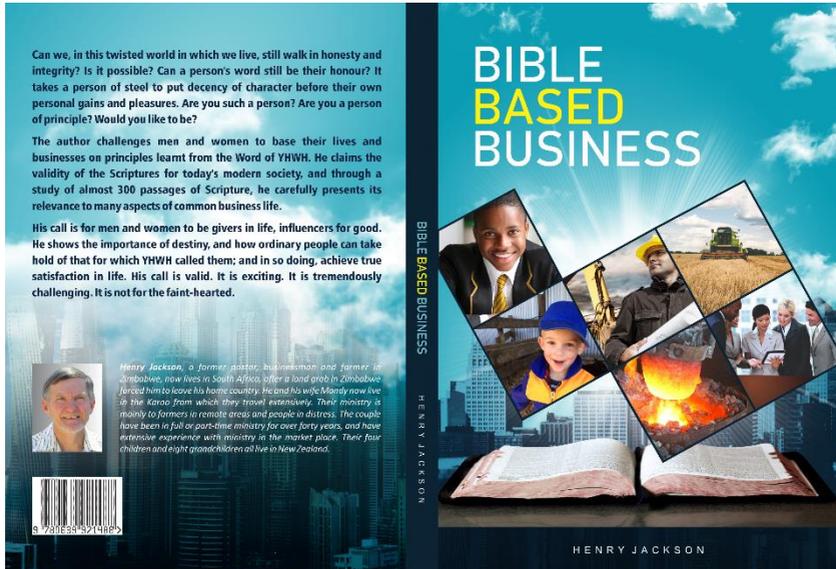


Herewith **chapters 6** of my book

## Bible based business



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Should you, however, wish to acquire the book itself, it may be ordered from Magda Du Plessis. She can be contacted at the following address:

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## Chapter 6

# DILIGENCE & QUALITY OF WORKMANSHIP

Many people seem to think that YHWH is obliged to bless them simply because they are Christians, irrespective of how they live their Christian lives, and they can just sit back and wait for the blessings to arrive. If this were so, then why would the Scriptures teach us to be diligent in our work?

### Self-motivation

I believe the following Scriptures hold great significance and cannot be ignored:

Prov 6:6 *“Go to the ant, O sluggard, (now that is a good description for a lazy man!) Observe her ways and be wise,*

7 *“Which, having no chief, officer or ruler,*

8 *“Prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest.*

9 *“How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?*

10 *“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest’—*

11 *“Your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man.”*

The essence of the instruction which I believe the writer wanted to impress on this lazy man was that the ants do not need anyone to chase them on. They motivate themselves. No one needs to drive them with a whip before they move. They are there already working at the crack of dawn. The Afrikaans Bible states the sluggard's reply so well.

*"Nog 'n bietjie slaap, nog 'n bietjie sluimer, nog 'n bietjie hande  
vou om uit te rus!"*

(I just want to sleep a little bit more. Just a few minutes more, please sir! I am not quite fully rested yet!)

No self-motivation! They have to be pushed all the way – grumbling and criticising. Just look at this perfect description of a lazy man's affairs:

Pro 24:30 *"I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the  
vineyard of the man lacking sense,*

31 *"And behold, it was completely overgrown with  
thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and  
its stone wall was broken down.*

32 *"When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and  
received instruction.*

33 *"A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of  
the hands to rest,'*

34 *"Then your poverty will come as a robber and your  
want like an armed man."*

## Clean environment

I needed to visit another foundry and engineering works in the 1980s and was absolutely shocked at what I saw. The entire place was a mess. There were bits of machinery and half-finished jobs lying all over the place. In the large machine shop with many lathes and milling machines and other equipment, they had made channels amongst the rubbish through which one could only walk in single file. The machinists had a small clear space just where they stood in front of their particular machines, and all around them were piles of rubbish.

In the foundry department there was not one inch of floor space where one could stand on even, flat floor space. One had to clamber over castings and mounds of sand to get anywhere. I saw this and was reminded of the above Scripture. No wonder this factory was going through severe cash flow problems.

It is not possible to work in a mess and encourage the labourers to produce quality! King Solomon observed this principle four thousand years ago. The result, he said, would be poverty! The reason is simple. YHWH expects us to be diligent in our work. If we neglect the little things, always putting them off for '*another day*', the big things will just never come our way. That broken stone wall and those small weeds might seem insignificant. However, the condition of the wall indicates the attitude of the owner.

In Zimbabwe, I often witnessed a deterioration of the roads and the development of potholes, which are not only

dangerous but also damaging to the vehicles that travel over those roads. I found a tendency with the road maintenance crews to put up a sign saying 'POTHOLE', or 'BUMPY ROAD', and then the duty of restoring the road is considered to be fulfilled.

It is so easy to adopt the attitude that "It does not matter", or "It is not important", yet, in neglecting these seemingly little things, we find that we never get to a position where we are fully in control of things, and sooner or later these little things become so big that we cannot cope with them anymore and they drag us down.

## Diligence

Diligence is of vital importance. Carefully watch every step you take. Be sure to cross every 't' and dot every 'i'. Observe the advice which Solomon gives in this passage:

Pro 27:23 *"Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds;*

24 *"For a riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.*

25 *"When the grass disappears, the new growth is seen, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered in,*

26 *"The lambs will be for your clothing, and the goats will bring the price of a field,*

27 *"And there will be goats' milk enough for your food, for the food of your household, and*

*sustenance for your maidens.”*

What is Solomon getting at here? The key is found in the first few words,

*“Know well the condition...”*

This speaks of diligence. He does not just let the flock get on with it out there in the fields. He follows their progress diligently. If one animal starts to show the slightest signs of sickness, he is there; nursing it, making sure that it is well cared for. Practice this principle while things are going well, and you will cope much better when the storms come.

What is the end result? Well, that comes naturally. The goats are healthy and therefore reproduce. There are plenty of lambs, and therefore also milk and the shepherd reaps the benefits of his diligence.

My dear friends, this principle does not only apply to farmers. It applies to business. It will apply to your marriage and children. It applies to pastors and their control over their congregations. It is a universal principle, set up by YHWH Himself. Heed the principle by diligently looking after that which has been placed in your care, and the fruit will be yours. Ignore the principle, and it will only be to your own detriment.

YHWH has taught me from the Scriptures how to handle storms. You might be surprised to discover that Christian businessmen also face storms – those times when everything seems to go wrong.

An urgent and valuable order comes in just when you need it, but the milling machine breaks down. You need a spare part

quickly, so you send a messenger to town, but three hours later he arrives, having walked back. The bicycle broke down, he says, and so he had not been able to get the part. You jump into your car, only to discover that you have a flat tyre. You know those days when problems come like a torrent?

I have experienced them many times – for weeks on end! The following Scripture has been a great encouragement to me, and has kept me on the tracks when derailment would have appeared to have been a far easier option.

Prov 24:10 *“If you are slack in the day of distress, your strength will be limited.”*

We were having some difficulties once, and it just seemed as if everything was going wrong in the factory. During an early morning prayer time, I cried out to the Lord for help, and He led me to this Scripture. I realised that He was expecting me to trust Him, put my head down, and keep going – keep ploughing, keep sowing! That was quite difficult to do, but as I did it, step by step things started to come right, and it was not long before we were experiencing His abundance again.

Do not allow yourself to descend into deep depressions when things don't quite go the way you expected and you cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. Be diligent. First make sure that you are still going in the right direction by seeking some wise counsel, and then keep on ploughing for all you are worth!

### **Self-Discipline**

Having observed what King Solomon had to say about diligence, it becomes obvious that this principle is closely

related to **discipline** – especially **self-discipline**. Let us examine a few more of Solomon’s statements in this regard.

Prov 25:28 *“Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.”*

Prov 16:32 *“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who captures a city.”*

Prov 17:27 *“... He who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.”*

What are these three verses telling us? Solomon is speaking here of self-control – self-discipline. A lazy man lacks self-control or self-discipline. He is like a city that can easily be broken into. He has no defence, and the ‘*enemy*’ can topple him easily. Those are the type of people who always blame others or circumstances for the negative things that go wrong in their lives. It is always someone else’s fault. Yet such people just never seem to rise out of their problems. They are always moving from one crisis to another. The negative things always seem to be happening to **them**.

If you have become such a person, then here is some sound advice for you. It might seem somewhat harsh, but then, no discipline is ever pleasant at the time at which it is administered. So here goes!

- 1. Realize, firstly, that the fault or problem lies entirely with you. Actively take the full weight of the responsibility on your own shoulders. A person, who cannot carry responsibility on his shoulders, will also not experience the glory of victory.*

2. *Make a decision that from today you are going to change your attitude towards life in general, and that you are going to make a difference in the world around you. This will take continual self-discipline. Learn to do this in small areas of your life. Try, for example, to refrain from the use of bad language – if you have a problem with that; or smoking; or bad temper; or indecent thought life; or snapping at your wife or children.*

3. *Know that YHWH is more than willing to “help those who help themselves”. Ask Him to help you to be a giver in life, not a criticiser. Ask Him to teach you how to control your tongue, your mind, and your actions. Ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit it is impossible to live a godly lifestyle of continual victory.*

You see, if a person is not in control of himself, with a good measure of self-discipline, then there is no way that he can run a business – or even his own personal affairs - properly. Things will be forgotten or half done, and end up a mess. Self-discipline and diligence in every little area, is a must. Just one more Scripture is this regard:

Luke 16:10 *“He who is faithful in a very little thing, is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.*

11 *“If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon (ie. money), who will give the true riches to you?”*

12 *“And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?”*

Can you see how this principle of diligence and discipline is used here by our Lord Jesus – this concept of faithfulness in the little things of life? I believe that the Lord is telling us here to be faithful in the way we handle other people’s money or goods. Are we wasteful or careful with our time and effort in relation to our employers – whether they are the government or large multinational organisations who supposedly “*have a lot of money to waste*”, or small organisations who are “*tight with their money*”?

We should apply ourselves in such a way as to give the best of our time and efforts, in order to benefit our employers, even in the smallest details of our work. This takes diligence, day by day diligence, and unrelenting diligence! But it certainly has its rewards, has it not?

I remember working for a company many years ago. I did not get a fantastic salary; neither were there any fringe benefits. I just had to work. I gave my best. I worked hard. Often I would work over the normal time. The company was in the process of setting up a completely new product line, and I took it upon myself to become personally responsible for making sure that the patterns were done neatly, and in the fastest possible time.

You might say, “*What for?*” Just diligence! Just working for someone else as if I was working for the Lord! I never even dreamed that one day I would have my own company. The thought did not even enter my mind.

However, one day an opportunity suddenly came my way out of the blue. Mind you, it was not easy. I still had to work hard, and I started the business with only my tool box and about

\$50 in my pocket. (Zimbabwe dollars at that!) But a wonderful opportunity came my way, and today my business is flourishing, thanks be to my Lord! Furthermore, because I worked hard for others, I can honestly expect that people should work hard for me.

You see, YHWH is no man's debtor. If we follow YHWH's principles, we will find YHWH's blessings on our lives. They just seem to come as if from nowhere! Diligence bears wonderful, juicy fruit in the end, even though it is sometimes tough going all the way.

Chapter 7 will follow next week – “*Good Stewardship 1 (Personal character)*” ...