

Prov 10:3a "The LORD will not suffer the soul of the
righteous to famish:..."

ONE MATTER THAT WE SHOULD IMMEDIATELY PUT OUT OF OUR MIND REGARDING THIS TEXT IS THAT GOD GUARANTEES THAT THE RIGHTEOUS WILL *NEVER* SUFFER IN THIS WORLD. THAT INCLUDES TIMES WHEN THE STOMACH OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAY UNDER TIMES OF ECONOMIC HARD TIMES MAY FEEL THE PANGS OF HUNGER.

I MAY DISAGREE WITH THOSE WHO SUGGEST THAT THIS PASSAGE TEACHES THAT THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NEVER GO HUNGRY. MAY I SUGGEST THAT THE KING JAMES VERSION HAS THE TRANSLATION CORRECT IN REFERRING TO THE *SOUL* OF THE BELIEVER - NOT THE PHYSICAL BODY. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU AND I HEARD OF THE TERRIBLE CONDITIONS THAT THE SAINTS OF GOD HAVE TO ENDURE, INCLUDING PHYSICAL STARVATION. THE PRISONER OF WAR WHO KNOWS THE LORD CAN SUFFER HUNGER JUST AS MUCH AS THE UNBELIEVER. THOSE WHO HAVE HAD TO ENDURE THE EVIL RULE OF THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS HAVE HAD TO SUFFER MANY THINGS UNDER THE DICTATOR'S HAND *INCLUDING HUNGER*. THERE ARE PLENTY OF ACCOUNTS OF BELIEVERS WHO HAD TO ENDURE STARVATION DURING EXTRAORDINARY TIMES.

IT IS THE SOUL THAT MATTERS. YES, THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE MATERIAL THINGS FOR THE BELIEVER - THAT IS ANOTHER ISSUE. LET US NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT SOLOMON IS CONCERNED IN HIS BOOK OF PROVERBS ABOUT HIS SON'S *SOUL*.

**IT IS THE SOUL OF THE BELIEVER THAT NEEDS
THE NOURISHMENT OF BIBLICAL VIRTUES.**

2 Peter 1:5 **And beside this, giving all diligence, add to
your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;...**" (Emphasis
mine).

THE CHRISTIAN WALK IS NOT MERELY COMPOSED OF SAYING THAT JESUS IS ONE'S SAVIOR. IT IS NOT FAITHFUL CHURCH ATTENDANCE. THERE IS A SERIES OF "BUILDING BLOCKS" THAT NEED TO GO INTO A LIFE TO MAKE IT A LIFE THAT IS FULFILLED IN CHRIST. A MOST IMPORTANT PART OF BUILDING THE LIFE IN CHRIST IS THE NOURISHMENT OF BIBLICAL VIRTUES. YOU CANNOT PROFESS CHRIST, GO TO ALL OF THE PROGRAMS THAT THE LOCAL CHURCH OFFERS AND DO ALL OF THE "RESPECTABLE" THINGS EXPECTED OF THE BELIEVER AND BYPASS BIBLICAL VIRTUES¹ AND CALL THAT LIFE IN CHRIST.

I MUST REPEAT THIS - THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A SPIRITUAL LIFE. WE MUST FEED THE SPIRITUAL MAN². LOOK AT PETER'S LIST OF "FOOD" - FAITH BEGINS THE LIST THEN COMES VIRTUE.

WORD STUDY ON "VIRTUE." *gk = accus, sing fem of aretē.* THE CLASSICAL GREEK HAS THE SENSE OF THE ESSENCE OF MANLINESS (VALOR), MORAL EXCELLENCE. THE WORD APPEARS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT 5 TIMES³. VIRTUE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT POINTS TO THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GOD. INDEED, THE BIBLICAL VIRTUES THAT WE WILL BE STUDYING IN PROVERBS ARE EXTENSIONS OF THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GOD. TAKE FOR INSTANCE DILIGENCE. TO BE DILIGENT IN A THING IS TO BE FAITHFUL IN CARRYING A THING OUT. THIS TOUCHES ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD. WE COULD GO ON TO HONESTY, INTEGRITY AND ALL THE REST OF BIBLICAL VIRTUES WHICH EVENTUALLY GO BACK TO THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GOD. IN 2 PETER 1:3 WE ARE CALLED TO THE GLORY AND *VIRTUE* BY THE LORD. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THAT GLORY AND VIRTUE IS GOD'S.

MORAL EXCELLENCE IS KEY TO THE

**Moral Excellence is the key to the
building and feeding of the Christian.**

¹ Here's a partial list of Biblical Virtues listed in Proverbs - Diligence, Integrity, Righteous Speech, Honesty - the list goes on.

² Read Heb 5:12, 13; 1 Pet 2:2.

³ Phil 4:8; 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Pet 1:3, 5

BUILDING AND FEEDING OF THE CHRISTIAN. IT IS THIS EXCELLENCE TO WHICH WE ARE ALL CALLED.

THE BIBLICAL VIRTUE
OF THE DILIGENT SOUL

Proverbs 10:4 **He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.**

WORD STUDY, DILIGENT. A WORD STUDY OF THE WORD *charuwts* TRANSLATED "DILIGENT" TURNED UP SOME INTERESTING FACETS TO THE WORD.

DAN 9:25. TO CUT OUT, TO SHARPLY DEFINE A DEFENSE PERIMETER. THE OCCASION IS THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM. OUR HEBREW WORD HERE *charuwts* IS TRANSLATED "WALL" IN THE KJV, "TRENCH" IN THE NIV AND "MOAT" IN THE NASB.

charuwts, THEN, CAN HAVE, IN OUR PROVERBS TEXTS, THE SENSE OF A DEFENSE PERIMETER AGAINST LAZINESS.

THE VALLEY OF DECISION IN JOEL 3:14 IS ANOTHER SHARPLY DEFINED AREA WHERE AN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT EVENT IS TO OCCUR. RETURNING BACK TO OUR TEXTS IN PROVERBS, THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMELINESS SHOULD BE APPLIED TO DILIGENCE. WHEN THE BELIEVER BECOMES AWARE OF THE NEED HE NEEDS TO DECIDE SHARPLY AND THEN ACT. DILIGENCE SAYS "NOW!"

2 SAM 5:24. THIS WORD IS USED IN THE MILITARY SENSE OF TACTICAL ACTION TO "ACT QUICKLY" (NASB), "BESTIR" (KJV), MOVE QUICKLY (NIV). THESE TRANSLATIONS SEEM TO DEPICT ACTION COMING IMMEDIATELY FROM A SHARP DECISION (THE MEANING OF THE ROOT WORD). THE HEBREW SEEMS TO PLACE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DECISION AND THE ACTION THAT SHOULD FOLLOW. THE TACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF DILIGENCE IS IN VIEW HERE. TO DELAY IS TO INVITE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES.

THE DILIGENT SOUL VERSUS THE LAZY SOUL

Prov 13:4 **"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."**

EVERYTHING WE HAVE STUDIED UP TO NOW HAS POINTED TO THE SOUL OF THE BELIEVER. THIS IS NOT A MANUAL ON THE PHYSICAL HEALTH OF THE BELIEVER, NOR IS IT A MANUAL ON HOW TO GET RICH QUICK. IF THE CHRISTIAN GETS CAUGHT UP IN THE DESIRE OF THE DETAILS OF LIFE HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE WILL SUFFER - HE WILL STARVE THE NEW MAN.

Psalms 37:4 **Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.**

THE IMPORTANT LESSON WE NEED TO LEARN IS THAT WE NEED TO BE OCCUPIED WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. FOCUS ON THE LORD SHOULD COME FIRST. HE THEN POINTS (ESPECIALLY IN PROVERBS) US TO BIBLICAL VIRTUES SUCH AS DILIGENCE.

SOLOMON HAS SET THE WHOLE TONE OF HIS BOOK OF PROVERBS ON THE CONDITION OF THE SOUL. A SOUL THAT IS FAT⁴ BECAUSE OF DILIGENCE IS ONE THAT IS FILLED WITH THE WISDOM OF GOD. IT IS THE SOUL THAT HAS HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF APPLYING GOD'S WORD THIS SOUL HAS "UNDERSTANDING." A FAT SOUL IS ONE THAT HAS CAPACITY FOR ENJOYING LIFE - IT IS THE SOUL THAT CAN GET THINGS DONE FOR THE LORD. A LAZY SOUL IS ONE THAT IS DESTITUTE. IT IS BEGRUDGING, SELF-CENTERED, NOT GENEROUS, CONSTANTLY CRAVING FOR SELF-SATISFACTION. THE LAZY SOUL CANNOT BE SATISFIED THOUGH IT SPENDS A LIFETIME IN TRYING TO DO SO.

THE RICH SOUL VERSUS THE POOR SOUL

Proverbs 10:4 **He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.**

MAY I STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT WE ARE NOT READING OF GOD'S GET-RICH SCHEME. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT HARD WORK DOES RESULT FROM HONEST WAGES AND, MANY TIMES,

⁴ We must remember that this expression "fat soul" does not point to an undesirable condition but rather to a soul that enjoys plenty (prosperity).

PROMOTION. SOLOMON IS DRAWING FROM THE WORK PLACE TO TEACH A SPIRITUAL LESSON. **IF WE ARE LAZY IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE THEN OUR SOULS WILL BE DESTITUTE. IF WE ARE DILIGENT IN OUR PURSUIT OF BIBLICAL VIRTUES THEN WE WILL DEVELOP OUR CAPACITY FOR LIFE - BOTH IN THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MUNDANE.** SPIRITUAL EXCELLENCE SPINS OFF INTO EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES. BIBLICAL VIRTUES SERVES AS NUTRITIONAL BUILDING BLOCKS IN OUR TOTAL DEVELOPMENT AS CHILDREN OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

1 Peter 2:2 **As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:**

ALL WE NEED TO GROW INTO A MATURE BELIEVER, COMPLETE IN JESUS CHRIST HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE LORD IN THE NEW BIRTH AND HERE IN HIS WORD IS THE NUTRITIONAL BUILDING BLOCKS WE NEED COMPLETE THAT PROCESS.

2 Peter 1:5 **And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**