

PRODUCTIVITY

CHARACTER



An empty stable stays clean, but no income comes from it. Proverbs 14:4

The root word of productivity is productive or fertile. It is the result of an activity. We say good land is fertile land meaning it is valuable because it has the ability to produce. If managed right, it can make us wealthy by giving us income. Land without managed activity cannot make us wealthy.

A banker once visited a farmer. As he drove along the white fences of the well-kept buildings and well-manicured lawns he was amazed at the beauty. He commented to the farmer, "God has given you the most beautiful farm in this valley." The farmer looked at his fields and thought of the hard work and effort it took to produce and replied, "You should have seen it when only God had it." The potential was in the land and in the farmer, but it took the productiveness of the farmer to be successful.

Productivity means we must participate actively with concepts, ideas and resources to transform them into something greater. The result of productivity is to build a prosperous society. In every person there is potential. We are born with the ability to produce. It is our responsibility to use productivity to manage our potential. Our failure is usually because of our lack of productivity. If we are not productive, expect nothing, but when we use our abilities, we will make progress towards our potential. In society, a lack of productivity creates poverty.

The key to effectiveness is to manage hard work and productivity on one side, with control and organization on the other side. We should never stand back and be satisfied with just being organized. Organization without productivity equals failure. Many times production is swallowed up by fixing messes. Building creates sawdust and dirt; we cannot be productive without having some type of disorder. If we can master organization while being productive, our lives will be very successful.

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Too many unproductive, organized chiefs (clean stables) spend most of their time enjoying their benefit programs and are not being productive. That's why we downsize. Being productive may not seem to be in style, and it may seem unorganized at times, but it still works best for the bottom line. Thank goodness for work horses messing up the stable, they generate income.

In many organizations there is a lot of time wasted in our daily routine doing personal activities instead of producing. Our motivation should be to increase our value by developing new ideas and increase our personal productivity. We can fall into a rut forgetting the real world is competitive, efficient and most of all creative. When we work without being conscious of why we do what we do and for whom we do it, this can affect our character and cause us to be unproductive.

Benefits

1. It will take us out of an attitude of complacency.
2. It will make us conscious of time.
3. It will make us responsible for our abilities and ideas.
4. It will motivate us, give us confidence and hope.

Practices

1. Earn your way through life. Life is a gift and what we do with it is in our hands. Things don't just happen; we must make them happen.
2. Manage what you produce. Learn to maintain your "land" and eliminate waste.
3. Be efficient. Learn the difference between quality and quantity. Utilize benchmarks to show whether your projects are progressing. This allows you to balance hard work with productivity. Work smarter not harder.
4. Learn to be organized. Many people simply don't know how to organize, and they lose productivity. A craftsman knows how to keep his tools in order. Don't waste a lot of time looking for things that you have misplaced.

Individuals, communities and nations must be productive. People must keep working, creating and developing dreams, this gives structure to our imagination. If we stop creating, we will not grow mentally. Growth comes from people who are doing something. Become a producer, not just a consumer. If we consume more than we produce we will go bankrupt, individually and as a society.

We are not born with wealth but have been given the ability to create it. The key to wealthy living is a productive life. Every human being enters and leaves this world without material wealth. The only thing we leave is our character and reputation. Our character is developed by how productive we have been in our work and in our lives.

Key Scriptures

- "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest — and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man" - Proverbs 24:33-34

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- “How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.” Proverbs 6:9-11
- “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’” Matthew 25:23.

Quotes

“The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now.” - Chinese Proverb

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” - Theodore Roosevelt

“We have a strategic plan. It’s called doing things” - Herb Kelleher

“A life spent making mistakes is not only more honourable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing” - George Bernard Shaw

Remember...thoughts produce actions, actions become habits, habits form our character, and character determines our destiny!

Reflect & Respond

1. Have you kept your position in life by being productive?
2. Do you consider yourself a producer or a consumer? Explain.
3. Do you tend to be overly organized or productively messy?
4. Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10 in this character quality:
5. Why did you give yourself this rating?
6. What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?

Ask Your Mentor

1. What are some things that you’ve learned to be productive?
2. What are some barriers that you’ve experienced in trying to be productive? What could you control and not control?
3. Do you know of a story of someone who exemplifies this principle that you can share?
4. What (or when) would it look like to place too much emphasis on productivity?
5. How do you think informing an out-of-balance productivity mindset with a faithfulness perspective might help us avoid unhealthy self-reliance or a performance trap?

Creative Connection

Think of a song, character or person from a book, movie or history, an animal, or an everyday item that personifies the main idea of this lesson and share it.

Go Do

1. Ask your boss or someone who knows you well to rate your overall level of productivity.
 2. Ask God, “Which of the above ‘steps to follow’ should I prioritize? What would it look like to trust you to help me with that?”
 3. Practice. What would productivity look like for you in the coming week? What specifically will you do to be productive? How I will practice this over the next month:
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Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study for those who want to go deeper.

1. What big problem do you think this session may be addressing?
2. What emotions, if any, did you have from what you learned in this session? Was there anything that surprised, excited, or angered you?

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