DILIGENCE & AMBITION

I find that a lot of words in the Bible I'm familiar with, but our culture and generations have played a little bit of a game of telephone over the years and the meanings today may not necessarily be aligned or describe the depth of the original meaning so I'm going to turn the *1828 Websters Dictionary* which has a strong foundation based in scripture.

> *Diligence is making a* ***choice****. It's a* ***steady*** *application in business of any kind;* ***constant effort*** *to accomplish what is undertaken; exertion of body or mind without unnecessary* ***delay*** *or* ***sloth****.*

Looking at **2 Peter 1:5**, it says to *"make every effort to supplement your faith…"* That phrase "make every effort" is the original Greek word (G4710) meaning "diligence and earnest effort." The Hebrew word for diligent (H2742) refers to diligent or industrious people who therefore succeed.

Turn to page 30 of *The Scripture Book Vol. 3.* Now that we've righted our minds with a good description of what it means to exercise Diligence, let's look at some other words that are similar to the topic of Diligence in terms of our husbands:

> Ambition, Discipline, Integrity, Perseverance, Priorities, Uprightness, and Work Ethic.

I learn a lot about a topic by looking at antonyms. If I'm creating an internal picture of what "diligence" is, what it is not, when it's good, and when it's not, it's good to know it's opposite.

> Slothfulness, Passivity, and Free-riding

are a few words that come to mind. You'll see sloth and sluggard throughout the Bible and it usually comes across as warnings to not be these things. Therefore, this tells me that having a lack of Diligence is not good.

But words like:

Overachieving, Burnout, and Perfection

can show us that there is such as thing as too much Diligence. So let's look at what the Bible says a healthy balance should look like.

All things in moderation—except for the fruit of the Spirit, against such things there is no law—so if we imagine a scale of 0 to 10. We'll label 0 as slothful and 10 as a busybody or a workaholic. Let's put 5 as the happy medium. This is where godly diligence lies.



When someone travels **down** the scale from 5 to 0, there is a spiritual slumber occurring and Proverbs has quite a bit to say about that. When someone travels **up** the scale from 5 to 10, an uneasiness, anxious, or frantic action toward busyness begins to evolve. This is where scriptures about Rest, Peace, and Trust come in to remind us that increased effort does not dictate a higher return on our investment. God rested. So *how much more* do we, as feeble humans, need to rest?

Balancing this scale requires searching the heart, and we know the One that can see that better than anyone. **1 Samuel 16:7** tells us *"man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."* We may naturally want to address our prayers for our husbands by aiming them at his unhealthy devotion to his job or at his idleness and lack of motivation. And yes, God hears those prayers! But when we specifically pray for the symptoms to be fixed, we may miss the deeper—and often times slower—heart change that is occurring beneath the surface. We are also likely to miss the slight growth in our husbands' character if our measuring line for whether or not our prayers are heard is simply the fixing of all of his negative behavior. Do you see what I'm getting at?

HEART POSTURE

As I researched scriptures that speak into a man's Diligence, a deeper theme was being highlighted to me. I'll read **Psalm 127:2** and see if you pick up on it too. *"It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep."*

If we look at **Psalm 104:23**--*"Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening,"*--it seems like there's no harm in "rising up early." And if we look at **Proverbs 6:9**--*"How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?"*--we might insinuate that resting or sleeping is actually frowned upon.

The clutch point of Psalm 127:2 is in the middle: *"eating the bread of anxious toil."* This person is not working with a mindset that He trusts in God. In **Genesis 2:15,** where we first read about "work," the Hebrew word actually connotes of "a joyful experience of liberation." So this man who arises early and rests rarely is not working from a place of joy but a place of anxiety. This describes his heart posture. And this heart posture was a recurring theme throughout my research on what it means to be Diligent in a godly way.

Here's a side quest for you: I was listening to the BEMA podcast, Episode 1 or 2, and they filled in some contextual gaps that was interesting for me to learn. (If you haven't ever listed to this podcast, search BEMA in your podcast app.) The Jewish day actually begins at sundown. The day BEGINS with rest. We are not a definition of what we produce, our success, or our fame and as a reflection of this, they do not start their day by performing or going to work. The start by resting. I am not my production, my efficiency, effectiveness, output, earnings, or accomplishments. When I learned this, my understanding of what "work" really is, and where its proper place should be in my life changed. And I know we're supposed to be focusing on our Husbands, but isn't it just like God's Word to be moving and active in our own personal lives, enlightening *us*, convicting *us*, and changing *us* WHILE we pray for our husbands?

Back on the subject of heart posture. Here are some verses that speak to me about praying for my husband's Diligence and his heart posture towards work:

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

A craving that is not of the Lord comes from a heart that is not aligned with His.

> **Proverbs 13:11** - *Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.*

The word "hastily" here translates to "fraud, vanity, unjust, cheating" in other Bible translations. Therefore, wealth that is acquired in this way does not reflect the character or virtues of God. The posture of this man's heart for unjust gain, cutting corners, and immediate gratification is rooted in selfishness and greed.

> **Proverbs 23:4** - *Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist.*

As we'll find out in a later video, money is the root of all evil. If acquiring wealth is the focus of a man's heart, his actions and his fruit will reflect that. It takes a surrendered heart to be quiet and discerning enough to pause and choose to stay on the narrow path.

> **Ephesians 6:5-8** - *Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man…*

Paul puts it so plainly: *with a sincere heart.* A heart posture of slothfulness or greed plays the worldly games, shaking hands with only those that can benefit them, speaking idle words as lip-service and niceties, and thinks firstly about their personal gain. A sincere heart would stop to be discerning, prioritize honesty, and have integrity in dealings, and act steadfastly in life understanding that the Lord sees all and does not overlook their work (**Hebrews 6:10**).

Flip back to **2 Peter 1:5** and let's read through verse 8. *"make every effort*—be diligent— *to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing,* ***they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful*** *in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Now that we understand a little more about how our heart posture affects our actions (**Luke 6:45** - *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*), let's talk more about praying for our husbands' balancing of the Diligence scale.

BALANCE

Centering the Busybodies

Looking at **Leviticus 23:3**, we see that humans are instructed to set aside time to rest in the form of a Sabbath. (There's a BEMA episode on this one too if you want a more contextual look at what it means to "Sabbath".) If your husband struggles with putting his emails down, leaving work on time, or turning work off during appropriate times of the week, praying for his Rest and reminding him that God not only allows for him to chill, but *instructs* him to, may be helpful. I have a whole list of scriptures on Rest in the *Scripture Book Vol 2*.

To the same point, flip to **Ecclesiastes 2:11** and **4:8**. For a man who may busy himself beyond necessary, this verse is a good reminder that we get to take nothing with us when we die, therefore, unless we're making Heaven crowded, all his work is in vain and worthless. It's a vapor (*"vanity"*) that disappears into thin air and is a miserable business. I think I speak for us all when I say I don't want a husband who is unhappy or miserable in his business. And he may not be outwardly unhappy but the Bible tells us in many different ways that if we are striving for wealth or prosperity with the wrong heart posture, it *will* collapse and as a result we will too. I enjoy these verses because they're great reminders that what we see with our eyes and acquire in our hands is worthless at the end of the day.

If we're being organized about this, we can add these verses to the Diligence scale on the 10 side as weapons of warfare to combat a heart posture that has chosen to be diligent beyond godly Diligence. Remember, this side of the scale is for the busybodies and workaholic types.

Awakening the Slothful

We mentioned **Proverbs 6:9** earlier as it's a bit like a bucket of water to a lazy persons nap. We can add this verse to the 0 side of the scale as a weapon that calls out and convicts the slothful.

Side note: I put "discouraging" verses like this in the Scripture Books because I believe it's important that we are not just reminded of all the blessings that come along when we choose to do things God's way, but we also need to be aware that there are consequences when we choose to do things our own way.

I need you to remember this: a prayer Bible should **ONLY *edify, encourage,*** or ***comfort*** someone. In no way, shape or form are we to write prayers of passive aggression, accusation, or even pleas to God to "fix him". We addressed this last week about getting our own heart posture properly aligned before entering into this sacred intercessory prayer space. With that said, be very cautious to highlight these "discouraging" scriptures. We do not hold the Office of the Prophet so correction, warnings, or judgments are not ours to give. Leave that to the One who does it all perfectly in love and gentleness.

However, if a "discouraging" scripture truly speaks to your heart, you can write a prayer of thankfulness, even it is in faith-filled form (thanking God for something that hasn't happened yet), such as, "Thank you, Lord, for awakening my husband and showing him his godly giftings," or "Father, I thank you for the work you have already done to fan my husband's passions into flame and awakening his Spirit," even if he isn't currently walking this out.

Some other "shake 'em awake" verses that have a bit of a warning bite to them are **Proverbs 18:9, 20:4, 21:25, 24:30-31**, and **Ecclesiastes 10:18.**

Showing the Balance

Proverbs 10:4 speaks of the good and the bad when Solomon explains *"a slack hand causes poverty but the hand of the diligent makes rich."* **Proverbs 15:19** is very similar in nature. We can put verses like these in the balanced middle ground of 5 on our scale.

I believe sometimes when we read Proverbs, we naturally look to those verses as hard and fast truths and applicable to every situation. Or maybe that they can seem contradictory to one another, but the reality is that these verses are supposed to be read with discernment and applied to situations as the Holy Spirit leads, rather than a blanketed application.

We've talked about how our heart posture leads our decisions and that there *is* such things as "too much" when it comes to being Diligent and Ambitious, now let's touch on how Diligence should be led by a proper alignment of priorities in our life.

PRIORITIES

If you've spend any amount of time in *The Scripture Books*, you will have noticed I like to include scriptures

that show real life examples of people demonstrating (or not demonstrating) the particular topic at hand. I feel that reading these scriptures makes the Bible—especially the Old Testament— more relatable. They may be ancient people from far away lands but they were humans, broken and confused, just like us, and I think it's really helpful in our own Christian walk if we read about their successes and failures and learn from them. Personally, I would rather learn from their mistakes than have to experience those mistakes on my own!

So here we go, **Nehemiah 4:21-23** describes the work ethic of the people and verse **6:3** illustrates Nehemiah's personal priorities for this season. (I love this verse; I need it on a sign on my office door.)

Cliff notes: The people have built the wall and the only thing left is to finish the gates. A couple guys summon Nehemiah to take a break for a few days but because Nehemiah's heart was on point with God's priorities, he discerned that this was likely not your average run of the mill boys trip invitation. Here's his response:

> *"I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"*

He knew his number one focus. Let me reframe it for a second: You have a family. Your husband is playing catch with your boys, running around and wrestling with them. His phone rings. It's a work call. *May our husbands maintain the pause necessary to make a Proverbs 23:4 judgment call in this situation.* His family **is** his work, and when appropriate, may he see it as the work he is called to that cannot be hindered or interrupted.

This is how we can use examples and stories from the Old Testament to lead our prayer life and our own Christian walk.

Flip over to **Proverbs 12:11**. This verse speaks of *"worthless pursuits"* and is translated in other versions to read "worthless people," "chasing fantasies," "daydreamers," "worthless projects," and "useless things". To chase after fantasies shows a mindset with its priorities out of line.

Going to **Isaiah 55:2**, the Lord calls out the disorder of the Israelites priorities when He says, *"why do you*

spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" He wants us to put first things first. Spend your money on what you need and that which will sustain. Put your sweat equity into a work that is fruitful and satisfies. **John 6:27** reflects this same notion when he tells us *"to not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life."* When a man's heart is out of alignment, his priorities will reflect that disconnect. When a man's heart prioritizes God, his efforts and decisions will reflect that decision also.

When I'm praying for my husband's Diligence and specifically his priorities, I want to recognize that I also have deficiencies in this area and that *striving to enter through the narrow door* (**Luke 13:24**) is hard and it may require intercessory prayer, encouragement, and accountability from others, because the end of Luke 13:24 tells us exactly why: *"for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."* It's not easy to stay on the straight and narrow, and that's why we're praying for our husbands: because they need *divine* help. Intercessory prayer is how we're partnering with God who is eager, willing, and able to do more, exceedingly, and abundantly than we can ask or imagine!

Here are some great words to add to your prayers when you're fighting for right alignment of priorities in your husband's heart: *be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the Lord.* These aren't my words, they're straight out of **1 Corinthians 15:58**

DISCIPLINE

Diligence is not a one time act. Like Webster said, it's a **steady** application and a **constant** effort. It's playing the long game. And just as our husbands need to be steadfast, diligent, and disciplined, we wives also need to be steadfast, diligent, and disciplined in our prayer efforts for him. *God, let us develop our own diligence as warring wives who carry spiritual burdens and constantly lift our husbands up to You in prayer.* There will be days and seasons when we don't feel like it or don't have it in us. Maybe we will be too busy to make time for it. It's in these seasons that we need to focus on scripture about the *importance* of Discipline. (See how God can use our efforts in prayer for our husbands for *our own* sanctification and comfort?)

Nike pretty much coined the best phrase when it comes to discipline: *Just Do It.* And **Ezra 10:4** reflects this sentiment pretty well: *"arise, for it is your task, and we are with you; be strong and do it."* When your husband is facing a challenging decision at work, imagine yourself standing in front of him with your hands

on his arms, looking into his eyes and repeating those same words. "Arise. This is your task. I support you. Be strong. Just do it." This would be speaking encouragement, purpose, unity, support, and words of life into him! Encourage him to be disciplined, diligent, and walking out his calling because the Lord has prepared him for such a time as this. I'm glad I found this verse because I need to utilize this!

Check out **Haggai 2:4**. So the people are discouraged, a bit overwhelmed and the Lord is now giving them a pep-talk, much like Ezra did. He looks at each of them individually and speaks directly to them saying *"be strong,"* then commands them to *"work"* regardless of how they're feeling or how discouraged they are. But because He's a loving God He doesn't just tell them to get to work and then leaves them to their own devices; He says He is with them. He's their support. Their comfort. Their partner through it, because sometimes we need an accountability partner to help us stay disciplined.

Matthew 25:23 feels like the verse of all verses to encourage discipline. ***"You've been faithful over little, I will set you over much."*** You handled the small stuff. You past the first test. Congratulations, you're graduating to the really cool level of managing Much! Being disciplined in the little things reminds me of the spiritual milk mentioned in **Hebrews 5:13-14**. The "*much*" is the spiritual "*solid food*" that someone graduates to after having *"their powers of discernment trained by* ***constant*** *practice."* Wow, that sounds really familiar. "***Constant*** efforts to accomplish what is undertaken." Yep, that's Websters definition of Diligence.

John 9:4 says *"we must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work."* This puts purpose and a timeline to our discipline. Like Nehemiah, we cannot be interrupted; the hour is here. We must choose to be disciplined in doing the work of the Lord because judgement day will come like a thief, a time when no one knows, and when it does, time's up. And **1 Corinthians 3:8** tells us that *we will receive our wages according to our labor.* We know we will sometimes experience seasons of slow growth, speedy maturity, and maybe even seasons of setbacks. As much as we want our husbands to stay Diligent and disciplined, we also need to *not grow weary doing the good work* of prayer.

Some actionable items of the surrendered, Diligent heart are as follows:

- *to live quietly, mind your own affairs, and work with your hands* as described by Paul in **1 Thessalonians 4:11**.
- *To be a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of*

truth as instructed by Paul in **2 Timothy 2:15.**

- And again in **2 Peter 1:5-8** but this time in it's entirety: *"to make every effort* [be diligent] *to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

CONCLUSION

Our husbands will go through different seasons throughout his life and you may find your prayers traveling up and down that scale of Diligence throughout your marriage. We're all imperfect. Remember, it's our job to speak *words of life* over our husbands, not to use God's Word as a weapon against him. That's Jesus's job. So as a praying wife, be patient and may your prayers be Diligent.

I know a prayer Bible can seem daunting at first, but remember, we have plenty of time so if we stay **DILIGENT** and write **2-3 prayers a day** *(use your Polite house 20 minute candle to help you stay focused!)*, the Bible will practically build itself over the course of our series and you'll be left with an amazing tool of warfare as well as tangible proof of God's presence and provision in the form of a Prayer Bible with 140-180 handwritten prayers.

God's word does not return void but accomplishes what it sets out to do! That's a promise and He's never broken one so far!

Copyright © Selah Way Sisters 2026. Not available for distribution. All rights reserved.

CLEAN YOUR HEART

Use this on days that feel hard or create a daily rhythm of surrender and begin every prayer session with it.

This is not a moment to perform, produce, or prove anything. Quiet yourself before God and intentionally lay down pride, distraction, control, and any known sin. Confess what Holy Spirit brings to mind. Release your own agendas, assumptions, and expectations. Choose humility. Choose obedience. Ask God to empty you of self so He can fill you with His Spirit. Do not move forward until your heart is surrendered and your spirit is yielded.

Lord, thank your calling me to draw near to You in this way.[1] Your Word says the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working[2] and You hear the prayer of the righteous.[3] I know my sins have made a separation between You and I.[4] If I cherish sin in my heart, You, Lord, will not listen.[5] Therefore, let me test and examine my ways.[6] Lord, weigh my spirit,[7] for even a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough.[8] Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting![9] Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.[10]

[Selah - pause, listen, repent, forgive, receive grace]

Thank you for cleansing me from what is dishonorable, that I am a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to You, and ready for every good work.[11]

[1] James 4:8; [2] James 5:16; [3] Proverbs 15:29; [4] Isaiah 59:2; [5] Psalm 66:18; [6] Lamentations 3:40; [7] Proverbs 16:2; [8] 1 Corinthians 5:6; [9] Psalm 139:23-24; [10] Psalm 51:10; [11] 2 Timothy 2:21

Copyright © Selah Way Sisters 2026. Not available for distribution. All rights reserved.