

Improvvidence Condemned

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Improvvidence enjoyed
(*Matthew 6:28, 31, 34; Luke 6:30, 35*)

Improvvidence condemned
(*Proverbs 13:22; 1Timothy 5:8*)

The word “improvvidence” could be applied to an individual, a family, an organization, or even a nation that is not providing for the future. By definition, those who practice improvvidence could be exhibiting one or more of the following traits: thrifless, incautious, selfish, lazy, or even rash.

Biblically, there are many scriptures showing that improvvidence is selfish as well as foolish. Also, when someone has been told they need to deal with the issue of improvvidence in their lives, and they refuse to act on it, this attitude can lead to tempting God.

Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, ⁷which, having no captain (leader), overseer or ruler, ⁸provides her supplies (bread) in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest. ⁹How long will you slumber (lie down), O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? ¹⁰A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep – ¹¹so shall your poverty come on you like a robber, and your need like an armed man (Prov. 6:6-11; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The apostle Paul emphasized that anyone, who claimed to be a follower of Jesus Christ, had to conduct themselves in a manner that would not be considered disorderly and this included a command regarding being too lazy to work.

But we (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy) command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he (they) received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹not because we do not have authority (cf. 1Cor. 9:4, 6-14), but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies (2Thes. 3:6-11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because Almighty God loves everyone He has created, He planned ahead of time to provide for the spiritual well-being of all who have sinned through the sacrifice of His son, Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 9:22). Conversely, those who are unloving will make excuses for not planning ahead, and providing for the future well-being of family members or friends.

And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of **the Lamb** (symbol of Christ) **slain from the foundation of the world** (Rev. 13:8; cf. 1Pet. 1:19-20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The law of sacrifice is practiced by those who plan for the future well-being of others and it is not always easy or convenient to do. It certainly was not an easy task for Jesus Christ but his act of love paved the way for billions of sinners.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life on behalf of his friends (Jn. 15:13; RNT).

With these scriptural examples in mind, the claim that improvidence is acceptable will be exposed as fraudulent. The Biblical texts, used to support the false accusation that God's word is contradictory on this subject, are dealing with different topics all together. One of these has to do with anxiety over physical matters. Hence, the word "anxious" is used in each of the references that follow.

And about clothing, **why are you anxious?** Think about the lilies of the field; they do not labor, neither do they spin (Mt. 6:28; RNT; emphasis added).

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What might we eat?' or 'What might we drink?' or 'With what might we clothe ourselves?' (Mt. 6:31; RNT; emphasis added).

Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. The day has enough of its own wickedness (Mt. 6:34; RNT; emphasis added).

Christ pointed out that if people are focused on physical goods and pursuits, they cannot worship Almighty God because all their time and attention is absorbed with these matters. In fact, the context of the three scriptures above was prefaced by an example of materialism.

No one is able to serve two lords, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and have a low opinion of the other. **You are not able to serve God and mammon** (riches) (Mt. 6:24; RNT; emphasis added; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Those who put aside for the future, are much less likely to be obsessed or anxious about physical things because they are following the wisdom of an ant that stores up for the future. The habit of future planning should actually relieve anxiety.

From a spiritual point of view, Christ taught that being distracted with physical pursuits can be harmful.

But as they were travelling (Christ's disciples), he (Christ) entered into a village and a certain woman named Martha received him as a guest. ³⁹And she also had a sister called Mariam, who, having sat beside the Lord's feet, was also listening to his word. ⁴⁰But Martha was drawn around much service; and having confronted him, she said, "Lord, is it not a care to you that my sister has left me behind to serve alone? Then say to her that she is to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered and said to her, '**Martha, Martha, you are anxious and in an uproar about many things;** ⁴²but only one thing is necessary, for Mariam has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her (Lk. 10:38-42; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Unfortunately, Martha was too focused on physical activities and it was having a negative effect on her spiritual growth.

So the verses in Matthew 6:28, 31, and 34 are not dealing with the subject of planning for the future. Instead, they are dealing with worrying about physical pursuits and focusing on material goods.

The next section of scripture used to claim that God condones improvidence is dealing with loving one's enemies and having compassion on them because they are spiritually impoverished.

It has nothing to do with ignoring the importance of future planning.

Give to everyone who asks of you, and from he who takes from you, do not ask it back (Lk. 6:30; RNT).

But love those who are hostile to you, and do good and lend, hoping to receive nothing; and great will be your reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the unfavorable and evil. ³⁶Become merciful, just as your Father is likewise merciful (Lk. 6:35-36; RNT).

Mankind's real enemies are not flesh and blood. Instead, they are the fallen host of heaven. Therefore, any physical goods that our enemies are trying to take away from us cannot be compared to the 'pearl of great price' that God has offered to those who seek to obey Him (cf. Mt. 13:46). This pearl symbolizes participation in God's kingdom. The fallen host can also strike God's people in an attempt to have them turn their back on Him (Lk. 6:29; Heb. 11:35-39; cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:9). These are the real issues that are being dealt with in Luke 6:27-30. So limiting these scriptures to our physical enemies misses the mark completely.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12).

Mankind's spiritual enemies work diligently to create any occasion that allows them to make a false accusation against those who are trying to obey God.

Then I (John) heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ

have come, for **the accuser of our brethren** (Satan), **who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down** (Rev. 12:10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Despite all the things that the fallen host of heaven have done to mankind, God's people and the loyal host of heaven need to be careful that they do not attempt to retaliate.

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him (Satan) a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' (Jude 9; Ed. note in parenthesis)

For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' ³¹It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:30-31).

Christ made it abundantly plain that if our enemies are able to cause us harm, it is only because Almighty God has allowed it to occur for an important reason, even if we do not fully understand what that reason is at the time.

Then Pilate said to him (Christ), 'Are you not speaking to me? Do you not know that I have power (authority) to crucify you, and power (authority) to release you?' ¹¹Jesus answered, '**You could have no power at all against me unless it had been given you from above.** Therefore the one who delivered me to you (Satan) has the greater sin (Jn. 19:10-11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In conclusion, God does not enjoy improvidence. Instead, he expects His people to act in a responsible and loving manner, which includes planning for the future needs of others. Anyone who is capable of working needs to do so (1Tim 5:8). Some acts of sacrifice on behalf of others

are as simple as putting aside savings, maintaining life insurance, and providing a last will and testament.

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