

▼ Sluggard Prov 6

- **3636.** ὀκνηρός oknērós; fem. oknērá, neut. oknērón, adj. from oknéō (3635), to be slow, to delay. Slow, tardy, slothful, lazy. Of persons (Matt. 25:26; Rom. 12:11; see Sept.: Prov. 6:6, 9); of things in the neut. meaning tedious, tiresome (Phil. 3:1).

Zodhiates, S. (2000). The complete word study dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

- † ὀκνηρός

Like ὄκνος, which means “hesitation” through weariness, sloth, fear, bashfulness, or reserve, ὀκνηρός is used a. of persons in the sense of “showing ὄκνον,” “hesitating,” “anxious,” “negligent,” “slothful.” It thus denotes one who for various reasons or difficulties does not have the resolution to act. Pind. Nem., 11, 22: ἐλπίδες; Thuc., IV, 55, 2: ἐς τὰ πολεμικά, along with ἀπρόθυμος Plut. De Tuenda Sanitate Praecepta, 14 (II, 129b); Them., 2, 3 (I, 112c); opp. τολμήρος (cf. R. 15:15), θρασύς (cf. Luc. Epistola ad Nigrinum, 38); Aristot. Hist. An., 9, p. 608b, 13: τὸ θῆλυ ... ὀκνηρότερον, Eth. Nic., 4, p. 1125a, 24; Menand. Peric., 127: ὡς ὀκνηρῶς μοι προσέρχε[ι], Δᾶε (cf. Ac. 9:38; Nu. 22:16 γνῃ; Ju. 18:9 ἔχῃ ni); Plut. Lib. Educ., 16 (II, 12c d): δύο γὰρ ταῦθ’ ὡσπερὶ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐστίν, ἐλπίς τε τιμῆς καὶ φόβος τιμωρίας· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὀρμητικωτέρους πρὸς τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων, ἡ δ’ ὀκνηροὺς πρὸς τὰ φαῦλα τῶν ἔργων ἀπεργάζεται. Plut. Cicero, 5 (I, 863a): ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ὀκνηρῶς προσήει. Philo Rer. Div. Her., 254; Spec. Leg., I, 99; cf. the expression in epistolary style, P. Eleph., 13, 7 (223/2 B.C.): μὴ ὀκνῶν γράφειν, Procl. de Forma Epist. in R. Hercher, Epistolographi

Graeci (1873), 8 ε. It is also used b. of things, “causing ὄκνον,” “awakening suspicion, dislike, fear,” Soph. Oed. Tyr., 834: ἡμῶν ... μὲν ταῦτ’ ὀκνηρά ...

In the OT ὀκνηρός is often used in connection with rules of practical wisdom. **Industry and work are here part of pious but prudent conduct.** Thus ὀκνηρός (predominantly for the Heb. לָצַד) **depicts the slothful man who lacks the resolve to get to work** (Prv. 6:6, 9), **who lets inconveniences stop him** (Prv. 20:4), or who, having no resolution, never moves on from the will to the deed (Prv. 21:25). **In contrast the continually active wife, who takes pleasure in work, is extolled** (Prv. 31:27 for Heb. תִּלְצַח), Cf. also Sir. 22:1 f.; 37:11 (אִשָּׁה).

In the NT a. occurs at Mt. 25:26 in an eschatological context. The slothful servant, who cannot overcome his distaste for responsible effort, is an image of the Christian who hesitates to put his divinely imparted gift actively to work during the testing period of earthly life. This sloth is a serious matter because it ignores and neglects the responsibility which the righteous must display in face of God’s eternal judgment. **In R. 12:11 Paul significantly relates the warning against sloth to the admonition to be inspired and directed by the Spirit.** To yield to the promptings of carnal indolence is for Christians an offence against the Spirit who enables and obligates them to overcome themselves.

Sense b. occurs at Phil. 3:1, “arousing dislike or displeasure.” Impelled by the Spirit to equip Christians adequately for salvation, Paul overcomes the dislike or distaste which might arise through repetition of his admonition.

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Kittel, G., Bromiley, G. W., & Friedrich, G. (Eds.). (1964–). Theological

dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed., Vol. 5, pp. 166–167).
Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- ὀκνέω, ὀκνηρός

okneō, to hesitate, delay; oknēros, lazy, idle, negligent, burdensome

okneō, S 3635; EDNT 2.505; MM 444–445; L&N 67.125; BDF §392(1b); BAGD 563 | oknēros, S 3636; TDNT 5.166–167; EDNT 2.506; MM 445; L&N 22.8, 88.250; BAGD 563

In literary Greek of the first century, okneō means “hesitate.” This is often its meaning in the LXX (Tob 12:13), where, however, it translates the niphal of the Hebrew *‘āṣal*, **always with negation: “Do not hesitate to set out”** (Judg 18:9); “Do not be slow to give thanks to God” (Tob 12:6); “Let this comely slave not delay to come to my lord” (Jdt 12:13). In Sir 7:35, *mē oknei* is synonymous with *mē amelei*: “Do not hesitate to visit the sick, for it is for such deeds that you will be loved.” When the disciples of Joppa ask Peter to come without delay, they use the same turn of phrase as Balak to Balaam in Num 22:16—*mē oknēsēs dielthein*.

The adjective oknēros (Hebrew *‘āṣēl*) is always pejorative in the Bible. It refers to the lazy person, or the loafer, who stays in bed (Prov 6:9; 26:4), whose “hands refuse to work.” Such a person is eminently worthy of scorn, inspires disgust, even has the face to justify his inactivity.⁷ **This is the case with the wicked and idle servant (*ponēre doule kai oknēre*) of the parable of the talents (Matt 25:26), who not only has failed to work to produce a profit on his master’s property but in addition makes excuses for his idleness.**

The nuance of culpable unconcern in **Rom 12:11 (*tē spoudē mē oknēroi*) is well attested in the papyri, where the author of a letter forbids the neglect of his instructions** (P.Mich. 221, 14; P.Oslo 82, 9; 128, 12; P.Oxy. 2190, 44; 2275, 9; 2596, 11; SB 9497, 26). The recipient is expected to be active, diligent, quick to act (P.Mert. 22, 3; P.Oxy. 1775, 8: *ouk oknēsa oute*

palin ēmelēsa; PSI 837, 15; Menander, Mis.: oknērōs kai tremōn eiserchomai, in P.Oxy. 2656, 266), especially when it comes to helping someone in need: spoudasate autō aoknōs ... kai hēm̄is ouk oknēsōmen (P.Lond. 1916, 16; cf. 2090, 6; PSI 1414, 21).

As for the remark in Phil 3:1—“To write the same things to you is not burdensome to me” (ta auta graphein hymin, emoi men ouk oknēron)—is not only a common formula in letters, but an expression of fervor and zeal in affection, used with loved ones: “It is not burdensome for me to write to you” (ou mē oknēsō soi graphin, P.Mich. 491, 14); “Do not be afraid to write letters, because I am extremely glad to get them” (ibid. 482, 22); “Dearest brother, do not hesitate to write to me” (glykytate adelphe, graphōn moi mē oknei, P.Mert. 85, 16); “Do not hesitate to write me concerning your health” (mē oknēsēs graphein moi peri tēs hygiās sou, P.Harr. 107, 15; cf. P.Mich. 490, 12; SB 10652, B 11); Diogenes writing to his mother in the first century: “If you write to me about anything at all that you need, do not hesitate to write to me; you know that I will do it immediately.”

Spicq, C., & Ernest, J. D. (1994). Theological lexicon of the New Testament (Vol. 2, pp. 576–577). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.