

**A. Lots of Potential ... but neglected:**

---

1. **Proverbs 24:30-34 (NLT)** <sup>30</sup> I walked by the field of a lazy person, the vineyard of one with no common sense.<sup>31</sup> I saw that it was overgrown with nettles. It was covered with weeds, and its walls were broken down.<sup>32</sup> Then, as I looked and thought about it, **I learned this lesson:**<sup>33</sup> A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—<sup>34</sup> then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.
  1. It's important to note that Proverbs is not a book of absolute promises for all of mankind, but they point out general truths or principles.
2. **The owner of the vineyard had something that was once valuable.**
3. **This owner is called lazy and described as one who has no common sense:**
4. **This vineyard is overgrown with nettles & covered with weeds**
  1. **Weeds are like our human nature.** You will recall Paul talking about this in:
    1. **Romans 5:12 (NLT) — 12** When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.
  2. Reaching a state of being "overgrown" **is the result of long-term neglect.**
5. **The walls of this vineyard are broken down.**
6. **There's a word to describe a vineyard overgrown with weeds and surrounded by broken walls .... it's called "neglect".**

---

**B. What is "neglect"?**

---

1. (def) **Neglect** is the failure to provide necessary care, attention, or support **to someone or something for which one is responsible**. It can be intentional or unintentional, and it often leads to harm or risk of harm.
2. You and I are also created for a purpose that involves working and taking care of our "responsibilities"
  1. **Genesis 2:7-15 NLT (Summary)** God created man, gave him life, and then ... **15 The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.**
1. This is illustrated well in the **parable of the talents found in Matthew 25 and in Luke 19**, it's the parable where the Master gave each servant different amounts of responsibility, and in the end, they had to give an account for what they did with the things he gave them to manage on his behalf.
2. **What is YOUR "vineyard"? What do you have that's valuable that God has entrusted to you?**
3. **The question is,**
  1. Am I putting in the time & effort required to get the best out of them?

2. Are these areas of my life only marginally “OK” because I’m not prepared to put in the effort to make them the best they can be?
3. God placed me into MY vineyard, and He surrounded me with things and relationships, then He asked me to “**Tend and watch over**” them.

---

## C. The Fruit of Neglect

---

1. Have you ever driven past an **old, abandoned house** that's falling apart, and wondered, "How did it get to that state"?
  - a. Over time, something happened to cause it to no longer be maintained and valued for the purpose for which it was built. It was neglected, eventually became empty, and was left to the elements.
2. **HOW does this happen in our lives?**
  - a. **The DRIFT: Hebrews 2:1 (BSB) — 1 We must pay closer attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not DRIFT away.**
  - b. Oxford Dictionary defines Drifting as "a continuous slow movement from one place to another."
  - c. **It can be**
    - i. **a slow drift from taking care of your physical health**
    - ii. **a slow drift into unhealthy habits**
    - iii. **a slow drift away from spending time in the Word & Prayer**
    - iv. **a slow drift from putting effort into your relationship with your spouse, family, or friends.**
    - v. Every single area will deteriorate if they are not maintained regularly and intentionally
  - d. **Do you have any “markers” that let you know if things are drifting?**
  - e. All of life requires that we continually evaluate and make adjustments if we want to be intentional about the things that matter to us.
3. **Why is it so easy to neglect something or someone?:**
  - a. **No immediate consequences:**
    - i. ... v33. **A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—**... and slowly but SURELY things decay and eventually fall apart.
  - b. **Ruled by feelings:**
    - i. Putting effort into things takes hard work, it takes commitment, it takes consistency. It also requires action over feelings.
  - c. **“Good enough”:**
    - i. It may also be that we have **too low expectations** of what could be
    - ii. Even though we recognize that things are not as they should be ... it's still "functional", it's still "good enough" (not broken enough yet for us to care)

- d. **We despair because the gap is too big**
  - e. **Don't know where to start**
4. Whatever you fail to manage will eventually fall apart if you are not paying attention.

---

## D. Application

---

1. The Proverb of the Vineyard illustrates what it looks like when we don't put the necessary effort into dealing with our responsibilities in life, and those that are not managed well will begin to fall apart, and once productive things will stand neglected and unfruitful.
2. **What areas of your life used to be healthy & awesome** and have now (like the vineyard in Proverbs) become “**overgrown, or broken and in need of repair**”?
3. Are you giving **the best** that you have to offer?
4. **Neglect doesn't happen overnight**; it happens when we consistently ignore what is vitally important.
5. Every day, we are taking steps toward some destination but don't wait until things are so neglected that they are no longer worth repairing!
6. The enemy doesn't need to destroy us directly; all he needs is for us to be apathetic and to stop paying attention, **and ruin is sure to follow.**

### Challenge Questions:

7. What is ONE AREA in which you need to make a change?
8. What ONE THING will you do differently?
9. WHEN will you start?
10. WHO will hold you accountable?
11. *Consistent small steps in the right direction can accomplish a LOT!*

**Ephesians 5:15–16 (NLT) 15** So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. **16 Make the most of every opportunity** in these evil days.