

**A lazy hand causes poverty,
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.**

Proverbs 10:4 – A Proverbial Story

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The Tale of Toby and the Talking Tool Shed

In the little town of Willowbend, there lived a boy named Toby. Toby was ten years old, just like you, and he had one big problem—he didn't like to work. He would rather lie under the apple tree in his backyard, staring at the clouds and eating cookies, than help his parents with chores or do his homework.

Toby's family owned a beautiful garden with fruit trees, vegetables, and even some chickens. But Toby always had excuses.

"Mom, I'll help after one more cookie," he'd say.

"Dad, I promise I'll clean the chicken coop tomorrow," he'd yawn.

One sunny afternoon, while avoiding his chores again, Toby wandered into the old tool shed behind the house. It was dusty and full of cobwebs. But just as he was about to leave, he heard a voice.

"Lazy hands cause poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich," said a deep, crackly voice.

Toby jumped. "Wh-who said that?"

A rusty rake wiggled slightly and spoke, "I did. I'm Roger the Rake. This shed is enchanted. We tools only talk to those who need a good lesson."

Toby's eyes grew wide. "You talk? Really?"

A hammer, named Hazel, chimed in, "Yes, and we've been watching you avoid work all year. The garden's a mess, the chickens are grumpy, and your homework's always late!"

Toby shuffled his feet. "Work is just so... hard."

Roger the Rake sighed. "It is at first. But it's also rewarding. You see, there's an old saying: '*A lazy hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.*' That means if you avoid doing what needs to be done, you won't grow. But if you work hard, you'll succeed—maybe even become great!"

Toby frowned. "But I'm just a kid. What difference does it make if I'm a little lazy?"

Hazel the Hammer replied, “Even little hands can do big things. Why don’t you try it for one week? Wake up early, help your parents, and really *try*.”

Toby wasn’t sure. But the idea of enchanted tools and being “great” sounded kind of exciting. “Alright,” he said, “I’ll try.”

And he did.

The next morning, Toby woke up before the sun. He helped his mom gather eggs, fed the chickens, and watered the garden with care. He even did his homework without anyone reminding him.

By the end of the week, the garden looked alive again. The chickens clucked happily. His parents were amazed, and his teacher gave him a gold star for his perfect homework.

One night, he went back to the tool shed. “I did it,” he said proudly.

Roger and Hazel smiled. “Well done, Toby. See? Hard work doesn’t just grow gardens—it grows character.”

From that day on, Toby still liked cookies and cloud-watching, but he never skipped his chores again. And whenever he was tempted to be lazy, he remembered the wise old proverb: *“A lazy hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.”*

And sometimes, if he listened very carefully, he could still hear Roger and Hazel cheering him on.