

Generation Next

May 18th

THE SIN OF SLOTHFULNESS OR LAZINESS

Again Webster's Dictionary defines this sin as "a disinclination to action or labor; sluggishness, slothfulness, idleness and indulgence." Scripture says much about it too. We read in,

Proverbs 19:15 (NIV) "Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless man goes hungry."

Proverbs 26:14 (NIV) "As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed."

Proverbs 21:25 (NIV) "The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work."

Hebrews 6:12 (NIV) "We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

God delights in those who desire to work hard, whose goal it is to do their finest and best work. God frowns greatly upon those whose goal is to do the least work, and when forced to work, give their poorest attention and labor. This means that when you are employed, you are to work your best, and to the fullest ability and capacity you are capable of. Today in the American workforce, too many what the highest pay for the littlest work. This sin of laziness extends into many areas of life. For many Americans, it can be seen in the personal habits of cleanliness and dress, and even the keeping of ones home and place of residence. Although the phrase "cleanliness is next to godliness," is not directly in the Bible, the truth behind it is! Laziness is slothfulness which is simply sinful neglect. God Himself is a worker, a magnificent One at that! He wants His creatures to be the same. Today, the greatest slothful neglect is the neglect of the human soul. Failure to offer it up to God and to keep it pure, clean and useful for His service is a seat of this sin. So many neglect the condition of their soul to their own damnation. How does your life measure up? Are you guilty of slothfulness or laziness as we call it today? If so, turn from it to God and He can change things.

(FAST FACTS)

- More than 67 million Americans have taken antidepressants. 200 million prescriptions are written annually for depression and anxiety.
- 32 million Americans are taking three or more medications daily.
- Preschoolers are the fastest-growing market for antidepressants. At least four percent of preschoolers—more than a million—are clinically depressed.
- Number of hours per day that TV is on in an average U.S. home: 6 hours, 47 minutes. Adult Americans spend an average of more than eight hours a day in front of screens — televisions, computer monitors, cellphones or other devices, according to a new study. The study also found that live television in the home continues to attract the greatest amount of viewing time with the average American spending slightly more than five hours a day in front of the tube.
- The childhood obesity statistics reveal the stunning fact that almost 60% of children in America are obese children. The rate of overweight children in America is increasing rapidly. The obesity statistics of 2002 say that 22% of US preschoolers were overweight. Then, you can imagine how big the problem would be right now. Childhood obesity studies also reveal the fact that 40% of obese children and 70% of obese adolescents become obese adults. Indeed, by the time an obese child turns six years old, his/her chance of becoming an obese adult is over 50%.
- Every day, on average, 11,318 American youth (12 to 20 years of age) try alcohol for the first time, compared with 6,488 for marijuana; 2,786 for cocaine; and 386 for heroin. Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin drinking at 21.
- Five finger discount specialists steal nearly \$10 billion worth of merchandise from stores in the United States every year which means that retailers raise their prices in an attempt to recover the money that they have lost through theft.

Bible Verses

Proverbs 6:6-11

2 Thessalonians 3: 10-14

1 Timothy 5:8

Proverbs 15:19

Romans 12:11

Matthew 21:28-31

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Proverbs 20:13

Ephesians 6:5-7

*Commit to the sacrifice /
embrace it, don't run from it!!!*

What does this mean??

"What does the Bible say about laziness?"

Answer: Newton's first law of motion states that an object in motion tends to remain in motion, and an object at rest tends to remain at rest. This law applies to people. While some are naturally driven to complete projects, others are apathetic, requiring motivation to overcome inertia! Laziness, a lifestyle for some, is a temptation for all. But the Bible is clear that because the Lord, who is a working God, ordained work for man, laziness is sin. "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6).

The Bible has a great deal to say about laziness. The Proverbs especially are filled with wisdom concerning laziness and warnings to the lazy person. They tell us that a lazy person hates work: "The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work." (21:25); he loves sleep: "As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed." (26:14); he gives excuses: "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!'" (26:13); he wastes time and energy: "He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great waster" (18:9 KJV); he believes he is wise, but is a fool: "The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly" (26:16).

Proverbs also tells us the end in store for the lazy: A lazy person becomes a servant (or debtor): "Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor" (12:24); his future is bleak: "A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing" (20:4); he may come to poverty: "The soul of the lazy man desires and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich" (13:4 KJV).

There is no room for laziness in the life of a Christian. A new believer is truthfully taught that "by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). But a believer can become idle if he erroneously believes God expects no fruit from a transformed life. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). Christians show their faith by their works. ". . . I will show you my faith by my works. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:18, 26 KJV). Slothfulness violates God's purpose—good works. The Lord, however, empowers Christians to overcome the flesh's propensity to laziness by giving us a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In our new nature, we are motivated to diligence and productiveness out of a love for our Savior who redeemed us. Our old propensity toward indolence—and all other sin—has been replaced by a desire to live godly lives: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need" (Ephesians 4:28). We are convicted of our need to provide for our families through our labors: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8); and for others in the family of God: "You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:34-35).

As Christians, we know that our labors will be rewarded by our Lord if we persevere in diligence: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:9-10); "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24); "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" (Hebrews 6:10).

Christians should labor in God's strength to evangelize and disciple. The Apostle Paul is our example: We proclaim him [Christ], admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me" (Colossians 1:28-29). Even in heaven, Christians' service to God will continue, although no longer encumbered by the curse (Revelation 22:3). Free from sickness, sorrow, and sin – even laziness – the saints will glorify the Lord forever. "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

IN NEW YORK CITY a few years back, a woman was attacked outside her apartment. The attacker stabbed her, took \$49 and then ran off. The victim was injured. She couldn't move. And as she lay there bleeding, she started to scream. For more than 20 minutes she screamed, but no one in her building did anything.

The attacker did something, though. He was a sick man. He drove back by the crime scene, saw she was still there, jumped out of his car and killed her.

When the police interviewed the people in the apartment building, some said when they heard the attack they turned up their radios. One guy got up, yelled out the window and went back to sleep. In all, 38 different people said they heard her.

And those 38 people did nothing.

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WE SHOULDN'T PICTURE SLOTH AS A LAID-BACK COUCH POTATO. SLOTH IS MORE LIKE THE GRIM REAPER. IT IS THE MESSENGER OF DEATH WHO, WITH BONY FINGERS, POKES THE SPOTS IN OUR LIVES THAT OUGHT TO BE THRIVING AND WATCHES THEM ATROPHY.

Sloth is not about laziness. It's not about taking time to rest or failing to be a good little capitalist. Sloth is about indifference-indifference toward the soul, indifference toward other human beings, indifference toward the world, indifference toward God.

We shouldn't picture sloth as a laid-back couch potato. Sloth is more like the grim reaper. It is the messenger of death who, with bony fingers, pokes the spots in our lives that ought to be thriving and watches them atrophy.

At its core, sloth moves us away from everything that ultimately matters and hands us diversions instead. Drug users, TiVo addicts and excessive video gamers may be poisoned by sloth, but so are most workaholics, for sloth is content to aim us at either lethargy or fanaticism. It only matters that the target of our energies is worthless.

Of course, sloth may not be tops on our confession list. Perhaps you're like so many in our culture, and hours of obligations seem to pass so quickly that you have no time for yourself. Sloth-we assume-only affects those with pizza boxes stacked in the corner, or our friends who wake up at the crack-of-noon to check Facebook for... you know ... a while. Sloth, we think, doesn't affect people working real jobs, meeting real deadlines and perhaps caring for real kids.

But we would be mistaken.

Conversely, heaven is the sphere in which celebration, outlandish generosity and zeal are normal. Far from heaven being a boring, ethereal landscape of clouds and harp music, heaven is the soul-restoring reign of God breaking into a sick world and invigorating it all with new life. In Paul's words, heaven is the sphere in which "all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe – people and things, animals atoms-get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies" (Colossians 1:20, MSG).

This is why when Jesus spoke of God's presence and rule filling our world, He spoke about desire. He said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6, TNIV).

Sloth can infect your life when you listen to an iPod while playing with your kids-choosing a podcast over being fully present with family. Sloth is evident when you do your budget and (consciously or not) allocate a couple hundred bucks a month to eating out and a mere 30 to that whole starving-children-overseas thing. Sloth is present when you choose to spend all your social energies on close friends and exclude people who look weird or messy-whose apparent loneliness is obviously their own fault. Sloth often chooses noise over silence, busyness over joy, anxiety over rest, soul-sucking indifference over a full-throated, rehumanizing passion for life.

Sloth praises the ruts we dig for ourselves, and even when we know they are unhealthy, sloth tells us this is just the way life is.

Look closely at this Beatitude. Jesus was not blessing people who were already filled with goodness. He did not say, "Blessed are those who are full yet act like they're still hungry." No! Blessed are those who hunger and thirst. Who lack. Who hurt. Who realize the painful ache within. It seems Jesus was speaking to those of us with wrecked moral lives-so wrecked that He associated our pain with starvation.

A Stealthy Enemy

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