

“The Danger of Laziness”
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Proverbs 24:30-34
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Key Points

1. The Profile of the Sluggard

- a. The sluggard is a lazy, slothful person who doesn't like to work. Instead of working diligently, the sluggard spends his energy avoiding work and choosing to rest. Below is Proverb's profile of a sluggard:
 - i. “As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.” - Proverbs 26:14
 - ii. “Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.” - Proverbs 12:27
 - iii. “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!’” - Proverbs 22:13
 - iv. “The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth.” - Proverbs 19:24
 - v. “Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways and be wise. Without having any chief, officer or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.” - Proverbs 6:6-8
- b. *“The sluggard doesn't start things, doesn't finish things and doesn't face things.”* – Derek Kidner

2. The Consequences of Being a Sluggard

- a. Poverty. “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.” – Proverbs 24:33-34
- b. No harvest (an empty hand). “The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.” - Proverbs 20:4
- c. His indolence eventually catches up with him. “The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.” - Proverbs 15:19

3. Spotting Your Inner Sluggard

- a. For most of us, our “sluggardliness” is subtle. No matter how many hours we work or how successful we are in our work, it is wise and humble for us to carefully search ourselves for the patterns of the sluggard.
- b. *“In the past I would have considered anything but sloth to be one of my problems because I seem to be so busy. Sloth doesn't necessarily mean*

we're doing nothing. Sloth is the failure to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done—like the kamikaze pilot who flew seventeen missions. I came gradually to the realization that this was a temptation. I would have a task I didn't look forward to—say, setting up an appointment to confront someone about a broken relationship. Suddenly, a myriad of other tasks leapt up and begged to be done. I would clean my desk, call a staff meeting, write two articles for a newsletter we didn't even publish. I did a lot. But over time I discovered that all too often I didn't do what needed to be done when it needed to be done. Just as most alcoholics don't live on skid-row, most sloth-aholics don't spend days eating bon-bons and watching 'The Young and the Restless.' That's why Scott Peck notes that even workaholics can be lazy. They may work furiously but only because they are trying to avoid doing something truly needful.”
—John Ortberg

4. The Gospel and the Sluggard

- a. We must read Proverbs in light of the gospel. Proverbs can profile and warn us about laziness but transformation comes through the power of the gospel.
- b. Here's how the gospel speaks to us in our laziness:
 - i. Laziness is a sin against God. We must repent of our sin to Him.
 - ii. The gospel announces that there is forgiveness for sluggards. Jesus died for the sins of laziness and abdication. We can know forgiveness and acceptance by God because Jesus has paid the penalty for our sloth.
 - iii. Whoever turns from sin and trusts in Jesus is not only forgiven but given a new heart and is filled with the Holy Spirit. It is His strength that enables us to obey one day at a time.

Fellowship Starters:

1. Proverbs 24:33 tells us that the sluggard makes little decisions (“a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest...”) that have huge consequences. What little decisions are you making for which the consequences could be significant in time?
2. Josh quoted John Ortberg that a sluggard “may work furiously but only because they are trying to avoid doing something truly needful.” Are you working hard but neglecting the “truly needful” and important things in your life? If so, how can you grow and change?
3. Are you being a sluggard in any of the following areas of your life: pursuing God, building your marriage, disciplining your children, pursuing fellowship or sharing the gospel?

4. How can the gospel transform your life from lazy and slothful to diligent and faithful? What would repentance look like in your life?