

14. Laziness

January 3, 2010

How many of you made a new year's resolution? And how many of you have already broken it? Here is one that not many people, let alone Christians, make as their new year's resolution – not being lazy in the new year.

But I think that it is very important for all us to make this as the new year's resolution. Allow me to elaborate a little. We constantly make decisions every moment since we were born – from major decisions, such as getting the right job, moving to somewhere or getting married to that perfect person (I hope that you still think so), to minor decisions, something we don't even consciously think about.

If, rather when we break our new year's resolution, we are making a decision not to keep it. It is not that which one is correct or not correct as long as it is not harmful to yourself and others and not against the Word of God. You simply make a decision of 'yes' or 'no'.

Generally about five times a week – from Wednesday through Sunday morning, I need to start my studies really early in the morning for our Sunday morning and Midweek services. Since the weather is cold, I hate to get out of the warm bed. So when that horrible alarm clock goes off with that annoying, ungodly and demonic noise, I start to come up with about a half dozen excuses why I don't have to get up so early. My brother Pillow and sister Sheet don't make me get out of the bed any easier. I stay in bed until the Lord gives that command in my heart, "You are lazy, get up."

The Bible talks about laziness clearly, sometimes rather brutally. I believe that the Lord wants us not to waste His precious time on this earth.

A. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LAZY PEOPLE

Proverbs 6:6-11 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, 7 Which, (1) having no captain, Overseer or ruler, 8 (2) Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest. 9 How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep-- 11 So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.

I need to make this clear before we go any further in this study of laziness. After a hard day's work, after long days throughout the week, you and I need to rest. Even though the Lord did not need rest from the creation process in the beginning, He chose to rest as an example for us, especially for the driven person like me. There is a tremendous difference between being lazy and taking a well-deserved rest after the hard work.

Here are eight characteristics of lazy people:

1) Lazy people depend on others to give them directions, because it is too much effort to be self-motivated for themselves.

Lazy people are not self-motivated and they don't care about anything other than their immediate comfort. They even expect others to take care of it for them.

2) Lazy people fail to plan ahead.

Lazy people do not plan for future. Christian sluggards' excuse is that they wing it for Jesus' sake. Right! They are impulsive, short sighted and compulsive waster. They are the kind of people who spend money on the things they don't need while they don't have money to pay for what is necessary. Then they expect others to pick up the tab.

3) Lazy people neglect to care for what they have.

Proverbs 19:24 A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Can you just picture a person who is too lazy to bring up his spoon to his mouth, because he considers it too much labor? You can see this kind of people while you drive around your neighborhood area. You see tall weeds around their homes and trash piled up all around. They call it "desert landscape." Sure!

4) Lazy people desire things but they do not work to earn it.

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

Proverbs 21:25 The desire of the lazy man kills him, For his hands refuse to labor.

God blesses diligent and hard working people, but He condemns lazy ones. I asked you to underline v25. Notice that this man chooses to be slothful and lazy by refusing to work.

From 1988 till 1990, my family was involved in a home mission church in downtown Tucson where we had a homeless ministry. We met some down and out people who had series of bad circumstances that pushed them to be homeless, but the majority of them chose to be homeless and jobless. They just wanted money from whomever so that they could go get more alcohol to drink or do more drugs.

In many cases, they are the same kind of people who stand at the medians of street intersections and hold the signs that say "Will work for food." But in reality they don't want actual jobs, except free money. I choose not to give any.

In a way, we all fall into this category as well. We all want something great without putting out our best effort. We'd rather daydream than work for it.

Some people think that pastors get to have some sort of holy packages from the Lord when they become pastors – the package that contains the memory capability of the entire Bible, the gift of counseling and many others for pastoral ministry. No, it doesn't work that way. I wish it did. I have to memorize our weekly verses plus a few more just like you by reading 70 times or more to overcome my language barrier per week. You can ask my wife Karen, she will tell you.

5) Lazy people often don't even put out enough effort to make the basic needs.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

There are a score of people who want foods and other good things, but they don't want to work. There are people who promote this idea and encourage others to join so that they can make this happen. They want to take money out of the people who work hard to earn it and redistribute them freely to those who don't want to work.

That is one of the most unbiblical way to live. Oh, by the way, their own wealth will not be redistributed. Theirs would not be included in the redistribution systems.

Obama administration and his cohort Congress and Senate want to take your money and redistribute them to the people who choose not to work but they want free hand-outs. Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have tried all this and didn't work since 1940s and were literally bankrupted. But western Europe and the United States want to be like them. Just brilliant. I guess you have to go to Harvard to learn this kind of stupidity.

6) Lazy people always make excuses – lame excuses – why they cannot work.

Proverbs 22:13 The lazy man says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!"

Proverbs 24:30 I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding;

7) Lazy people always think that they are smart when they are not.

Proverbs 26:16 The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can answer sensibly.

They think that no one knows what they are doing – getting free money without honest work. They don't know that their deception will be exposed at the most inconvenient time.

8) Lazy people can easily destroy the things that took others long time to make.

Proverbs 18:9 He who is slothful in his work Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

How many of you do work with a lazy person? I say everyone. But wonder what they say about you. I hope that they don't consider you lazy.

B. THE CONSEQUENCES OF LAZINESS

1) Laziness brings deterioration.

Ecclesiastes 10:18 Because of laziness the building decays, And through idleness of hands the house leaks.

Show me one street gang member who is not lazy. They'd rather steal, rob, deal illegal drugs and murder others to get what they want than getting things through hard earned money. The more lazy people we have in our society, the more gangs we will have which bring more crimes.

In my opinion, the main problem with our teenagers in America is that they are not challenged enough academically, intellectually and spiritually. Instead of bringing up low-graded students up to higher standard level, the liberal educators lower the standard to pass low-graded students. In other words, those liberal educators are enabling our teenagers to be a lazy generation for the sake of self-esteem stupidity.

2) Laziness brings poverty.

Proverbs 19:15 Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, And an idle person will suffer hunger.

The Bible nor I are not saying that a person with poverty is lazy. But lazy people bring poverty into his or her life physically and spiritually.

C. ARE YOU SPIRITUALLY LAZY?

Matthew 25:14-15 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

Matthew 25:20-21 So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Matthew 25:24 Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

The third servant was unfaithful and therefore he was not rewarded. Because this man was lazy as his master declared, he intentionally chose not to succeed.

We all have been given at least one talent from the Lord. "Not me," you say. "I have no talents and no abilities. I can't do anything." Can you change a diaper? Sign up to help in the nursery. Can you listen? Visit people at the nursing home. Can you push a cart or carry a table? Help the people who set up and tear down each Sunday. You can do so much for the Lord, literally heaven is the limit.

The problem is, the majority of Christians have a tendency to bury it like the third servant. Here, Jesus is telling us that we will give an account for that which has been entrusted to us. If you are the one who doesn't think you have been given much, you are the one who needs to be especially careful that you don't bury that which you do have.

Instead of coming up with reasons and excuses why you cannot serve God and His church, I am asking you to ask yourself if there is any way you can serve Him.

Some say, "I don't know what kind of gift I have to serve?" Pray and ask the Lord and start to serve in any way you can in the church. The Lord will direct you. It is so much easier to turn a steering wheel while you allow your car to go forward than standing on brake.

D. THE GOD'S INSPECTING AND REWARDING SYSTEM

1 Corinthians 3:12-14 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

Apostle Paul explains why it's so important to maintain high quality control on the building materials: because every believer's work will be inspected. At the judgment seat of Christ, God will reward believers for their work.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The purpose of the inspection isn't to decide whose work has earned salvation – our salvation is sealed the moment we believe. The fire strictly determines the rewards we will receive.

It is very important for us to understand and remember this:

God sees the hearts of men. He knows the motives of what he or she does in the name of God. It might be godly in outward appearance, but God sees the intention of the accomplishment. If the motive was selfish, that work will be burned and the person who did that will not receive rewards in heaven though he will enter into heaven through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Don't be lazy spiritually this year, nor sit on your spiritual hands and take spiritual foods all the time and become a spiritual fat pew potato.

Exercise your spiritual body, pump your spiritual muscles by serving the Lord and His church.

1 Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

2) Don't expect others do your part. You do yours as well as others. That is the heart of a servant and it pleases the Father in heaven.