 Sherward Swartz is not a name you’d likely know.

He’s the guy who created Gilligan’s Island  
   The TV sitcom that ran from 1964-67.

So if you are as old as dirt as I am  
   You’d remember this show.

Interestingly  
   Swartz confessed years after the show ended  
      That he patterned his characters  
         After the 7 deadly sins.

One character for each of the seven sins.

The professor, pride  
   Mr. Howell, greed  
   Ginger, lust  
   Mary Ann, envy  
   Mrs. Howell, extravagance or gluttony  
   The skipper, wrath  
   And Gilligan, sloth

The concept of the 7 Deadly Sins is widely known.

So why would these almost petty sins get so much attention?

That is what we want to find out.
You won’t find a list of the 7 deadly sins in your Bible.

Oh there’s lists of sins in the Bible, don’t get me wrong
   The Ten Commandments being the best-known.

But nowhere is there specifically these particular seven.

The closest list we find to the 7 Deadly Sins
   Is today’s passage.

Proverbs lists the things God deplores
   • Haughty eyes
   • A lying tongue
   • Hands that shed innocent blood
   • A heart that devises wicked schemes
   • Feet quick to rush into evil
   • A false witness who pours out lies
   • And a person who stirs up conflict in the community

It was Pope Gregory in 600 AD
   That essentially boiled down all the different sins
      Into the seven categories we know today.

He places them in order of severity, the least to the most severe
   • Lust
   • Gluttony
   • Greed (Avarice)
   • Sloth
   • Wrath
   • Envy
   • Pride

Pope Gregory believed pride was the father of all sins.
As I said a couple of weeks ago
    The word sin has become rather archaic.

We no longer pay attention to the word
    Because of its overuse, misuse, and abuse.

But according to Scripture
    Ever since first man and first woman
        Succumbed to the temptation to disobey God

The world has suffered because of it.
~~
Call it anything else, and it has a certain appeal to it!

Just look at television programing
    The advertisements, movies and best-selling books
        We’re obsessed with it.

Sin is entertainment!
    Sex and violence sells.

Look at what we watch!
    Look at the video games we play!

The constant exposure to it
    Numbs us to its destructive nature . . .
        Taunts us into saying, “ahh come on. It’s not so bad!”
~~
Down through the centuries the seven deadly sins
    Has had a certain lure and appeal.

From the 1400s’ Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch’s 7 Deadly Sins
    With each panel representing one of the seven deadly sins
To the 1990s movie *Seven*

Starring Morgan Freeman and Brad Pitt

Who chase down a killer intent on killing people

Representing each of the deadly sins.
Maybe our fascination with the 7 deadly sins
Has to do with our own complicity in them.
They’re our sins.

If I were to take a survey here in this sanctuary right now
I won’t . . .

But if I would
    And ask . . . of the 7 categories of sin
    Is there one with which you struggle?

If we are honest ourselves
    My guess is all our hands would be raised.

The seven deadly sins are the sins we commit!

But for the most part, we’d never admit it.

Church has a hard time admitting sins.

We seek to live in an atmosphere that we have it all together.

Will Willimon in his superbly, entitled book
    Sinning like a Christian
    A Contemporary Look at the 7 Deadly Sins

Tells the story of someone who found healing from alcoholism
    Through Alcoholics Anonymous
    And as a result starting attending church.

But he found the church superficial
    No one, honest about their struggles with sin.

~~

My attempt to preach the 7 deadly sins
    Is not to call each of you out
    For the sins you are committing.
My attempt is to help us identify these sins.

Find ways to nip them in the bud.

And discover ways to replace them with real hope and joy
   Purpose and meaning in life through our faith.

Marshall Regal, writer for John Piper’s Desiring God website.

*Many people think following Jesus means surrendering our happiness. You can either enjoy a fun, passionate, and exciting life here for a short time or live a bland, boring, but safe life forever with God.*

~~

The motivation for preaching the 7 deadly sins
   Is to identify the ills of our contemporary society.

I believe our personal problems
   As well at many of the world’s trouble
      Are rooted in these 7 categories of sin.
Throughout this summer
   We will look at each of the deadly sins
      And see how they play out today.

By naming them we can diffuse their allure
   And with intent, replace their appeal
      With the deep joy of a Christ-like life.

~~

Why 7 sins?

Why deadly?

Is not all sin deadly?
As people throughout the ages
    Studied scripture and observed human behavior
    They began to see patterns in sin.

For instance, why would a person take delight
    In a neighbor’s misfortune?

Or what compels a person’s relentless urge
    For more and more and more?

Contemporary ills of society are rooted in these 7 deadly sins.

Pornography, sex trafficking, and date rape
    Contemporary problems stemming from what sin?

Lust!

Commercialization, consumerism, materialism,
    Our incessant need for more material possessions
    Rooted in which sin? Greed!

So on and so forth!

Most of these sins aren’t deadly in themselves.

Quite ordinary and rather benign sins, really.

I mean, we can all over-eat
    Or sling a temper tantrum
    Or be envious of our neighbor’s lawn
    Or enjoy looking at an attractive person

What’s the harm in that?

These, of themselves, are ordinary and universal impulses.
So why are they deadly?

Because, these seven sins are considered
   The source or root of the larger sins.

Murder, adultery, deception
   Mass-shootings, genocide, and war.

The real, horrific social ills in the world today originate
   From one or multiple sins found in the 7 deadly sins.

That’s why, Jesus said

**Matthew 5:27-28 NIV** You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

According to early church thinking
   If you can control the urge
   To commit these rather nonthreatening sins

They would not manifest themselves into something bigger.

~~

The sermon series will explore these modern-day sins
   To know, to name, to fight, and to heal from them.

Ryan Griffith professor at Bethlehem College writes

*Diagnosing the root of sinful behavior entails identifying what we foolishly believe will make us more happy than joy in Christ.* . . . *Identifying seven especially deep, especially pervasive strains of sins will likely be helpful.*

~~
Here are some of the important questions we will ask And to answer during this sermon series.

What compels us to knowingly disregard better judgment And engage one of the deadly sins?

What stressors in life trigger our need or desire . . .
   What brokenness are we experiencing . . .
   That motivates us toward reckless living?

How do we channel those desires and motivations
   Towards a healthier and wholesome lifestyle?

And finally, how do we live a life pleasing to God
   But also satisfying to one’s own self?

~~

From the very beginning,
   God designed and created us
   To live happy and contented lives.
Having become separated from God
   As part of the plight of the human condition
   We yearn for wholeness and healing

We seek to attain some sense of happiness
   Through petty and temporary pleasures.

These short-lived pleasures
   Leave one empty, unfulfilled, and needing more.

From John Piper

*Pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust are woefully inadequate substitutes for the wonder, beauty, and affection of God.*
They will rob you, not ravish you. They will numb you, not heal you. They will slaughter you, not save you.

Seven sins . . . one hope.

True happiness and contentment that lasts for eternity
Is found in our relationship with God through Christ.

True peace in the face of all our brokenness
Is experienced when we acknowledge our dependency
On one another in the community of faith
And on God our Creator
Christ, our Redeemer
And the Holy Spirit, our advocate.

Let us pray.