

“7 Deadly Sins: Sloth”

Did you know there are three families of sloths?

You have the two-toed species.

Then, you have the three-toed species

And then . . . you have the five-toed sloth.

Today we want to spend some time

Looking at the five-toed sloth.

The five-toed sloth is a creature

That would rather lie around all day

Than to do a day's work.

It's often known by its other nicknames:

Couch potato, sofa spud, do-nothing, loafer, slouch

Lounger, slacker and sluggard.

1)

Proverbs 6:6-11 (NLT)

⁶Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones.

Learn from their ways and become wise!

⁷Though they have no prince

or governor or ruler to make them work,

⁸they labor hard all summer,

gathering food for the winter.

⁹But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep?

When will you wake up?

¹⁰A little extra sleep, a little more slumber,

a little folding of the hands to rest—

¹¹then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit;

scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

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Today we continue our sermon series

On the 7 deadly sins.

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So far we have touched upon lust, gluttony, and greed.

Today we look at sloth.

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In his book, *Killjoy: The Seven Deadly Sins*

Tony Reinke, introduces sloth in three categories

The sluggard, the workaholic, and the zombie.

I found this insightful

And so will use his three categories to describe the sloth.

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The sluggard is what we typically think of

When we think of sloth.

Proverbs describes it well.

As does Paul in our 2 Thessalonians passage.

The sluggard seeks to live a life of least resistance.

All they want is to get by.

2)

Ecclesiastes 10:18 (NRSV) Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks.

3)

Proverbs 19:24 ESV The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth.

Now that's lazy . . . too lazy to even feed yourself!

Reminds me of the quote, *If there was an award for laziness I'd probably send someone to pick it up for me.*

The sloth has trouble getting out of his own way!

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The second category of sloth is a workaholic.

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It seems contradictory to compare sloth to a workaholic.

But it makes sense.

From a blog from the Archdiocese of Kansas City

What the Couch Potato & the Workaholic Have in Common

The gentleman lying on the sofa may be a more popular image of sloth, but the workaholic, who's on the job 24-7 and in the process neglects God and family, is the more typical manifestation of sloth in our culture.

Our American work ethic applauds a workaholic
Because work symbolizes productivity and success.

But a hard worker and a workaholic are 2 different things.

The Bible encourages good, hard work.

A workaholic is somehow different.

Their focus is either on personal gain
Or the need to distract themselves from something else.
Their efforts really are more about themselves
Than a concern for providing for family
Or dedication to their job.

Even when the work is service-oriented;
The doctor, nurse, minister, teacher, the politician

The workaholic pours themselves into their work
To escape from other responsibilities.

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The 3rd type of sloth is the zombie.

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The TV, the IPad, and the smart phone
Are the perfect tools for today’s sloth!

The zombie sloth seeks to disengage from reality.

He has lost his thirst for meaning and purpose

William Willimon, professor at Duke Divinity School says,
We live in an age of an [excess] of distraction, [a] massive attention-deficit disorder. Failing to have our attention grabbed by anything of lasting value, our eyes, our minds wander, restlessly roving, failing to alight on anything worth having.

The zombie sleeps walks through life.

Hear God’s sarcastic comments about this kind of person.

4)

Isaiah 6:9-10 (NIV)

⁹ He said, “Go and tell this people:

“‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding;
be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.

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Boredom drives the zombie.

A Zombie will “yawn” their way
Through a trip to Niagara Falls

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“Ho hum” at the majesty of a fabulous sunset
Or “whatever” during an evening thunderstorm.

And isn't being bored with your life the very rejection
Of what God has given you in the moment?

Many are spiritually lethargic
Indifferent, lazy, bored and unconcerned.

When it comes to the things of God
Whether the beauty of nature
The stunning story of Jesus

Or the life-saving message of salvation . . .
You're apt to hear from a zombie . . . “who cares?”

Today's synonym for sloth is apathy

From Wikipedia-- *Apathy is a lack of feeling, emotion, interest, or concern about something. Apathy is a state of indifference, or the suppression of emotions such as concern, excitement, motivation, or passion. ... The apathetic may lack a sense of purpose, worth, or meaning in their life.*

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Let me tell you what I think . . .
Christianity won't die in America because of persecution.

Historically, persecution only strengthens the church.

American Christianity will die because of spiritual apathy!

This is sloth at its most dangerous level!
This is when it becomes deadly!

Because there is this drift in the Western church today

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Toward the notion that church is irrelevant.

Pope John Paul II in 1995 wrote: *A striking correlation exists between the rise of secular atheism and boredom*

In other words, take away God from the equation of life
And what do you end up with . . . ?

5)

Ecclesiastes 2:17 (NLT) So I came to hate life because everything done here under the sun is so troubling. Everything is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

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One of the 7 churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation
Seemed to have a bit of the same problem.

Sloth was killing the church in Laodicea:

6)

Revelation 3:15-17 (NRSV) “I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷For you say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.’ You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Sloth transforms our love for God

From a, “with all your heart, mind, soul and strength”

To a half-hearted, “whatever” kind of love.

It’s a kind of love we give lip service to

But our attitude and action give a different testimony.

Jesus closes his condemnation of the Laodicea church.

7)

Revelation 3:19 (NLT) I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.

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So how do we turn from our indifference?

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What will it take to replace spiritual sloth?
With meaningful, purposed-filled spiritual zeal?

As with the other deadly sins we've discussed
It takes God's Spirit and our discipline.

Whether the sloth you are fighting
Is in the form of laziness,
Or being a workaholic, or boredom . . .

There are things one can do to nurture zeal for the Lord.

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Prayer.

Invite God into all of your life.

Pray for help, for mercy, insight strength and guidance.
Prayer is powerful and effective.

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Read your Bible.

Read the stories of Jesus
From one of the four gospels.

Read the Psalms.

Make it a daily discipline along with your prayers.

Learn to know Jesus from the source
Not what other people's perceptions of Jesus are.

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Join a local church family
Attend worship regularly
Attend Sunday school.

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Volunteer in the local community.

Go on a disaster ministry trip.

Work, get involved, do something! Make a difference!

8)

Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV) Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Williamson says that sloth is a slow, cowardly suicide.

The only intentionality in it is to escape reality.

It is a sin because it rejects the very place
 God has intentionally positioned you
 To do his will and have his way.

Leisure and rest is one thing.

We all need it more frequently than most of us get.

But there is no place for sloth and boredom in our life.

Life will never be boring if lived with a purpose driven sense
 That God has placed you exactly where he wants you.
 And so . . .

9)

Hebrews 12:1-2 (CEV) . . . we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won't let go. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us. ²We must keep our eyes on Jesus

We get one chance to live this life, one chance . . .
 Make it count!