

Keep Heart: Awake My Soul

Slothfulness: Proverbs 19:15

“Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger.”

Hebrew Strong’s Dictionary definition for slothfulness is “indolent.”

Webster’s Definition of Indolent is, “averse to activity, effort or movement. One who is habitually lazy.”

How did we get here?

- Certainly one doesn’t wake up one day habitually lazy, nor would one wish to be identified as a sloth. Yet, slothfulness is pervasive and consequential. How does a sin - which is described as averse to activity, effort or movement - cause so much chaos?
- What starts one down the path of becoming habitually lazy? Can it be event-driven or is it mostly just a failure to be disciplined? Explain. Is it self-identifiable? If so, how?
- How should a brother or sister in Christ call out this sin in a fellow believer, without having the finger pointed right back them? For that matter, how can we (or should we) call out a sin that we too are dealing with? Is it worth the risk to lose credibility as well as a friendship, and then be a hypocrite?

John Marshall Lang, a Church of Scotland minister and author, penned the subsequent text before his death in 1909. These truths penned over one hundred years ago continues to offer a stinging rebuke, not without controversy however.

- Read the subsequent paragraph and discuss his observations. Discuss whether you agree or disagree with his conclusions regarding the consequences of slothfulness as it relates to poverty.

In our great towns, more than half of our poverty is the result, direct or indirect, of that slothfulness which casts into a deep sleep.”

-J. Lang

In the big, busy city, the one who seems out of touch with it is the idler. He who has no other business than the wretched one of killing time has no portion, right, or memorial in it; nor has he any right or portion in the age which we are serving. There is the rich idler, who lives to amuse himself. Such provide the demoralizing element in our society. They lead the fashion in vice and frivolity. There is the poor idler. There are some who “for the sake of equalizing poverty and wealth would really equalize indolence and industry.” In our great towns, more than half of our poverty is the result, direct or indirect, of that slothfulness which casts into a deep sleep. There is a hereditary pauperism. There is the poverty of recklessness and thoughtlessness and thriftlessness. A third type of idler is the idle-souled. Busy enough with earth, such have no business with heaven, no business with love, no business even with the ideals of duty. Leisure is very different from idleness. There is no leisure at all when the life is spent in idleness. It is the interval between work and work that gives the helpful leisure. Leisure is good, idleness is bad. Above all things, avoid heart indolence, moral and spiritual indolence, the indolence of the soul. ¹

¹ The Bible Illustrator, Joseph S. Exell, M.A. Public Domain

Asleep at the wheel

- Is it possible to be busy and still be slothful?
- In what area(s) do you feel convicted about slothfulness, if any?
- If slothfulness leads to complacency, and complacency leads to apathy, then why is apathy usually the end of the road?
- Why does apathy become a coping mechanism?
- It's been said that it is easier to recover a relationship living with hate than a relationship living with indifference. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Spiritual Starvation: Awake My Soul

Read and discuss the paragraph below from A.W. Tozer's book, *The Size of the Soul*

- What does spiritual starvation look like?
- What is meant by "The dead heart cannot aspire?"
- Have you experienced the pangs of spiritual hunger? What was it like and what stirred your soul to start feeding again?
- What does it take to be roused to the table to start eating again? Is it wholly a work of God or is there responsibility on your part? Explain your answers using Scripture.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Hunger is a pain. It is God's merciful provision, a divinely set stimulus to propel us in the direction of food. If food-hunger is a pain, thirst, which is water-hunger, it is a hundredfold worse, and the more critical than need becomes within the living organism the more acute pain. It is nature's last drastic effort to rouse the imperiled life to seek to renew itself. A dead body feels no hunger and the dead soul knows not the pains of wholly desire. "If you want God," said the old saint, "you have already found him." Our desire for fuller life is proof that some life must be there already. Our very dissatisfactions should encourage us, our yet unfulfilled aspirations should give us hope. "What I aspire to be, and was not, comforts me," wrote Browning with true spiritual insight. The dead heart cannot aspire. -A.W. Tozer

Working out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling

- Why should we approach our salvation with fear and trembling, if salvation is a gift and not a work?
- What does it mean when we say, "We need to work out what God has worked in." How does that relate to fear and trembling?
- What are real-life practical ways to re-energize your walk with God and your service to Him?
- Does the Holy Spirit use shame or conviction (or both) in the call to *work out* your salvation? What are the differences and potential outcomes in using shame vs. conviction as motivation?

The Present of His Presence

- What is the Holy Spirit's work in arousing our heart out of soul slumber?
- What does it mean grieve the Holy Spirit and to be sealed for the day of redemption?
- Grieve means "to cause severe mental or emotional distress." Does our slothfulness cause the Holy Spirit to grieve? If so, does this grief equate to a removal of his presence? Why or Why not?

Personal Wellness Check

- Are you in the Word?
- What does it mean to be "in" the word?
- Are your prayers conversational or "Hail Mary?" Why does this matter?
Bonus: Where was the first reference to the "Hail Mary" in sports? [Answer.](#)

*"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"
-Ephesians 4:30*

- Are you motivated by self-preservation? How can you tell?
- Are you a consumer or an investor? Is it okay to be both? Explain.
- How can our individual actions influence the corporate body of Berean?

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

-Philippians 2:12

How fickle my heart and how woozy my eyes! struggle to find any truth in your lies, And now my heart stumbles on things I don't know My weakness I feel I must finally show In these bodies we will live, in these bodies we will die Where you invest your love, you invest your life.

-Mumford and Sons