



Avoiding the pitfalls of life!

A topical series for men!



DANGER

Sloth

Matthew 25:14-30

Men's Breakfast

Sermon given on January 14, 2017



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Danger: Sloth

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Opening Comments

- Today we continue the series: **DANGER: Avoiding the pitfalls of life!**
- The Bible teaches that we have an enemy, and He is relentlessly trying to trap us, to ensnare us **John 10:10**
The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.
- To live the abundant life, we need to learn how to avoid the pitfalls the devil WILL lay in our path
- It is absolutely possible to avoid them **Psalm 119:110**
The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.
- This is the sixth message in this series
- So far we have dealt with anger, lustful temptation of the eye, pride, covetousness, and last time it was Compromise
- If you missed any of them, you can go online and listen or watch
- This month we are going to tackle the pitfall of Sloth
- And no I am not talking about the slow-moving arboreal creatures –
Insert picture of sloth
- The definition for Sloth is: **habitual disinclination to exertion; indolence; laziness**
- The word we would commonly use for this is laziness = **having an aversion to work or effort**
- I have wrestled with actually giving this message at a Men's Breakfast
- Not because I don't believe there are lazy men
- I was just not sure if they would come to the Men's Breakfast
- Maybe I'm the only one that needs this message
- Let's pray and ask God to help us to live productive, abundant lives
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Danger: Sloth**

- Turn in your Bible to **Proverbs 13**
- The word ‘slothful’ appears once in the Bible, and the word ‘lazy’ or one of its forms is used 18 times, 15 of them here in the book of Proverbs
- We are going to skim several of these verses in Proverbs to see some of the characteristics of a lazy or slothful man
- But as we do, I want to caution you
- The proverbs are often written in generalizations
- The first characteristic of a lazy man is poverty of soul **Proverbs 13:4**
- The diligent man has the same desires as the lazy man
- The difference is the diligent man does something about his desires
- Second characteristic = life is hard **Proverbs 15:19**
- A lazy man just can’t seem to get ahead, doesn’t seem to be moving forward
- The upright man is always moving forward, maybe not materially, but spiritually for sure – go to **Proverbs 20**
- Our next characteristic – looking for instant gratification **Proverbs 20:4**
- Plowing in the winter is how you produce a crop in the spring
- A lazy person will not do what they have to do today so that they can benefit later
- In the next chapter of Proverbs we have another characteristic – leads to emotional death **Proverbs 21:25**
- Because he refuses to work to fulfill his desires, they go unfulfilled and this will have an effect on him emotionally
- We live in a culture today that increasingly believes that the government is responsible for taking care of them
- We are also seeing an increasing number of people who refuse to take responsibility for their actions or the circumstances of their life – instead they shift the blame upon others
- Which leads us to our next characteristic – making excuses for their laziness **Proverbs 22:13**
- This one is repeated in chapter 26
- The sense of this is that there is not really a lion out there

- They are imagining a danger to give them a reason not to work
- This man could be working and should be working but has lots of excuses why they can't
- Often their excuses sound as ridiculous as saying there is a lion outside
- Our next characteristic is in chapter 24 – he lacks understanding **Proverbs 24:30-34**
- A lazy man doesn't understand what his laziness is costing him
- In his ignorance he will explain away his difficult circumstances as anything but his fault
- One last characteristic in Proverbs 26 – unreasonable **Proverbs 26:13-16**
- It is difficult to reason with the lazy man – he believes that he knows more than those who are around him
- Sadly, he is deluding himself, or worse he is enslaved to the lies of the devil
- These verses are warnings to us to examine our heart to make sure that we are not being lazy in our lives
- God created men to work **Genesis 2:15**
Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.
- When God created this world, He did it perfectly
- He said repeatedly 'it is good' and then 'It is very good'
- When God created the garden of Eden, He created it with a need to be tended
- You know He didn't have to do it that way
- God could have created it to run on automatic, to grow and flourish without man's efforts
- God created the garden to need man to work it and He created man with a need to do the work
- To be a lazy man is to rebel against what God created a man to be
- Solomon, the wisest man to live tells us of one of the consequences for this rebellion **Ecclesiastes 10:18**
Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks.

- I am guessing that we all see the reality of this statement
- If you neglect caring for your home, things will break down
- Even with maintenance things wear out
- A car is a great example of that, if you fail to service it regularly, it will not last as long as it could have
- Turn to **Matthew 25**
- There are only two uses of the word lazy in the New Testament, and one of them is a quote from a pagan philosopher
- The one we are going to look at comes from the lips of Jesus Himself
- This is a parable exhorting us to use what God has given us
- **Matthew 25:14-15**
- The Lord gives us what He knows we are capable of handling
- Now, if you were perfectly honest you will admit that there are times, maybe even right now, when you have believed that you could do more if God gave you more
- If you have ever raised children, especially boys, then you know that they often believe they are capable of doing more than they actually can
- And part of letting them grow and mature we should let them experience trying something they believe they can do and failing
- But as good parents we are not going to let them do that if we know that it will be harmful to them
- I believe God has protected, and is protecting me from my wrong ideas of what I am capable of doing
- In the end, it is not what God gives you, but what you do with what God gives you
- **Matthew 25:16-18**
- Each man is given an opportunity to be productive
- Two are, and one is not
- **Matthew 25:19-23**
- One of the things that has always encouraged me about this parable is the fact that the one who was faithful with two talents receives the same apparent blessing and reward as the one who was faithful with five talents

- As one who has not received five talents, I know that I need only be faithful with the little God has given me, and He will be pleased
- Especially after reading what happens to the one who is unfaithful
- **Matthew 25:24-30**
- It occurred to me as I was writing this message that it would have been better if he had tried and failed than to not have tried at all
- I can't imagine what it would be like to hear from Jesus 'You wicked and lazy servant'
- Laziness is a pitfall that we can fall into that will destroy our lives and will result in a rebuke from the Lord
- The opposite of laziness is diligence – **constant in effort to accomplish something**
- Now, it is my firm belief that most men that hear this message would not refer to themselves as lazy
- They go to work faithfully, but laziness isn't exclusive your occupation
- You are more than just what you do to provide a living for your family
- When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment, He responded **Mark 12:29-31**
The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.
- As men, we might be tempted to believe that God cares more about our strength than anything else
- So if we are going to work, and providing for our family, then we are okay with God
- God cares about all of you
- You may not being lazy in your strength, but how about in the other areas of your life
- Are you being diligent to keep your heart right before God and with other people?
- Are you being diligent to tend to your soul, by feeding it the Word of God, and cleansing it of sin?

- Are you being faithful to be diligent to keep your mind pure and focused on God and His will for your life?
- Turn to **Ecclesiastes 10**
- My challenge to you guys is to examine your life based on what the Bible says
- Let me give you an example of how to do that
- We'll look at this verse we referred to earlier **Ecclesiastes 10:18**
Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks.
- While there is a practical reality to this statement, there is also a spiritual one
- The word decay literally has the idea of the rafters sagging, which speaks of instability
- We can all understand that when a house leaks, things are being damaged or ruined
- We've probably all heard the saying, 'Get your house in order'
- It is usually said when something is out of order
- Our house can apply to our whole life or some part of our life
- Examine your life – are there parts that are out of order? Are things stable in your life, marriage, or family? Has the joy leaked out of your life? Or has something leaked into your life, marriage, or family that is causing damage
- And if there is, what are you doing about it?
- Do you know what to do about it? And if not, why not?
- Are you being faithful to seek answers and direction from God, His Word, and His people?
- Are you being diligent to do what you can, and then trusting God to do His part?
- When you stand before God, what will you hear?
- As for me and my house, I will serve the Lord
- I will do everything in my ability to be faithful and diligent with the little He has given me
- So that I can stand before Him and hear Him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' Amen?!
- **Prayer**