

CAPITOL STUDIES

MARCH 3, 2021 • WEEK 8



SEVEN DEADLY SINS AND CIVIL SERVANTS

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Verse of the Week

Hebrews 4:9-10

So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Sloth: The Sin of Slowness (Part I)



LOST, YESTERDAY, SOMEWHERE between the sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever. – Horace Mann, American educator.

Life is precious. Time is valuable. We must not waste either. Life, time, and value all find their source in God's Person and His created order. Peering back into history's first week, we can see God ready to rest once He had completed the sixth day of creation: "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."¹

Life is very good and to be celebrated. Humans are to engage fully in the enjoyment and propagation of life. And like God, when their work is done, they are to rest. Life is good. Work is good. Celebrations are good. Rest is good. Rest is godly, but it is also the basis for sloth.

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(This study is adapted from an earlier series by Rev. Gauthier, 1960–2020.)



1. REST IS GOOD AND GODLY

The workaholic in the Capitol community might be convinced that rest is merely shirking responsibility. However, human rest is rooted in God's own rest and His command that His creatures rest as well.

A. Rest Is Modeled by God

The Father Resting: At the end of the sixth day, God's amazing creation was complete. He had created the world *ex nihilo* with His mere word.

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. ²By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created.

Our omnipotent God rested, not because He was tired, but because He was finished with His work. Our infinite God rejoiced in His divine design.

The God-Man, A Sabbath Rester: When the second person of the Trinity, Christ Jesus, came to earth, He came as one "begotten, not made." Yet as the God-Man, He was the preeminent model-Man. He lived in sinless obedience, walking fully in His Father's will. This included God's will about resting on the Sabbath—fully relaxing in revelation (Scripture) and rejoicing in God among His people.

Luke 4:14 & 16

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district... ¹⁶And He came to Nazareth... and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

God rested and rejoiced on the seventh day of Creation, instituting the Sabbath rest. Likewise, the incarnate Christ regularly rested, rejoicing on the Sabbath, modeling for us how to obediently rest.

B. Rest Is Commanded by God

Humans are not divine. Humans are the crown jewel of God's creation, but they are still human: mere mortals, subject to death, and needful of rest. At sunrise, parents pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." At bedtime, little children say, "Now I lay me down to sleep." As human creatures we need bread, we need sleep, and we need rest.

Rest Commanded in "The Big Ten": Like little children, we often do not want what we need. Like a parent, God tells us what we *ought* to do. The Fourth Commandment is:

Exodus 20:8-11

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work... ¹¹For in six days the

LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

ARE YOU PUTTING OFF CHURCH? PROCRASTINATION IS THE HARDENING OF THE “OUGHTERIES.”

Sabbath Rest, an Eternal Principle: Sabbath rest is an eternal principle, which began on the seventh day of creation, centuries before Moses' Fourth Commandment. Christ fulfilled the demands of the perfect Law, living His sinless life before dying His sacrificial death. Sabbath is an eternal principle.

Hebrews 4:9-10

So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. ¹⁰For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Entering the salvific rest of Christ, resting in grace, relieved from the burden of earning salvation by works, the believer has entered a great rest. The Christian (saved by grace through faith, not as a result² of works) rests, rejuvenates, and rejoices each week in Christ's finished work. We do not oblige ourselves to the Saturday Sabbath of the Mosaic Law as Jewish Jesus did. But we do publicly worship weekly as Jesus did, rejoicing in revelation, resting, relaxing, rejuvenating, and releasing the worries of our weary workweek to Him. Most Christians do not shirk church. Usually, seeing Sunday as “the Lord's Day,” they publicly honor the day He rose from the dead as a new “First Day Sabbath.”

2. SLOTH WASTES LIFE AND PERVERTS REST

We have seen God's good gift of rest. The deadly sin of sloth is a perversion of this gift. This sin of slowness wants “too much” rest, so much that it goes outside the boundaries of God's Word to get it. Marijuana may be a gateway drug, but sloth is surely a gateway sin. If you have the energy, read this:

Any discussion of sloth in the present day is of course incomplete without considering television, with its gifts of paralysis, along with its creature and symbiont, the notorious Couch Potato. Tales spun in idleness find us Tube-side, supine, chiropractic fodder, sucking it all in... so that we might feed, uncritically, committing the six other deadly sins in parallel, ⁽¹⁾**eating** too much, ⁽²⁾**envying** the celebrated, ⁽³⁾**coveting** merchandise, ⁽⁴⁾**lusting** after images, ⁽⁵⁾**angry** at the news, ⁽⁶⁾**perversely proud** of whatever distance we may enjoy between our couches and what appears on the screen.³

I am not against technology, but I have seen all seven deadly sins assault my heart through new technology. Let us not goof off concerning godliness nor lollygag before the Lord. Let us be rigorous in righteousness.

**YOU HOPE TO READ YOUR BIBLE SOMEDAY?
TOO BAD SOMEDAY IS NOT A DAY OF THE WEEK.**





A. Sloth Wants *Too Much* Rest at Home

The pursuit of private property is an unalienable right. Part of the American Dream is to own one's own home. A man's house is his castle. What if the homeowner shirks the work of home ownership?

Ecclesiastes 10:18

Through indolence the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks.

The wise political leader King Solomon wrote that warning about the work of homeownership. He also learned a lot from one sad excuse for a landowner in his day. Rather than exercise dominion over his private domain, the following lazy toad liked "too much" rest. Sloth had even taught this slow sluggard a *sleepy song* (see verse 33) which stern Solomon rebukes in verse 34.

Proverbs 24:30-34

I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, ³¹And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. ³²When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. ³³"A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest," ³⁴Then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man.

B. Sloth Wants *Too Much* Rest at Work

God's institution of commerce is designed to "economize culture" through the harmonious authority/submission relationships of bosses and workers. The following proverb shows the pain incurred by a boss when an employee is a vegetative dawdler. Some things just do not mix, such as risk-taking, productive bosses, and workers who are lagging lumps of laziness. Can you feel the pain and tension in the following couplets?

Proverbs 10:26

Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy one to those who send him.

Irritated bosses need to be patient with their workers. Conversely, phlegmatic workers need to hustle and speed it up. As one army sergeant shouted to his troops, "Move like you've got a purpose!" Sloths wanting too much rest at work might soon find themselves lethargically looking through the "Help Wanted" ads.

C. Sloth Wants *Too Much* Rest at War

I am sure you have heard the Biblical warning that "your sins will find you out." I had heard it for years before I found out that the actual context of that warning is to Israelite citizen-soldiers whom the Lord wanted ready for warfare. The LORD's anger had burned with righteous indignation against His people because they refused to fight by faith under General Joshua. He swore in His wrath (sometimes a good time



to swear) they would not enter His rest (the Promised Land). True to His promise of punishment, the children of Israel wandered for 40 years in the Wilderness of Sin (Zin). In this text, Moses encouraged the two largest tribes to set an example of bravery and follow Yahweh, by faith, into the fight for what is right (possessing their land).

Numbers 32:20-23

So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, ²¹and all of you armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven His enemies out from before Him... ²²this land shall be yours for a possession before the LORD. ²³But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out."

IF EVIL CALLS FOR WAR, COWARDS AND
THE LAZY WILL BE FOUND OUT FOR COMMITTING
THE "GREAT SIN OF DOING NOTHING."

D. Sloth Wants *Too Much* Rest at Worship

As a pastoral "watchman on the wall," I am sounding an alarm of troubling things on the horizon. As a sheepdog who does bark, I have called out some wolves among the sheep that are infiltrating flocks of true Christians with the false teachings of "Chrislam" (that Christians and Muslims are worshipping the same God). One of the groups promoting this heresy in the world's political capitols is also fond of the following sayings that make me a bit angry.

The first is that believers are not supposed to call themselves Christians, saying, "The name has too much baggage." Instead, we are to be known only as followers of Jesus. Their idea is unbiblical and not *just*-ified. The singular phrases "follower of Jesus" and "follower of Christ" as well as the plural phrases "followers of Jesus" and "followers of Christ" are never used in the Bible.⁴ "His followers" is used once. This is hardly our Biblically preferred name.

The second is that Jesus is calling people to follow Him, *not* calling them to the Church. These statements annoy me because they are not according to God's Law (His Holy Word). Christ absolutely loves His church (lovingly ogling her) as His breathtaking bride preparing for their white wedding.

Ephesians 5:25-27

Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

This is insulting Christ's bride. Try insulting a human groom about his beautiful bride before the wedding. As Dr. Phil might ask, "How's that workin' for ya'?" This group is wrong and offensively so. In fact, the church is, by definition, exactly *who* Christ is calling out for Himself.





The word church (ekklesia in New Testament Greek, ἐκκλησία), means nothing other than “the called-out ones.” Called out by Whom? By Christ. His precious bride is the church—the body of all true believers. He died for her, loves her, is not ashamed of her, and cannot wait to join her for the wedding. Healthy believers unashamedly love His church.

One practical danger inherent in this group’s slippery teaching is that it tempts believers to laziness in worship, accountability, doctrine, and forsaking the assembling for public worship. Note this warning to assemble, as a habit, for public corporate worship:

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Sloth avoids work. As we will see next week, sloth avoids, *most of all, spiritual work and worship.*

CONCLUSION & APPLICATION

Senator, may your nightly sleep be deep and your weekly sabbath rests be ever so rejuvenating so that you are evermore the leader God wants you to be at home, at work, and for the great state of Nebraska.

Diligently, and for your souls,

Rev. Perry M. Gauthier

FOOTNOTES

1. Genesis 1:31. All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible 1995 Update* unless otherwise noted.

2. Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

3. Thomas Pynchon, American novelist, in a June 6, 1993, *New York Times* article titled “The Deadly Sins/Sloth; Nearer, My Couch, to Thee,” <http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/97/05/18/reviews/pynchon-sloth.html>.

4. Mark 9:41 does not include the word “followers” in the inspired Greek New Testament but only the phrase “you belong” (ἐστε).

