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## **GOD REALLY DOES NOT LIKE PEOPLE WHO ARE LAZY**

People who are diligent and industrious, people who seek to produce things and to accomplish things don't really identify with people who are lazy and slothful. People who work hard for the things they want to achieve understand that people who are lazy **expect other people to do things for them**. Diligent people realize that their own outlook on life is diametrically opposed to the outlook of those people who shirk work like some Andy Capp or Garfield cartoon character.

I personally don't really feel comfortable around lazy people. And I don't like people who try to sponge off other people. I don't like it when people expect others to do things for them. And I don't feel sorry for lazy people.

As I will show, the Bible shows that God responds in a very similar way to people who are lazy. To clarify what I mean by "laziness".

I am not talking about people perhaps not working because they have enough assets to take care of all their own financial needs ... they can pay for their own food and clothing and housing, etc. I am not talking about people enjoying their retirement years with the funds they have accumulated, managing on the income available to them.

When I use the term "laziness", I am speaking about people who **refuse** to work to meet their own needs for food and housing, etc. I am talking about people who **expect** others to provide food, etc. for them. I am talking about people who **look for** free handouts. Whether or not people are physically active is not the criterion in this particular definition. The key is: **do we try** to take care of our own needs for food, etc., **or do we expect** others to provide those needs for us? Those people who expect others to pay for them and to provide for their needs are the people I refer to as "lazy" in this article.

We should understand that **the God who has always worked**, as Jesus Christ pointed out in John 5:17, also very strongly dislikes people who are lazy. And **everything that God dislikes is sin!** This is explained in great detail in my article "What Is Sin?". Laziness is a sin just as much as things like murder, stealing and adultery are sins.

### **Laziness that is not repented of is a sin that leads to the lake of fire!**

God is not prepared to have any lazy individuals in His Family. In the sight of God laziness is **an extremely bad character trait**, one that must be totally eradicated before God creates the new heaven and the new earth. Laziness is a bad character trait because amongst other things **lazy people cannot be trusted**, any more than immoral people can be trusted.

To make this quite plain:

If people do not actively break any of the ten commandments, yet they are slothful, then they are still guilty of sin, just as much as any adulterer or murderer is guilty of sin. Laziness is a sin, even when on the surface it does not seem to transgress any of God's laws.

Before getting into this subject, I want to make quite clear that this article is not about any specific individuals I may know. I have no personal axe to grind. **In any group of fifty or more of God's people**

**anywhere on Earth** there are always some individuals to whom the message of this article will apply very directly, because Satan has always managed to insert his "tares" (see Matthew 13:25) into every group of God's people throughout the ages. "Tares" represent a very wide range of sins, and slothful people are a part of the "tares" Satan has placed within God's Church.

The message of this article would have fitted certain individuals perfectly 3000 years ago at the time of Solomon, because Solomon made many very specific statements about such individuals. The message of this article also accurately describes certain individuals in the Church during the first century, because Jesus Christ and also some of the apostles addressed such people directly. The message of this article also applies to a considerable number of "tares" in our age today, be that in congregations in California or Australia or South Africa or Florida or Canada or anywhere else. **The Church in every part of the world and in every age has always attracted some individuals to whom this message applies very pointedly.** And over the past 45 years I have personally dealt with a number of individuals who were in this category. Lazy people are in fact fairly common throughout the world.

I am writing this present article as a follow-on to the article "What Is Sin?", because this present article addresses a specific sin that is not defined by 1 John 3:4, and yet it is a sin.

Let's start by looking at some of Solomon's proverbs.

## **LAZINESS IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS**

Laziness is one of the major topics that Solomon addressed time and again in the Book of Proverbs. This tells us that **laziness was a major concern** already at **Solomon's time** about 3000 years ago. And even as we have different words in English to describe this attribute, words like lazy, slothful, sluggard, etc., so also in Old Testament Hebrew Solomon had different words available to describe lazy people.

Let's start by looking at Scriptures that all use the Hebrew words "atsel" or "atslah". Both of these Hebrew words are derived from the primitive Hebrew root verb "atsal" which means "**to be sluggish**" and "**to be lazy**".

As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, **so is the sluggard** to them that send (i.e. employ) him. (Proverbs 10:26)

This verse highlights a major problem with lazy people. An employer can never trust a lazy employee to diligently do the work that needs to be done. Lazy people (i.e. "sluggards") simply **cannot be trusted**. They are **unreliable**. And that is very stressful and unpleasant for any employer; it is like "smoke to the eyes". It should also be clear that God will not have lazy individuals in His Family.

**The soul of the sluggard desires, and has nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat (i.e. prosperous). (Proverbs 13:4)**

This verse highlights another major problem with lazy people. And that major problem is this: **lazy people are almost always covetous!** They want things that other people have, they "desire" those things, but they are not willing to work for those things.

**The desire of the slothful kills him; for his hands refuse to labor. (Proverbs 21:25)**

Talk about coveting! Laziness breaks the tenth commandment because of the frame of mind that invariably underlies laziness. Lazy people are without doubt commandment-breakers. **Laziness is a**

**serious sin.** And lazy people typically refuse to work (i.e. "his hands refuse to labor"). Laziness is a very serious character flaw.

**Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger. (Proverbs 19:15)**

Lazy people don't live in the real world! They live in fantasy-land. They don't see the real picture. No, it is like they are in "a deep sleep". And they don't discern their own circumstances correctly. They don't understand and don't face up to the inevitable consequences of their own slothfulness, that **they will always have problems and troubles.** (We'll come back to this verse later for the second part.)

**A slothful *man* hides his hand in *his* bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again. (Proverbs 19:24)**

**The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; *therefore* shall he beg in harvest, and *have* nothing. (Proverbs 20:4)**

The sluggard's problem is that **he doesn't really want to work.** That is his mindset. He is always looking for ways to get out of working, and so any excuse will do. His problem is his own attitude regarding how to conduct himself in a responsible way. He doesn't face up to the fact that all of his problems are self-inflicted. He looks for excuses to justify himself, excuses like "it's too cold or too hot to work right now ...", etc.

Needless to say, God does not like that approach and that attitude. And everything that God does not like is sin. Therefore that attitude is sin.

The slothful *man* says, ***There is a lion without,*** I shall be slain in the streets. (Proverbs 22:13)

Lazy people come up with the most **absurd excuses** and justifications for their laziness. And the strange thing is that such people don't even realize how ridiculous their stories are. And over the past four decades I have heard my share of ridiculous stories. In their own minds their convoluted excuses are quite plausible, when to everyone else these people are for all practical purposes saying: I can't go to work because there is a lion in the streets, something that is an absurd excuse. Absurd excuses go all the way back to Solomon's time.

Solomon repeated this statement a few chapters later. It bears emphasis.

The slothful *man* says, ***There is a lion in the way;*** a lion *is* in the streets. (Proverbs 26:13)

Meanwhile the lazy person isn't even willing to get out of bed.

As the (creaky warped) door turns upon his (very rusty) hinges, ***so does the slothful upon his bed.*** (Proverbs 26:14)

Here Solomon was referring to a creaky door with rusty hinges. It takes some effort to get such a door all the way open, and the whole process produces an unpleasant squeaking noise. That's what lazy people are like. **They groan and complain and moan** when they have to put out the smallest amount of effort to do anything, as if they were facing a major ordeal. Their idea is to get us to do things for them, rather than us expecting them to do their part.

Obviously that sort of attitude is not something God will accept! So that attitude is sin.

**The slothful hides his hand in *his* bosom; it grieves him to bring it again to his mouth. (Proverbs**

## 26:15)

The slothful person will make sure that he can't be expected to work. If he hides his hands, then you can't possibly expect him to work. He seeks to present circumstances that would seem to make working impossible. **Even the body language** of such a person tells you that he is not about to seriously consider working in order to provide for his own needs (i.e. to put food into his own mouth).

## **The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. (Proverbs 26:16)**

That's what Solomon said. Even Solomon couldn't reason with a sluggard. You can never convince a lazy person that all of his problems are his own doing. You can never get lazy people to accept **the correct solution** to all of their problems.

So let's understand something: a lazy person will always cling to solutions that are **impractical and unworkable**, because those particular "solutions" will empower him to maintain his present inactive status. **The lazy person always knows better than anyone else.**

That's what Solomon was also alluding to in an earlier verse.

## **The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain. (Proverbs 15:19)**

"The way of the slothful man" refers to the way the lazy person reasons, the way the lazy person's mind works. The solutions the slothful man presents for his problems are as impractical as trying to work your way through an extremely dense, thick hedge of long and vicious thorns. The way forward that the slothful man proposes is to go through a thick hedge of thorns, something that will not work without causing serious additional problems.

In all of the above Scriptures the focus is on individuals who are sluggish and lazy. Now let's look at another Hebrew word that Solomon used for laziness in the Book of Proverbs. This Hebrew word is "remiyah".

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT) gives the meanings of "**remiyah**" as: **slackening, looseness, sloth, deceit, fraud**. These meanings are all found in various Old Testament Scriptures. But here is the point we should note:

Here we have one Hebrew word that at the same time has the meanings of "**sloth**" and "**deceit**". What we should understand is that sloth and laziness are in effect a form of deceit. That's not something we might immediately think of. But that is the way God views slothfulness and laziness: **laziness invariably involves deception.**

There are the excuses, the justifications and the complaints, all of which are **intended to mislead** the listeners as to the real situation, which is that the individual involved is simply not willing to work.

Here are some places where this Hebrew word "remiyah" is used.

## **The slothful man (remiyah) roasts not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious. (Proverbs 12:27)**

"The slothful man" here lives on the things other people have produced (i.e. "hunted for"). But he gives the appearance of having done his part, by being willing to do the roasting. There is an element of

deception involved in this situation. The person here is "slothful" and also somewhat "deceptive".

**He becomes poor that deals *with* a slack (remiyah) hand: but the hand of the diligent makes rich. (Proverbs 10:4)**

"A slack hand" is a hand that is not really willing to work; it is a slothful hand. But it is also somewhat deceitful. Such an individual becomes poor because God will not bless such a person. God hates both laziness and deception.

The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but **the slothful** (remiyah) **shall be under tribute**. (Proverbs 12:24)

The diligent bear rule over the things they produce. Diligence leads to control over what has been achieved.

A verse we have already seen uses both of these Hebrew words, thereby confirming that "remiyah" certainly also means "lazy".

Slothfulness (atslah) casts into a deep sleep; and **an idle** (remiyah) **soul shall suffer hunger**. (Proverbs 19:15)

Because lazy people don't live their lives in the real world, therefore they are always on the borderline, just barely getting by (i.e. they "suffer hunger").

Notice also how this word "remiyah" is translated in Jeremiah 48:10.

Cursed *be* he that does the work of the LORD **deceitfully** (remiyah), and cursed *be* he that keeps back his sword from blood. (Jeremiah 48:10)

The marginal reading in the KJV is: "... he that does the work of the LORD **negligently** ...". The reason the translators provided this marginal reading of "negligently" is because they understood that it could equally correctly read: "... he that does the work of the LORD **slothfully** ...". And that is in fact the underlying thought in the **NRSV** translation of this verse, which reads: "Accursed is **the one who is slack** in doing the work of the LORD ...".

The point is that the Hebrew word "remiyah" conveys **both** meanings, "**deceitfully**" and also "**slothfully**". Laziness is a form of deceit. A lazy person is a deceitful person. And notice that in this verse a curse is attached to being lazy and deceitful.

Slothfulness involves deceitfulness.

This once again means that slothfulness is a sin like adultery and murder and stealing.

Let's now consider the fourth commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **Six days shall you labor**, and do all your work: But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God: *in it* you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that *is* within your gates: For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:8-11)

This commandment involves two parts: we are to work for six days in the week, and we are not to work

on one day (the weekly Sabbath) in the week. Lazy people may keep the weekly Sabbath, but they will still be guilty of breaking the fourth commandment because **lazy people disregard the part that tells us to work for six days in the week.**

## **SOME NEW TESTAMENT INSTRUCTIONS**

Consider what Jesus Christ said at His last Passover.

Herein is my Father glorified, **that you bear much fruit**; so shall you be my disciples. (John 15:8)

What Jesus Christ was saying is: God expects us to produce much fruit. **If we do so, then we are true Christians.** However, the corollary of that statement is also true.

**If we do not produce much fruit, then we are not true Christians. Producing much fruit is not optional; producing much fruit is an absolute requirement for us to be true Christians. Tares do not produce any fruit. And that gives us one way of identifying tares, the absence of real fruits in their lives.**

It should be self-evident that **slothful people do not produce fruit**, let alone "much fruit". That's the obvious conclusion for laziness; lazy people just don't produce something good. And as Jesus Christ said:

**Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire. (Matthew 7:19)**

The criterion here for being "cut down" is not whether or not laws have been actively transgressed. The only criterion Jesus Christ mentioned in this context is whether or not good fruit has been produced.

Christ was here referring to the second death in the lake of fire. God will not have lazy individuals in His Family. When a fig tree had not produced any fruit for three successive years God instructed the tree to be cut down (see Luke 13:7), though the chief gardener pleaded for the tree to be given one more year to produce fruit.

The point is: **God will sever lazy individuals from His Church**, even as God will sever from His Church people that are adulterers or murderers or thieves.

The Apostle Paul gave the following instruction to the Church:

**That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:12)**

One reason Paul gave this instruction is because slothfulness is a sin. And while laziness does not overtly transgress the commandments of God, when we examine it more closely, then the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> commandments do actually become involved.

## **PARABLE OF THE TALENTS**

This parable is recorded in Matthew chapter 25.

For *the kingdom of heaven* is as a man traveling into a far country, *who called his own servants*, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave **five** talents, to another **two**, and to another **one**; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. (Matthew 25:14-15)

"His own servants" is a reference to **members of God's Church**. The servants were expected to know what they were to do with the money given into their stewardship. They didn't need extra instructions to tell them what to do. We all know this parable quite well.

Two of those servants immediately understood that they were to work at producing growth for their master. And that is what they did. That left the servant who had received only one talent.

But **he that had received one** went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. (Matthew 25:18)

This individual was **lazy**. He wasn't about to work for someone else's benefit. He wasn't going to do more than he absolutely had to do. This servant isn't actively breaking any of the ten commandments. He's just lazy and wiser in his own conceit than seven men that could provide sound reasons for why his response to the responsibility he was given is wrong. He justifies his laziness.

So when the day of reckoning comes, the first two servants are rewarded for the growth they had produced. Then comes the servant who had been given one talent.

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, **I knew You**, that You are a hard man, reaping where You have not sown, and gathering where You have not strawed: (Matthew 25:24)

For a start, this individual actually believes that he knows the Bible better than the other servants who had produced much fruit. In actual practice, however, he has **a very perverted view of what God is like**. He attributes incredible selfishness to God. His whole concept of what God is really like and what God is seeking to achieve is grossly perverted.

He has no idea just how completely wrong his views happen to be. In fact, his view of God fits Satan pretty accurately, because it is Satan who always seeks to get something for nothing. This individual is ascribing the attributes of the god of this present age (see 2 Corinthians 4:4) to the true God.

Notice also that this individual can't just come out and say what he has done. No, he first has to set the stage. This is also typical of slothful people. They can't just tell you the facts that you are asking for. No, **they first have to set the stage** for what they will present. The intent is to lend more credibility to what they did or didn't do. In this situation the intent for setting the stage is always to justify themselves. They present a justification rather than an explanation for their conduct.

So after setting the stage in verse 24, this servant then said:

And **I was afraid**, and went and hid Your talent in the earth: lo, *there* You have *that which is Yours*. (Matthew 25:25)

Setting the stage in verse 24 was supposed to justify why he was afraid, when in fact **he had been bone-lazy**. He had not produced anything of value. This servant has no idea whatsoever regarding just how absurd and flawed his reasoning is. He might as well have said: I didn't do anything because there was a lion in the street.

There was nothing valid about this individual's reasoning, nothing at all. Nothing was true or correct. To show up the flaws in this man's reasoning, God then reasons from that servant's own flawed premise.

In effect, God said:

"Okay, **if** that's how you saw Me, **then** why didn't you do this?"

Notice Jesus Christ's words:

His lord answered and said unto him, *you **wicked** and **slothful** servant*, you knew that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: You ought therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received my own with usury. (Matthew 25:26-27)

There was no need to straighten out the man's totally twisted view of what God is like. The man was heading for the lake of fire, and the time for explaining the truth about God and His plan was past. He had gone past the point of no return. And in our age for a variety of reasons many people have done the same thing ... gone past the point of no return.

Now there is no hint anywhere in this parable that any of the ten commandments were broken. This parable is not a discussion about God's laws. It is **assumed** that this servant was basically observing God's laws. Yet Jesus Christ stated two things about this man:

1) The man was "wicked". The Greek word here means "evil".

2) The man was "slothful", i.e. lazy.

By saying the man was "wicked", Jesus Christ made clear that **the man had sinned regarding what he had done with the talent God had given him**. It was a sin for the man to not use that talent which God had entrusted to him. It was a sin because not using that talent missed the target set by God, that target being that we are to use the talents God gives to us in order to produce growth for God. **We are not allowed to bury them.**

And by saying the man was "slothful", Jesus Christ made clear that the man's inactivity had been **motivated by laziness**.

This servant's sin was not primarily a matter of breaking the ten commandments. This servant's sin was primarily a matter of having the totally unacceptable character attribute of laziness. Any commandment-breaking was only a consequence of the laziness, not the cause for the laziness.

Laziness is just as sinful as being fearful and being unbelieving (see Revelation 21:8) are sinful. This is also made clear in the last verse of this section here in Matthew 25.

And cast you the unprofitable servant into **outer darkness**: there shall be **weeping** and **gnashing of teeth**. (Matthew 25:30)

These terms "outer darkness" and "weeping" and "gnashing of teeth" are code language for those who end up in the lake of fire. This fits right into the picture of Revelation 21:8. Laziness is a character trait, and it is in exactly the same category as fearfulness and faithlessness. On the surface laziness does not appear to be "a transgression of the law"; that fact only becomes apparent upon closer inspection.

Notice also an instruction that Paul gave to the Church:

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that **if any would not work, neither should he eat**. For we hear that **there are some** which walk **among you** disorderly, **working not at all**, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with

quietness they work, and eat their own bread. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

What Paul is saying is that **lazy people should not really be helped by the Church**. When Paul had been there in person he had in plain and emphatic terms told them: **don't help people who are lazy**, people who are unwilling to work, people who have ridiculous excuses for why they don't work for their own food and for their other needs (i.e. excuses like "there are lions out there ..."). Paul's instructions here are the original "tough love" approach to helping people.

This instruction makes clear that Paul obviously understood that laziness is a sin, which should not be accepted in the Church. Paul expected people to work in order to provide for their own needs, and for the needs of their own families. Paul was not looking for excuses to put people on third tithe assistance from the Church. He expected people to try their utmost to provide for their own needs.

Nowhere in the Bible is there ever anything good said about laziness. Laziness is always shown in a bad light. And while on the surface it may not seem to break any laws directly, laziness is always shown to be just as unacceptable as are any active transgressions of God's laws.

Laziness is a sin that, if not repented of, ultimately leads to the lake of fire.

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