



SEVEN • Sloth

Introduction

The Seven Deadly Sins of Gilligan's Island theory is quite simple. Each of the seven characters on the island represents each of the seven deadly sins. Now this theory seems to fit upon initial inspection, but there are technical difficulties when you get down to Gilligan.

1. See if you can list the Seven Deadly Sins. For extra credit, you can assign the Gilligan's Island characters.

According to rushman.org:

The seven deadly sins is the list of wicked human passions, first refined by Pope Gregory in the 6th century. It was heavily taught in the Middle Ages and popularized by Dante. They were called "deadly sins" because of their fatal effect on spiritual health. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) was a Catholic layman who wrote "The Divine Comedy," which is really three epic poems in Italian: "Inferno," "Purgatorio," and "Paradiso," which are about Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven/Paradise, respectively. In "Purgatorio," Dante places each of the seven sins on a level, with the higher levels closer to Paradise and the lower ones closer to Hell.

Such a grouping, or hierarchy, of sin is not found in the Bible, nor does the Bible teach of Dante's variegated levels of Hell. This is fantasy. Yet, it seems these destructive passions are worth studying, understanding, and learning to avoid. It also seems important to see what the Bible does say about these things, as well as what it does not. We begin with "sloth."

What's a Sloth?

2. What is the sin of sloth? Is Mr. "Fat and Lazy" [below] a sloth? Is it really sin?

Mr. Fat and Lazy from Natashascafe.com:

Fat and Lazy: I've had a problem all my adult life. I've tried solving this problem in so many different ways that maybe I'm just destined to be this way forever.

Stated simply it is this: I am Fat and Lazy.

I never, ever make any headway. I'm 42 years old and still at the same basic poverty level and health level I've been since I was 25. I know the obvious answer: work harder, exercise and lose the weight. Know also, that I have tried every method I've come across in twenty years of dealing with this. Every fresh start ends in failure.



I have a wife and three beautiful kids. I love everything about my life except living on the edge of poverty and feeling so fat and unhealthy. I have a love of God even though I suspect He's not going to help me unless I help myself.

I think, perhaps I am doomed to "live this life of quiet desperation." I have an impulse to give up and just do nothing.

3. Would you consider yourself slothful in certain ways? If so, what ways?

How Do You Measure a Slug?

The Book of Proverbs is of a genre called, 'Wisdom Literature': collections of wise proverbs, sayings, and general truisms that help one to lead a good and wise life. For instance, Proverbs 19:24 says, "The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!" In a more modern translation, we could say, he clicks "on" the TV, but lacks even the energy to change the channels. Proverbs, has a great deal to say on the vice known as sloth. We'll look at five characteristics of the sloth from Proverbs.

Proverbs 6:9-11:

How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

"The Procrastinator's Creed." from Personal.nbet.nb.ca:

1. *I believe that if anything is worth doing, it would have been done already.*
2. *I shall never move quickly, except to avoid more work or find excuses.*
3. *I will never rush into a job without a lifetime of consideration.*
4. *I shall meet all of my deadlines directly in proportion to the amount of bodily injury I could expect to receive from missing them.*
5. *I firmly believe that tomorrow holds the possibility for new technologies, astounding discoveries, and a reprieve from my obligations.*
6. *I shall never forget that the probability of a miracle, though infinitesimally small, is not exactly zero.*
7. *I obey the law of inverse excuses which demands that the greater the task to be done, the more insignificant the work that must be done prior to beginning the greater task.*

According to Coachroz.com:

If you don't stay ahead of it, procrastination is an insidious little varmint that scuttles around the baseboards of life, contaminating your best intentions. The little saboteur loves to perch on top of your to-do list, gloating, knowing full well who's Boss.

4. The need to plan for the future is a natural drive. What causes procrastination?
5. I'm sure the sluggard has his own rationalization: We all need sleep – what's wrong with that? Procrastination, is often an exercise in rationalization. In what ways does your mind work to rationalize procrastination?
6. With what specific things do you tend to procrastinate?



Proverbs 21:25:

The desires of the sluggard put him to death, for his hands refuse to work.

Good news from Kult.org:

People who spend too much time playing video games have new hope for gainful employment as Nintendo of America announced plans Tuesday to pay 50 people about \$100 a day to play computer games all summer long.

7. What does, “the sluggard’s craving will be the death of him” mean?
8. Do you have unfulfilled desires that are a result of not being willing to work hard? What are they? What regrets do you have? What do you wish that you had done or accomplished?

Proverbs 22:13:

The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside!” or, “I will be murdered in the streets!”

9. Inactivity, is both the cause and result of irrational fears. List a few of your irrational fears that, at times, keep you immobilized?

Proverbs 26:16:

The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly.

From Lazy.com:

This is a site for the lazy, the idle, the slothful, those who waste time, those who procrastinate, those who slack off, those who would rather be napping, those who take the elevator, and those who prefer their meals to be “instant.” Instead of criticizing these lazy traits, this ring celebrates them in all their slothful glory.

10. What do you think it means that they are, “wiser in their own eyes”? Have you ever felt this way?

Proverbs 15:19:

The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.

11. Write out what you think the verse is saying.
12. Of all these descriptions of laziness (procrastination, irrational fears, etc.) which, if any, can you most relate to?



Try TheSparks.com sloth quiz:

1. How many hours of sleep do you average each night?
2. How many hours of video-gaming per day? Plus regular television?
3. Do you have a job?
4. Have you ever been fired for slacking off?
5. Do you have a plan for the future?
6. Do you have a plan for the present?
7. Did you give blood during our recent national crisis?
8. Have you ever protested anything?
9. Do you recycle?
10. Does someone else do your laundry for you?
11. Do you skip work or school a lot?

Can I Change, or At Least Get Perkier?

Proverbs 6:6-8:

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

The sage tells the sluggard to consider the ways of the productive. There are two factors. The first is pondering the outcome of different ways of living.

13. From the Proverbs we looked at, describe in a short paragraph the results of a life of sloth.

14. The second component is emulation. Share one thing that you have heard, or try to do, that has helped you be more disciplined and productive, which the group might benefit from. Is there a book or biography you found motivating?

Summary

Our life is a stewardship and one day we will need to give an account of how we spent the hours of the day. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

15. What things do you want to be true of your life; what do wish to accomplish? How can you keep these goals in front of you?

End

The Compass is the discipleship curriculum for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this lesson. Please write us at centerfield@uscm.org