

Combating Spiritual Slothfulness

Scripture

“Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, Provides her supplies in the summer, [And] gathers her food in the harvest. How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep— So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.” (Pr 6:6-11 NKJV)

Devotion

Slothfulness has a narcotic like effect; it is mind-altering, progressive, and destructive. Find a slothful person and you will likely find a depressed person. While this writer is not an expert in human behavior by medical standards, it is not hard to see how sloth and depression might work together especially in one’s spiritual life.

Consider the following proverb for example, “The desire of the lazy [man] kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.” (Pr 21:25 NKJV) Maybe you have a real desire to be pleasing to God, but you refuse to do what is required. This writer has heard many testimonies declaring as much. Like, “I know I need to be better at Bible study, but I just can’t seem to find the time.” Or, “I want to pray more, but I always get distracted.” Don’t these excuses sound a little like another proverb? “The lazy [man] says, ‘[There is] a lion in the road! A fierce lion [is] in the streets!’” (Pr 26:13 NKJV)

Like a narcotic, sloth alters rational thought and convinces the slothful of his need for sloth. This confusion is progressive because the effects of spiritual sloth increase one’s feelings of separation from God’s Spirit. Have you ever had days when you asked yourself, “Why does God seem so far away?” This shouldn’t be a surprise to the believer if he has been absent from his spiritual disciplines. Christ said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” (John 15:4 NKJV) The longer this goes on, the more difficult it is to combat.

Be assured this sin is not without consequences. So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler! How does a prowler come? He sneaks in doesn’t he? So, don’t wait to lock your doors and windows, do something about your sloth today.

Go to the ant and consider her ways. Gather your food now while there is still time to harvest. If you wait until winter, your need will be like an armed man, ruthless and without mercy. Do not wait until you lay with death’s cold sweat upon your brow. Your need will be great on that day when the devil throws the last of his fiery darts. Forge your weapons now while you are still able to strike the iron.