**The Word on Laziness**

**Kick off with small group questions:**

1. What do you think laziness is?

2. Think about the last time you took a “lazy day”, what did you do before that day? What did you do the next day after that day?

3. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” ([Colossians 3:23-24](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%203.23-24%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). How can this word encourage us out of idleness?

**Introduction**

Tell me if this sounds like a familiar scenario. It is the beginning of the year. It is your first week back at school in January. Last year you did OK at school. But this year you are set on doing way better. You are going to pull up your socks, you're going to knuckle down. "New Year, New me", you tell yourself. Your teacher tells you that your have a project coming up for later that term. She tells you it is due the second week in March. You open your diary and jot down the date. You count the weeks - Six weeks time. You are already thinking about how awesome your project is going to be.

Two weeks has gone by and you still haven't started but you still have loads of time. You have been thinking about the project and you are just stewing over things in your mind.

Another two weeks has gone by. Your project is due in two weeks. It should only take you a couple days to actually do it anyway. You have wanted to start by now but sports practice has been hectic. When you got home last night you were just so tired.

Another week goes by. There is only 5 days left till the due date. You know the time has come. Monday is hectic. You'll do it Tuesday. Tuesday is even more hectic. You'll wake up early Wednesday morning to get started you tell yourself. You accidentally oversleep. Wednesday afternoon you have drama practice. Thursday you feel totally out of your depth. You feel the pressure and weight of the assignment on your shoulders. Friday has come – the due date for your assignment has come. You have hardly touched a thing. You fake an illness, telling your mom you've been up all night with a fever and vomiting. Guess who hasn't handed in their assignment... again?

**Let’s look in the Bible: We were created by God to work**

**Genesis 2:15-17** says "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden **to work it and keep it**. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying: 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

So the task given to the man (Eve is not on the scene yet; she is coming) in light of where he has been placed by God is to work and keep Eden. If we could draw up the narrative, God has created the earth. Then off to the east, he has created Eden. Eden is orderly and put together in a way that the unkempt part of the world is not. He takes the man, and he places him in the garden. He says, "Work and keep this, and make the rest of the world look like this."

We see early on in the Bible that God gave humans the task to cultivate, to work. **Before sin ever entered into the world**, God designed us to work. This is why lazy people are so damaging to human flourishing. We weren’t designed to be lazy. We weren’t designed to master video games. **Work is not a result of sin. It existed before sin enters the world.**

And because the Lord ordained work for us, laziness is sin. “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise” (Proverbs 6:6).

**Does this sound like anyone you know? “**They hate work, love sleep, give excuses, waste time and energy, believe they are wise but they are a fool”. It is a verse from the book of Proverbs.

The Bible has a great deal to say about laziness. Proverbs is especially filled with wisdom concerning laziness and warnings to the lazy person. Proverbs tells us that a lazy person **hates work**: “The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work” (21:25); **he loves sleep**: “As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed” (26:14); he **gives excuses**: “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets’” (26:13); **he wastes time and energy**: “He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great waster” (18:9); **he believes he is wise, but is a fool**: “The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly” (26:16).

**Consequences of being lazy**

If you are lazy your future looks bleak according to Scripture: Proverbs also tells us the end in store for the lazy: **A lazy person becomes a servant** (or debtor): “Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labour” (12:24); his **future is bleak**: “A sluggard does not plough in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing” (20:4); he **may come to poverty**: “The soul of the lazy man desires and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich” (13:4 KJV).

“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). Christians are not saved by works, but they do show their faith by their works (James 2:18, 26)

**How are things different for Christians when dealing with laziness?**

Through pursuing God we are motivated to diligence and productiveness out of a love for our Saviour who redeemed us. Our old tendency toward laziness and other sins has been replaced by a desire to live godly lives:

\* “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Ephesians 4:28).

\* We are convicted of our need to provide for our families through our labours: “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8);

\* We are also to provide for others in the family of God: “You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'” (Acts 20:34-35).

As Christians, we know that our labours will be rewarded by our Lord if we persevere in diligence: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:9-10); “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23-24);

**Why are we doing this teaching today?**

One of the reasons why we are tackling this topic this week is because exams are coming up soon. I would love each and every one of you to do better in these exams than you did last year. I often found in my own studying days that as important exams and assignments loomed closer, I was attacked by laziness. I remember at times feeling overwhelmed, like studying and getting solid results all just felt like there was so much was on my plate. The longer tasks went undone, the more this giant, unstructured mess of uncompleted tasks piled up. It’s easier to avoid a problem than face it head on, it would seem. When we feel the workload is huge and we are disorganized we can be scared into inactivity and laziness. No one said this is going to be a breeze. But there is help….

**Practical Step to Overcome Laziness**
Many of you might be asking, “But how do I stop being lazy?” The lazy man is the man who feels overwhelmed and inefficient, and tries to escape. But you can over come laziness as you take these steps:

**1. Plan.** Put together a study plan and stick to it. (We can be lazy in so many ways; exercise, reading our Bibles, friendships, maintaining our rooms, etc.)

**2. Prioritise.** Ask yourself questions like: What is important? What is urgent? When are things due by? What can I do now? What can I leave for later?

**3. Perform.** My granny always used to say to me: "Don't do tomorrow what you can do today." Tackle the tasks or projects that you have identified!

**4. Pray.** Ask God to help you overcome laziness, avoid procrastination and get things done.