

Each One Teach One Discipleship Lessons

Part Two:

FAITH THAT GROWS UP:

Growing in Your Faith in God

LESSON FIVE:

The DISCIPLINED LIFE

There is a word that was common at the time the *King James Bible* was introduced that you seldom hear today:

Proverbs 24:30-34 (KJV)

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

Proverbs 15:19 (KJV)

The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

If you are not familiar with the word, you may not be able to tell exactly what it means from these passages.

In Proverbs 24 it explains that the **slothful** man is not a man of understanding. So it might appear that **slothful** means **ignorant**.

But then Proverbs 15 explains that the **slothful** man is not a righteous man. So it might appear that **slothful** means **unrighteous**.

Neither of these deductions would be correct. A **slothful** man may, indeed, be both ignorant and unrighteous. But the fact that he is **slothful** means specifically that he is **LAZY**, he **dislikes work**, and he will do anything to **avoid** it!

[Eccl 10:18]

If a man is _____, the rafters sag; if his _____, the house leaks.

***** Whenever you see the word "lazy" in the *New International Version* Old Testament, it is usually from the same Hebrew word that the *King James Version* translates "slothful."

The reason I chose to call your attention to the old word "**slothful**" is that it allows us to focus on a very graphic example of what slothful means. If you knew the word sloth, it is probably because you have heard of the animal by that name.

"The sloth's toes are an important part of its body, since it spends its life hanging from branches... Unless molested, this upside down animal seldom moves during the day... The sloth is such a masterpiece of immobility that during the rainy season tiny green plants grow on its coarse hair. Caterpillars feed on the plants, and from the untidy covering moths may fly out! The sloth's immobility is its chief safeguard against enemies. Seen motionless, high amongst the dense foliage, it resembles a mass of dead leaves, a termite nest or a lump of moldy fungus... even when killed, a sloth continues to cling to his branch with his curved claws. No one, perhaps not even the sloth, knows whether he is dead or alive."



[*Marvels and Mysteries of Our Animal World*, Reader's Digest 1964]

***** The emphasis in the passages above from the book of Proverbs is slothfulness in physical matters. Perhaps you know someone like the sloth described here!

But the principal is just as important in spiritual matters. If we want to reap fields of harvest for the Lord, if we want to have spiritual riches now and stored up for eternity, we cannot be slothful in working toward those goals.

Many within the Body of Christ (the Church) who are dynamic, organized and prosperous in their working lives are totally bogged down in making spiritual progress. They don't approach the spiritual part of their lives with the same zeal and self-control that they have for making money. And then there are those "average" Christians who are basically disorganized, unmotivated and unfulfilled in almost **all** parts of their lives!

Do you ever feel a little "moldy" yourself?!

Success in **every** part of life requires **working** at it, and that includes our spiritual growth. So what is the opposite of slothful?

[Proverbs 10:4]

Lazy [slothful] hands make a man poor, but _____ hands bring wealth.

[Proverbs 12:24]

_____ hands will rule, but laziness [slothfulness] ends in slave labor.

As you can see by these scriptures, the real **opposite** of "slothful" is "**diligent**." We are called to be **Diligent Disciples**. And how do you get to be diligent? By *discipline*.

Discipline:
Training that develops
self-control,
character,
orderliness and
efficiency.

A person who is **disciplined** will have:

1. Perseverance

The ability to continue in an effort **in spite of** difficulty or opposition

2. Diligence

Persevering and careful in work, industrious, painstaking and steady in effort

3. Temperance

Self-control and moderation in conduct, **not** self-indulgent

In the rest of this lesson, and the next three lessons, we will focus on spiritual growth *through personal discipline*.

[II Peter 1:5-10]

For this very reason, make every effort [King James: "giving all diligence"] to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, _____; and to _____, _____; and to _____, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall.

[I Cor 9:24-27]

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I _____ and _____ so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

[II Peter 3:14]

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort [King James: "be diligent"] to be found _____, _____ and at peace with him.

***** There is another Bible word which is related to an animal like the sloth in one way:

[Proverbs 6:6-11]

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



A "slug" is a slow person or thing.

(The common garden slug, shown here, is like a snail with no shell.)

A "sluggard" is a habitually lazy or idle person.

The scripture encourages us to consider the diligence of the ant, who needs no overseer or commander. Many of us are more like the slug than the ant. If we would discipline **ourselves** (in both physical **and** spiritual matters), we might avoid the necessity for the Lord to discipline us as frequently!

***** Where are you right now in leading a spiritually disciplined life? Do you have a regular habit of prayer, Bible Study, devotions, meditation, fasting, worshipping and fellowshiping with others, serving the Body?

Are you *self-controlled* in conduct, attitude and speech?

Have you set *personal goals* for yourself in these and related areas?

Would you feel comfortable as a "*role model*" for a new Christian in these areas?

There is a strong warning by Christ himself in the scriptures that we need to be diligent in growth:

***** READ Matthew 25:14-30**

In this parable, the word *talent* describes an amount of money. But it is obvious the parable is to be applied symbolically. We even use the word *talent* now to mean a God-given ability. What does Jesus call those who are not diligent and producing with their talents?

Matthew 25:26

"His master replied, 'You wicked, _____ [King James: "slothful"] servant!

*** If we are to **grow up** in our Faith in God, we need to become *self-disciplined*. In our next lesson we will consider...

THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

REVIEW:

1. A **disciple** must be *disciplined*.
2. *Self-discipline* should be our goal
3. *Faith* grows through *discipline*.
4. *Discipline* will include *diligence*.
5. *Discipline* will include *perseverance*.
6. *Discipline* will include *temperance*.

MEMORY VERSES:

LESSON FIVE MEMORY VERSE:

I Corinthians 9:27

I beat my body and make it my slave,
so that after I have preached to others,
I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

MEMORY VERSES NOTE:

Now that you have progressed to *Part Two*, the eight Memory Verses introduced in *Part One* will no longer be repeated on these review pages. However, in order to keep them fresh in your mind until they become a part of you, we ask that you continue to review them on your own regularly.

A separate sheet listing them all has been provided for your convenience. They **may** show up at random on future *Question* sheets or *Quizzes*!

QUESTIONS:

1. Give a simple definition of **diligence**.
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2. Give a simple definition of **perseverance**.

3. Give a simple definition of **temperance**.

4. How will **self-discipline** help in **spiritual growth**?

5. What is a **slothful** person like?

6. Why do you think so many **lack** self-discipline?

7. Write I Corinthians 9:27 from memory:

I beat my body _____
