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A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things.

–Proverbs 18:9, NLT

Most societies suffer from an overabundance of lazy people, and ours is no exception. Leaders have struggled for centuries to help such individuals—with little success. The book of Proverbs addresses the issue head-on.

According to Solomon, the lifestyle of a sluggard is an irresponsible, carefree existence. On the surface, the person may appear to have his life in order; but in reality, he is in bondage to his own laziness.

According to Strong's concordance, the biblical word picture for laziness is that of a person leaning idly against a wall. The Hebrew word used in this passage means to be idle, slack or lethargic. It also carries the idea of being shiftless and irresponsible.

What are the characteristics of a lazy person? Usually, they're easy to spot. For starters, most lazy people are an irritation to those around them. In Proverbs 10:26, the writer compares them to "smoke in the eyes" and "vinegar on the teeth" (NLT).

Lazy people also have a strong inclination to take for granted what they have. According to Proverbs 18:9, they are akin to great wasters. Be careful what you loan to a lazy person; he may tear it up, lose it or destroy it through negligence (see Prov. 12:27).

Most lazy people live by this motto: "Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow." Consequently, a slothful person leaves much undone in his life. Work stacks up; chores get postponed. The result is a life of sterility and unproductiveness.

Because of their lack of diligence and discipline, most lazy people rarely acquire the “finer things” of life. Solomon described it this way: “A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber” (Prov. 24:33).

To a lazy person, the normal everyday tasks of life are burdensome. Simple responsibilities you and I do with ease often appear colossal and beyond reach for the sluggard. They dread and often avoid the normal activities of life, such as yard work, dishes or cooking meals (see Prov. 26:15).

The end result of a lazy lifestyle is an attitude of smugness and arrogance. “Lazy people consider themselves smarter than seven wise counselors” (Prov. 26:16). A lazy person always has an excuse. Nothing can convince him that he should toil. Solomon’s remarks may sound harsh, but the lifestyle of the lazy person leads only down a path of sorrow and shame. Make certain you don’t go there!

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