

GOD'S BLESSING OF IDENTIFYING AND CONQUERING SLOTHFULNESS

LEADER'S GUIDE

For Lesson 14



Providing "GOD'S NEW LIFESTYLE OF FINANCIAL FREEDOM"

We appreciate your faithfulness, even diligence, in leading your group and giving them the opportunity to learn principles that will give them a lifetime of God's financial blessings.

It is hard to be diligent in spiritual priorities when there are many demands, and temptations, to do other things. Diligence in daily tasks is important, even critical. But diligence in serving the Lord has unimaginable rewards.

Let your personal diligence be a great example to your group.

In secular terminology: "Monkey see, monkey do". 😊

THE LEADER'S HOME PREPARATION

Did you try anything new last time? How was it received? Change brings freshness.

How well do you follow the suggested times? Are you able to cover everything?

There are **4** steps you should take during your lesson preparation. Our question for you is: do you actually pray throughout your preparation? That is why it is very purposefully placed as the first and the last step. It is only with God's help that this lesson, or any of them, will bring change and victory into people's lives. Pray and prepare.

1) **Pray**

Lord, show me where I have let slothfulness creep in. Help me to be diligent in my lesson preparation, diligent in my relationship with you, and help me find new ways to be diligent even in my daily tasks. Let me be known as someone who works wholeheartedly and with joy. And help me to communicate that to my group.

2) **Prepare** your lesson –with all diligence!

3) **Discuss** the material with a spouse or friend. Do they give you ideas of how you can communicate better or what you should emphasize more? Write it down.

4) **Pray**

Dear Father, through this lesson help my group members to become so diligent and industrious that we will have influence in the ungodly world around us, even with great men and rulers. (Prov. 22:29). Help us to be motivated by our love for you to make every hour of our days count.

LESSON PRESENTATION

TOTAL anticipated lesson time is 2 hours

NOTE: You may already be aware of someone in your group who, using the criteria for a sluggard, is very definitely one. Please note that the scripture warns us that a sluggard is “wise in his own eyes”. Pray very specifically for that person that this would be a life changing lesson for him and his eyes would be opened. Also be warned that this person might not receive the material very well. It is always so easy to point at others. God is the only one who can take the log out of their eyes. So, do not argue with them. Unfortunately if you have someone like that among you, the others will know. It is only the individual who is blinded. But, the Holy Spirit has the power to bring conviction!

Begin with any testimonies of deliverance or avoidance of partnerships.

PRAYER TIME –

Dear God and Father, our Creator, we thank You that you never rest or go on vacation. Thank You for your constant care 24/7. Thank you that in eternity You have beautiful things for us to participate in. Thank You, Lord Jesus our Christ, for Your example of an active life, seeking lost souls. Thank You for making us “fishers of MEN”. Thank you Holy Spirit, our Shepherd and Guide, for pouring Your power into us and through us to others. Thank You for Your supernatural power and strength by which we believers have the opportunity to do everything with our whole hearts and experience more energy in our lives so that we can impact this world, bringing Your Kingdom right here, right now. We praise You. Amen

This lesson is covered in 10 parts.

You may give additional lesson copies upon request. Please note that there is a lot of excellent material in the lesson that Sunday School teachers could use with their classes. This is a topic that needs to be dealt with early so that we can help our children and youth to develop the right habits and the right attitudes. Another opportunity for great influence in our church and neighborhoods! Therefore, if you need to, be prepared to make extra photocopies for teachers to use.

At the close pass out Lesson 15.

LESSON GUIDE

The crippling enemy of obedience. A subtle thief. A defiant squanderer of time and seasons. Slothfulness is all this and more. Here is a personally convicting lesson. A special part of the Financial Freedom meetings which tackles the destructive effects of slothfulness when we let it grow to control our lives. Soft choices, carefully reasoned away, can soon become a habit of life. Truly a sluggard becomes "wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (Proverbs 26:16). With the exhortations of this lesson prepare yourself to ward off the harsh consequences of laziness. Learn the principles of **rising** early, **loving** work, **growing** in diligence, **building** self-discipline and **maximizing** productivity in the race against time.

Let's change our world! I have a Ukrainian proverb to share. "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today!"
Let us repeat it together 3 times.

1. IDENTIFY AND CONQUER SLOTHFULNESS

pp. 1-2 > 10 min <

SAMUEL – A lifetime of diligent service

Follow Samuel's example! Cover each of these 3 opening Bible verses with a question for the group.

He conveyed God's warning to a slothful father – (1 Sam. 3:13)

Who was the slothful father that God told Samuel to warn, and how did he show his slothfulness?

Diligent always – (2 Thess. 3:10)

As a child Samuel learned diligence. As an adult what area(s) do you find it difficult to be diligent in?

He challenged a slothful nation – (1 Sam. 12:23-24)

How can you successfully challenge your family, a friend, or some church members to take action and become diligent?

2. CAN YOU DETECT AND OVERCOME SLOTHFULNESS?

p. 3 > 15 min < Personal Evaluation

Let us first review our proverb which should become the motto of every Christian. "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today!" Let us repeat it 3 more times.

Have each person discover how to overcome slothfulness.

When all are finished share the **20** answers:

Answers:

1.False 2.False 3.False 4.False 5.False 6.False 7.False 8.True 9.False 10.False 11.True 12.False
13.True 14.True 15.False 16.False 17.False 18.True 19.False 20.False

Have each write down their total score of correct answers.

For each of the **3** evaluation categories ask attendees to identify themselves.

Well, what did you know about slothfulness?

Who has 20-18 correct answers – You understand a sluggard.

Who has 17-10 correct answers – You do not recognize slothfulness.

Who has 9-0 correct answers – You will have difficulty with slothful people.

Copy the evaluation categories in your notes.

Let's get busy, not be slothful, and move on to discover more.

3. SEVEN SYMPTOMS OF A SLOTHFUL MAN

pp. 4–5 > 20 min <

Alright, before we begin this part let me see who can repeat our Christian motto. “Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today!” (Perhaps call out a name.) If it is not repeated word perfect, have the group say it twice more.

Slothfulness is a serious social difficulty. Decades of being under a dictatorship took away initiative and industriousness from many of people in Ukraine and we continue to reap slothfulness from that. Not only that, it is the bent of human nature to take the easy way out! If children are not trained to be diligent, to take responsibility, and to enjoy working, you are left with a generation who must be taken care of. Do you see the symptoms around you? Do you see them in yourself?

In the picture which one is the slothful one? The right one or the left one?

Answer: The symptoms of a slothful man are not usually recognizable by outward appearance.

The key phrases here are “rationalizing slothfulness, little soft choices, low value of time, incomplete tasks, wishful thinking, destructiveness, self-induced fears”.

Ask for stories, testimonies, happenings closely related to these seven points. Ask what was done about, or what the results were.

Then ask: “Can we do better?”

“How?”

4. HOW SLOTHFULNES DEVELOPS

p. 6 > 10 min <

Yes, our new motto is still on my mind. Who wishes to share it? “Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today!” Very good! Let us all say it together.

THIS IS THE PRAYER TIME FOR THIS SESSION.

Read and discuss the progression of each of these 6 points. Some in your group may be experiencing this battle with slothfulness. EVERYONE will know someone who is showing symptoms of slothfulness. Ask everyone to pray quietly that God will open their eyes to areas where they are struggling with slothfulness and also ask that they will pray for an individual by name, that the Lord would have mercy on them and confront them with His truth.

Challenge your group to actually use these lesson materials to talk to someone about slothfulness. This whole lesson is an excellent teaching opportunity in the home with children of all ages. Share it with a friend—as a self-discovery process, not an attack on them! Look for opportunities to share the Scriptures throughout the lesson to challenge yourself and others.

5. HOW TO CONQUER SLOTHFULNESS

pp. 7–8 > 15 min <

You guessed it, we will begin each part with our new believers’ motto. “Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today!” Call on a person who has not yet said it.

Go through the points one at a time, asking a different person each time to read the main point and then summarize what is said. Ask for others to comment on the practical steps both that are mentioned and others they have thought of that would be effective in making a new step against slothfulness.

Give them one minute of quiet prayer and ask them to focus on one point that would help them to stand against any slothfulness taking hold in their lives. God is longing to help us in our needs.

6. GO TO THE ANT, THOU SLUGGARD...

pp. 8–12 > 10 min <

Ask if everyone has read the illustration of the ant. If a large number did not read it, take the extra time and ask those who did to give some of the highlights that they learned. (This will take a lot longer than 10 minutes!) There is incredible information here about God's creation. Not only that, He has chosen to use the tiny ant as an example for us!

Ask: What did you find most fascinating on this information about ants?

What challenge does the ant bring to slothfulness?

Has God created us with the same abilities as ants? (We have different physical capabilities and different mental capabilities, but God still challenges us to be as diligent as they are.)

7. BE COMMITTED TO DILIGENCE

p. 13 > 15 min <

Diligence is doing a task with the motivation of love and an attitude of joy.

Bill Gothard, Founder of Institute of Basic Life Principles

Do choral reading: You the group guide read the "Requirements" one at a time. After each point stop for the choral response from the group. (Sample; you read #1, the group reply's "YES WE WILL". Then you read #2 and the group reply's "YES WE WILL".)

Read Hebrews 11:6 and point out that God wishes to reward us. Then read the "Rewards" one at a time with a choral response. (Sample; you read #1, the group replies "Hallelujah". Then you read #2, and the group replies "Hallelujah".)

You may want to share with them the quote in the box here. So often our attitude to work is to groan and complain. You will never be diligent if that is your attitude!

Alright, you 3 people repeat our proverb together please (select 3 randomly) "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today!" Excellent, once more please!

Personal Commitment to Conquer Slothfulness

Now let us sign our commitment. Remember, no one is perfect, we will all falter and sometimes fail. But should we try, or should we not try? What is your response?

8. CAN YOU DETECT THE SYMPTOMS OF A SLUGGARD?

p. 14 > 5 min <

We have not yet heard from so --- and so --- and so ---. We will let you say it each individually one after another. "Why wait until tomorrow when you can do it today?"

The answers to this quiz are obvious so, other than confirming the right answers, move on. (Ask if anyone did it with their child.)

Answers: 1. C 2. B 3. E 4. D 5. A

9. WHO PASSED THE "SLEEP TEST" IN THE BIBLE?

p. 15 > 10 min <

I think we are going to be good Ukrainians. Let us say it all together. "Why wait until tomorrow when you can do it today?" Good, now say it much louder please. --- , good now shout it out. --- . Thank you for your cooperation. That was fun!

Have various individuals each read a statement and give their answer. Ask for a raising of hands. Who would like to be like _____ (name the name of the person of the answer). Then move on to the next statement.

Answers:

1. F Jesus 2. A Darius 3. H Job 4. E Joshua 5. G Gideon 6. C Abraham 7. B Moses 8. D Samuel

10. WHO FAILED THE “SLEEP TEST” IN THE BIBLE?

p. 16 > 10 min <

Again have various individuals each read a statement and give their answer. Ask for a raising of hands. Who personally has experienced a very similar mishap or knows of a close relative, friend, acquaintance who had a similar happening? Then let them share. The goal is to relate these experiences to present day happenings right here among us.

Praise the Lord, all you faithful people. Now in your notes write down our new motto from memory. “Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today!”

Answers: 1. H Unnamed prophet 2. C David 3. A Jonah 4. F Peter 5. D Samson 6. B Eutychus
7. E Nabal 8. G A foolish virgin

Distribute Lesson # 15 and instruct everyone to be diligent, and read this lesson and fill it out at home.

Notice the **2** copies of the personal evaluation in Lesson 15 on pages 3 and 5. Both spouses should complete this quiz. This will be obvious if you have a couples’ group. Explain that there are not right or wrong answers. The issue is whether the husband understands his wife’s feelings about how the finances are handled in the home. After they fill it out, they should compare their answers and talk about it.

If you have a ladies group, ask if they would try to have their husbands fill out the evaluation too. If there are single women, the situation is different. Ask them to read through it and think about the issues involved with a couple. If they are living with parents, there will be similar issues involved.

If you have a youth group, ask them to look over the evaluation and fill out one of them according to whether they are male or female and to think about how that works in a marriage. Or if their parents do not attend a financial freedom group, they could ask them to fill it out and see what they learn about how husbands and wives feel. It is very important to have a mutual understanding of financial responsibilities when you get married.

Close in prayer

Dear Creator Father, we ask “Were You diligent at the creation? Was Jesus diligent in providing salvation? Is the Holy Spirit diligent in providing and guiding for 20 centuries? We Praise You, we Glorify You, there was no alternative for You. And we are created in your Image Father, we are also Jesus’ face now, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Shall we perform less? Shall we shame You? We commit to diligence, Father. With diligence we accept each task as a special assignment from You. Jesus. We commit to use all our energies, Holy Spirit, to do it quickly and skillfully. All to Your Honor and Glory! AMEN

What ? ? ? You really want to repeat our Ukrainian proverb which is our new Christian motto once more? O.K. Let’s go! God bless you all.

Contact Information for God’s Blessing of Financial Freedom

General info, Training, follow-up, help – Vera Lavrinenko – 096 254 33 24

Orders for paper materials – lessons, guides, posters, magnets, banners – Ivanka Dubenchuk – 096 103 98 77

For electronic materials on FF Website <http://svoboda.sytes.net> – Ivan Onishuk