



THE
MENTORING
PROJECT

HOW TO STOP BEING LAZY: LIVE WITH PURPOSE



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HOW TO STOP BEING LAZY



INTRODUCTION

Every morning at 4:30 or so just east of Millersburg, Ohio my grandfather wakes in order to spend time with the Lord and then to go to work. He's in his eighties. You may be thinking, "Wow, that guy should have planned better for retirement." But here's the thing—money isn't his motivation. He works because it's who he is—it's what he does. He has no interest in being lazy. Now, he isn't punching a clock, nor does he receive a W-2 in January from any given employer, and you will never find him lazy at work. But upon finishing time spent in God's Word and in prayer, he will load into his Chevy Traverse and make off for the Bob Evans in the town just to the north of ours in order to begin meetings with gentlemen from one of two groups—plumbers and pastors (and maybe the occasional railroad engineer).

You see, sixty years ago my grandfather got into plumbing, first as a grip and then eventually as a master plumber. Today, he teaches plumbing classes through his training agency for Ohio plumbers who need so many hours a year of extended education. Nearly as far back, he received the call to ministry, and so he packed up his family and moved to Lynchburg, Virginia where he received his theological education. Since then, he's been pastoring and preaching faithfully. Today, he serves as the interim pastor of Ridgewood Baptist Church in Wadsworth, Ohio.

Why do I tell you all this? Well, I must admit, I am proud of my Papaw. More than that though, I want to be like him. I've spent my entire life watching him and hoping that I'd be hard working like he is, never needing to ask myself "why am I so lazy?". In that way, you can think of him like my mentor. Man, have I had a good one.

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So, when I had the opportunity to write this guide on how to stop being lazy and working hard, I jumped at it. Now, I am no finished product. I have plenty a growing to do when it comes to the task of overcoming laziness and working hard. I am guessing you're probably like me—wanting to grow in the area of work ethic rather than confessing "I am lazy." I have good news for you. In addition to the wonderful examples of good work ethic I have in my life, and I hope you have in yours, the Bible has loads to say on this topic with plenty of Bible verses about laziness. That's why in this guide we will focus our attention on laziness in the Bible.

We will begin by considering God's purpose for our work before and after the Fall. Next, we will take a closer look at what is laziness and the causes of laziness, as well as the consequences that it brings. After having a think about laziness, we will look at the why and how of hard work. And lastly, we will consider some practical ways regarding how to overcome laziness and grow in the area of hard work and discipline. So, without further ado...

1

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR OUR WORK

God is a worker

The Bible famously opens with the line: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). From this one sentence, we learn so much about God. First, we learn that God is eternal—that is, he is outside of time, having always been what he is. Have you ever noticed how Moses (the author of Genesis) simply presupposes God’s existence? Everything else in the universe had to be created but not God. God has always existed. When we explore what does the Bible say about laziness, we must start here: with God’s eternal nature.

Second, we learn that God is capable of extraordinary power. He created the entire world after all! If we keep reading in Genesis, we learn that God’s preferred method for creating is his own voice. Repeatedly the text says, “And God said...” (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). Upon issuing his powerful word, that which he willed came to be. He is the ultimate example of industry, far removed from being lazy.

Lastly and in bringing these two truths together, we learn that God is not lazy, or, to say it positively, God is a worker.¹ Think about it. God has always existed. That means that he is fully sufficient within himself for his own life. And yet, God deliberately chose to act in time to create the world. Imagine coming into a boatload of cash—I’m talking an amount so big, you’d rank right up there with the Bezos’s and Musk’s of the world. What would be your first move after counting the zeros? I bet many of us would *stop* working and succumb to being lazy. But not God. God, the only eternal, completely sufficient, and entirely satisfied one chose to work to bring about the world.

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God created us to be workers like him

Okay so God is a worker and he worked to create the entire world and everything in it. Got it. Let's zero in on where you and I come into this story. Genesis 1:26 says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" Like we can learn so much about God from Genesis 1:1, we can learn so much about ourselves from Genesis 1:26.

We're made to be like God. Now (as a quick PSA), there are legitimate ways in which you and I will *never* be like him. There is a "Godness" to God that we will never share in. In case this surprises you, we only need to re-examine Genesis 1:1 and 1:26 to realize God is, in some ways, utterly unique. He is Creator and we are created. He has life in himself, and our lives are from him. He can work to make the world from nothing, whereas our work requires preexisting material provided by God. All this is just to name a few points of distinction lest we get too big for our britches, as my grandmother would say.

And yet, there are real ways in which we *are* like God. Specifically, we're made to work. God works and so we work. Look back at Genesis 1:1. Who has dominion over the heavens and the earth? God. That is, he creates the world and so he has charge over it—aka he can work in it as he pleases. We get this, right? Creating power transfers to governing authority. Now look at Genesis 1:26 again and ask yourself that same question—who has dominion? Answer—we do! Wow! God creates and charges us with the responsibility to rule over everything he made. Wow! So work is a part of the human job description—it's part of what it means to bear God's image. This is a crucial concept when understanding what does the Bible say about laziness and our created purpose.

Sometimes work is wrongly associated with the Fall of man as though, if it weren't for sin there would be no reason to work. But notice work is a justifying ground to humanity's existence before sin even entered the picture. It is a part of the created order unstained by sin and death. So next time you think to associate work with something bad or find yourself

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justifying laziness at work, you should stop and remind yourself, “God made me to work. This is part of why I exist.”

God Calls Us to Work for His Glory

Okay, God made us to work. The next question we need to get at is why. The first answer the Bible offers us is the utilitarian one and we see that in the passage we’ve been staring at—Genesis 1:26-28. We were created to steward the things that God has made. Plants, animals, and everything else is under the care of image-bearing humanity, and under humanity’s care, these things should flourish. When Moses retells the story of God creating Adam and Eve in Genesis 2, he writes, “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). The call to work and keep indicate a responsibility to maintain and expand; to preserve and improve. From this we learn that God made the world good but with the capacity to increase. We also learn that man was his chosen vessel to bring about that increase. So, human work has a utility in God’s design.

The Bible also offers us a teleological purpose for human work. Don’t stress that big t-word. It just means something like ultimate or final. There is an ultimate purpose for our work and it doesn’t terminate on the here and now. Yes, God wants Adam to expand the garden of Eden such that it covers the entire earth but not for the garden’s sake and not even for Adam’s sake, though both of those things are in play. No, God ultimately wants Adam to do this for his own sake—for God’s own glory.

That’s why, in the New Testament, Christians are instructed to “. . . work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men. . .” (Col. 3:23). What does this mean practically? It means that every practical matter of work in your life has a bigger purpose than you probably realize. Rather than being an annoying feature in your life that you try to minimize or treat with laziness at work, you should go about your work recognizing that God is brought glory when you work for him.

I remember once being asked by my dad to move a pile of wood from the front of the house to the backyard. Being only eight or nine years old, to my eye my dad might as well of asked me to clear the forest behind our house of all its timber. I felt dread at the size of the task. But then I noticed

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something of an opportunity you may call it. As I was hauling the first wheelbarrow's load of wood, I noticed that there was a rather large pine in our side yard with sprawling, low-lying branches. Like the Grinch in Dr. Seus's world, I got "... an awful idea! ... a wonderful, awful idea." I had to act fast though. At eight, it was hard to know when the adults were wise to your schemes. I quickly started rolling the logs under the that pine tree. It cut the distance down by 75% and, therefore, I was done in a quarter of the time it should have taken.

There was only one problem. On the side of our house just feet from that pine, there was a window. And it just so happened my dad was standing in that window, watching me toss every single log under that tree. I was caught and the judge sentenced me maximally. What hurt more than the punishment I received, however, was the fact that I should have obeyed my dad because he was my dad and I loved him. I remember him asking me, "Taylor, why would you disobey me? I love you and you can trust me that when I ask you to do something it is for your good and our family's good. Why would you distrust and disobey?" Those were penetrating questions.

Reflecting back on my rough and wild eight-year-old ways, an important lesson about working for the glory of God rises to the surface. Part of what it means to work for his glory is to be motivated by love, not only our love for God but also his love for us. You see, God has given us everything we have. What do we have that we haven't received? Answer: not one iota. God has richly blessed us with all things. His commands intend to bring even more blessings as there is safety in fearing him alone. Working then for his glory should be a given. There is just one problem. Like when I was eight. . . we're often tempted to cut corners, do less, shirk responsibility, begrudge accountability, and despise work. Why? That question leads us to the section of this life skill guide regarding the causes of laziness.

Reflection Questions:

1. Search your heart and answer honestly: how do you feel about work? Why?
2. In what ways are you currently tempted to be lazy or practice the art of laziness?
3. How does work bring glory to God?

2

WHAT IS LAZINESS AND WHY DOES IT EXIST?

What is laziness?

I'll offer you a simple definition of what is laziness. Laziness is being uninterested or unwilling to do what you're supposed to do in favor of being idle or overindulging in easier, more enjoyable things like sleep, watching tv, doom scrolling, or some other unproductive activity. You might ask "why am I so lazy?" Here's my bet though—you probably don't need a definition of laziness in order to spot it in your life and in others' lives. Laziness stands out.

A wife asked her husband to take out the trash, but he waits until the football game is over. Then he waits until the next football game is over. Then he waits until morning. What was he being? Among other things, lazy!

A university student has a big exam he needs to ace in order to pass his chemistry class, but he waits to study until after he watches an episode of his favorite show on Netflix. And then another episode. And another episode. And pretty soon he's on the phone with his mom informing her that he flunked out of school. What do we have here? Again, laziness, or procrastination and laziness.

A dad yells up the stairs to his teenage son asking him to go clean the garage, but it's only 10 AM and it's a Saturday! The son decides to sleep through the request and before he knows it it's 1:30 PM. One more time . . . being lazy!

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What about you? In what ways are you struggling with laziness? My hunch is that one of the clearest forms laziness takes today is wasted time spent on our smart phones. I don't have stats to back that up (though I would bet they're out there!), but short-term content makes it too easy for someone to think to themselves, "Just one more video and then I'll get to work on that project." One video then becomes thirty minutes or even an hour's worth of videos and you haven't done one thing in regard to your work. Call it procrastination, therapy for anxiety (or maybe you think it's adhd and laziness), or something else. Whatever it is, it's not short of laziness.

Whatever your lazy "drug" of choice is, identify it now. Knowing your proclivities will help make this life skill guide more productive for you.

Why does laziness exist?

Okay, so laziness is shirking responsibility in favor of something easy. It's not doing what you're supposed to do when you're supposed to do it. We now move to the issue of laziness's existence. Why can't we just be born into a world where we *want* to do what we're supposed to do when we're supposed to do and never are tempted to be lazy instead. Well, the short answer is sin. This addresses the question "is laziness a sin?". Sin's entrance into the world messed a bunch of stuff up including the goodness of man's labors and his enjoyment in them. This is one of the root causes of laziness.

Remember Adam, the first man who was placed in the Garden of Eden? Well, his sin affected not only him but all of us. In fact, in some sense, we were in him and represented by him when he sinned. Paul writes to the Roman church, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death spread to all men because all sinned. . ." (Rom. 5:12). So sin and death and everything else that is wrong in this world including laziness came through Adam's sin. Now, you may be thinking, "Wow. What a raw deal! I wasn't even there and I have to pay for Adam's mess up?" Not so fast, my friend. Yes, we sinned in Adam. But we also personally and regularly sin all the time. We sin volitionally, happily, and sometimes with little to no remorse after the fact, admitting "I am lazy" only when caught. So, sin, death, and everything bad including laziness exists because Adam's sin, but it also exists because of ours. This is the reality of laziness in the Bible.

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What are laziness's consequences?

So, laziness is not doing what you're supposed to do when you're supposed to do it, and it exists because we are all sinners. The next question we need to get at is what are laziness's consequences. The Bible does not mince words answering this question. A sampling of lazy scriptures in the Bible and Bible verses about laziness is in order.

- "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man." — Proverbs 6:10-11 ·
- "The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied." — Proverbs 13:4 ·
- "A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich." — Proverbs 10:4 ·
- "Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks." —Ecclesiastes 10:18 ·
- "For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living." — 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 ·
- "Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord." — Romans 12:11

From these passages, we see that laziness causes poverty, hunger, and even the breaking of fellowship between believers in the church. Stiff costs! What's worse is that Jesus clearly teaches that spiritual laziness leads to eternal ruin (Matthew 25:23).

My friend, if you're tempted to practice the art of laziness, then you're probably familiar with lines of reasoning that go something like: "What's five more minutes?" "I don't need to do that thing now, I can later!" "If I don't read my Bible today it isn't the worst thing. I need sleep." Be very careful. Laziness lures you in and then lulls you to sleep. The problem is that you can't guarantee that you'll wake from your slumber. Laziness will cost you now and it will cost you dearly in the end. I hope that one of the

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reasons you were attracted to this guide in the first place is because you understand the risks associated with laziness and want to ward them off and stop being lazy. I pray that the Lord give you great success in overcoming laziness.

Reflection Questions:

1. How is laziness a sin?
2. What are some costs associated with laziness?
3. How does counting the costs encourage you to work hard and not be lazy?

3

THE WHY AND HOW OF DISCIPLINE

The why of discipline

Thomas Edison sent the following recommendations to a youth assembly that requested a message from him on how to stop being lazy:

1. Always be interested in whatever you undertake.
2. Don't mind the clock, but keep at it, and let nature indicate the necessity of rest.
3. Failures, so called, are the fingerposts pointing out the right direction to those who are willing to learn.
4. Hard work and a genuine interest in everything that makes for human progress will make men and women more valuable and acceptable to themselves and to the world.²

Pretty good advice, I must say. These points show that Edison was in favor of youth growing in discipline and learning how to stop being lazy. Granted, he wasn't overly specific in what they should show discipline in. In fact, in his first point he indicates that one should let interest lead to discipline in whatever it is that their hand finds to do. My mother would amen this sentiment only she would say something more akin to, "If it's worth doing, then it's worth doing right." This mindset leaves no room for the art of laziness.

So, whatever you do, according to Thomas, you should do with interest and discipline. But what should you do? He answers that one's interest and discipline should aim at human progress. Hard work, in other words, is about more than the work itself; it is the key to overcoming laziness. Hard work is about advancement, and not only advancement of self, but advancement of everyone else starting with those closest to you.

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We've already thought about how work is intended to bring glory to God and explored what does the Bible say about laziness. But in order to better understand what kind of work best brings God glory we need to consider our work's impact on others. Edison was onto something in his last point though he didn't here ground it in God's glory. What we want to do now is show the relationship between bringing God glory by advancing others with our work even as we ourselves grow and avoid becoming lazy at work.

In order to see this relationship, let's consider the two greatest commandments. Jesus was once approached by a lawyer who asked him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (Matt. 22:36). He offered two answers for the price of one question. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (vv. 37-39). In his first answer, Jesus basically says that the highest aim for a human to have is bringing God glory by loving him, the ultimate cure for spiritual laziness. The Shorter Catechism summarizes this law in its answer to the question, "What is the chief end of man?" It answers, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."³

So, your whole life, Christian, is to be about bringing glory to God and you do this, in part, by showing discipline and working hard, refusing to be defined by being lazy. Jesus's second commandment then helps us fill in what kind of discipline brings glory to God—the kind that loves and advances neighbor. You should labor then to do good to others both materially and spiritually and you should do so out of love for God and others.

You may even say that this is what the Bible means by discipline: using your life to love God and neighbor. This is the secret to how to overcome laziness. Is that how you approach your work whatever that work may be? Or to you, is your why behind your work something more like a paycheck or a checked box? Take stock, my friend. Are you giving in to procrastination and laziness? The Bible calls you to something more than punching the clock. You punch the clock and work with excellence so that you can demonstrate God's goodness to you and provide for those he has

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put under you and beside you. You punch the clock to glorify God and love neighbor. That must be our why behind work if our work is to be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord and if we truly want to stop being lazy.

The how of discipline

Now begins our descent into the practical, starting now and finishing in the next section.

My oldest son was born on June 4, 2024. Within twenty-four hours of his birth, I learned a very important lesson: he wasn't concerned about my sleep . . . AT ALL. He didn't care one bit that it was 2AM and every other decent person in our time zone was asleep. He was awake and that fact demanded that I be also. Those first five months were tough for my wife and me. We were very tired. The work was very hard.

And yet, knowing that the purpose of our lives was to love God and neighbor (especially those neighbor's closest to us, which in this case was my boy) made all the difference. It stopped me from asking "why am I so lazy?" and helped me act. What would God have me do at 2 AM when my son would wake in a fit? Give him something to eat, change his diaper, sing him a song, or rock him to sleep. Why? Because caring for my son in faith did good to him and brought God glory.

In some sense, the how of discipline starts by passing everything through the filter of love for God and neighbor. This is the foundation for overcoming laziness. Will this action display God's character to the world? Will it advance my neighbor? Asking yourself these questions will not only help you say no to the wrong things and stop being lazy, but it will also motivate you to work hard while doing the right things.

Speaking of the right things, I would be amiss to not mention that the best work that you can do for someone else and thereby most glorify God is spiritual in nature. We must be vigilant against spiritual laziness. Don't get me wrong, it is good to give water to the thirsty, food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless. It is good to take your kids to school each morning, to refill the water jug at work when it's empty (and not be lazy at work), to shovel your neighbor's sidewalk after it snows. These material acts of

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service or showings of hard work which serve neighbor and so glorify God are good things to do, so do more of them!

But the most important work you can do is spiritual in nature. That doesn't mean everyone reading this should quit their jobs and go to seminary with plans of becoming a pastor (though some of you should!). What it does mean, however, is that your highest aim in work should be to tell the truth about who God is and help other people understand what it means to follow him. After all, to be a Christian requires that you believe Heaven and Hell are real places, that Jesus is the only way to find forgiveness for sin, and that the best life one can live is by following Jesus. Believing all that, what good have you actually done your neighbor if you take out their trash but don't tell them how they can be right with God?

The last thing I want to say on this matter is that the material and spiritual acts of service or showings of hard work are not mutually exclusive. Why do you take your children to school? Well, it's so that they can learn to read and grow in their ability to think critically. The benefits of an education will help them greatly when they're older and in need of a job. You know what else an education will help them do? Read their Bibles where they will learn more and more what God is like? So again, why should you see to your children gaining an education? So that they grow to become contributing members of society AND so they learn to know and love the Lord their God.

Let's try another one just to make sure you get the point. Why do you choose to serve breakfast to the homeless at your community's local soup kitchen on a Saturday morning instead of sleeping in? Instead of practicing the art of laziness? A legitimate aim should be to ensure that those who are hungry leave full! But your even higher goal should be that those being served see and hear in your act of service and in your speech something about Jesus, who is the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

You see, the material acts of service which are the fruit of your labor serve the spiritual. You work to serve your spouse, your children, your church, your employer, your friends, and your community to glorify God and make their lives better even as you point them to eternal life in Jesus. There are so many goods available to you if you would just work for them. But make

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no mistake, being lazy will cost you every one of them. If you labor for others, you could lift them up to God such that they see his grace and receive it even as their material needs are met. If you choose to be lazy, however, and you can forget having such a big impact.

In this we learn that laziness feels self-serving, but it actually costs a lot. This realization is crucial for learning how to stop being lazy. The temptation to laziness says, "You'll be better off to take care of yourself in this moment by not doing what you're supposed to do." Saying yes to that line though requires that you pass on blessing others with your labor and so bringing glory to God. If you pass on such a chance, not only will others pay for it, but you will also. Remember that you can never actually serve yourself by doing other than what God made you to do, and he made you to love him and to love your neighbor.

Okay, in this section we've said that the why behind hard work is to bring glory to God and do good to others. We've also seen that these two aims are intertwined and create a filter by which we can begin to understand what work we should say yes to, helping us defeat procrastination and laziness. Lastly, we've noted that the most important work we can do is spiritual in nature though this often works alongside and through material work.

So, you should be motivated to work hard and ward off discipline. You should even have some conceptual idea of what that will require. In our next and final section, we will take a look at a gameplan by which you can begin taking steps in that direction.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is the relationship between loving God and neighbor?
2. How does thinking about your work as advancing others help you want to work hard and stop asking "why am I so lazy"?
3. How does material work relate to spiritual work?
4. Why is spiritual work the most important work we can do?

4

THE GAMEPLAN

Time for some truth in advertising. Most of what we've covered so far is mandatory for Christians. Loving God and neighbor, for example, isn't optional, it's required. What we're now going to do is lay out some suggestions for how you can get started becoming a more disciplined person and learn how to stop being lazy. I really think these can help you, but I don't want you thinking that these are bullet-proof guarantees. What's more is that I don't want you getting the idea that these are the only things you can or should do in order to grow in discipline. There are a thousand practical things we can do to become more disciplined. Consider these a starting point then and go from here.

Have a plan

It's amazing what little you can accomplish without a plan. Having a purpose often rides on the back of having a plan. My friend, if you are a lazy person today, battling procrastination and laziness, then it will likely require some semblance of a plan in order to become a disciplined person tomorrow.

I already told you that my son was born on June 4, 2024. An amazing thing happened three months later. I watched my wife run a half marathon, carrying my three-month-old in her arms as she crossed the finish line (No, he didn't ride with her for 13.1—I handed him to her with 100 yards to go). Watching her pull that off left me feeling as proud as maybe I've ever been. I left the race with her that day thinking, "I need to run a marathon. If she can do it, so can I."

There was only one problem—I despise running. I used to joke, "I only run when dribbling a basketball or being chased." I hate(d) every part of running. It felt like the art of laziness was more my speed. But a marathon I set out to run! Here's what I quickly learned: going from 0 running to

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running 26.1 miles requires a plan—a plan that is composed of a thousand different steps. It feels like everything goes into 26.1 miles: nutrition, sleep, stretching, slow runs, fast runs, run in between, and yes, loads of ice and ibuprofen. All these things have to be a part of the plan.

I learned of my need for a plan the hard way. How do you run a marathon? Well, you go for your first run and simply run as far and fast as you can until you can run 26.1. Then you keep doing that every day until race day. My first run was 2 miles, and I was pretty certain it would be the end of me. I quickly learned that pacing, training according to heart rate, taking days off, and ramping up slowly were requirements if I was to actually be able to go the distance. These things also had to go into the plan.

Guess what? In 2025, I ran my first two marathons (slowly albeit)! That would have never happened if I didn't have a plan. You and I need a plan to help direct our effort in overcoming laziness.

Okay, so you want to be disciplined and that requires a plan. What goes into a good plan? First, you need to prioritize the most important things. Second, you need to decide how you'll spend your time. Third, you need to limit distractions and eliminate excuses (like claiming it's just adhd and laziness). And finally, you need to evaluate in order to improve. Let's break these down.

Starting with priorities. If you're a Christian, your highest aim is to love the Lord your God and you can't do this without spending time with him in his Word and in prayer. Many Christians find the morning time best for these spiritual disciplines. The Bible doesn't, however, specify when you must read. If anything, the picture we get from Scripture is that we should all the time be in God's Word. Joshua wrote to the children of Israel, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Josh. 1:8). Similarly, Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly..." (Col. 3:16). How can you meditate on God's Word or allow Christ's word to you to dwell richly in your heart if you're never spending time reading your Bible or praying?

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My friend, if you're not disciplined in spiritual things, succumbing to spiritual laziness, then your discipline in other things is of little importance. So, ask yourself when is the best time for you to daily have a quiet time? If you're not accustomed to spending time in God's Word and prayer daily, then start with fifteen minutes a day where you read and pray. Whatever time of day it ends up being, be sure to be disciplined and do it every day.

The second priority I would encourage you to focus on is your family. You may be a spouse, a parent, a sibling. You're definitely a son or daughter. Whatever you are, focus on building into your family relationships. Serve those whom God has given you. Work to show care at your family members' points of need. Prioritize laboring for them over mindless activities like doom scrolling, which are common causes of laziness. This one can be a challenge for me. After a long day, I might feel lazy at work and just want to come home and sit in a quiet room and catch up on the news. But do you know where my toddler wants me to be? On the floor playing with blocks or building blanket forts or reading *Big Truck Little Island*. Which do you think is the better choice? Serving my kid every time. Whatever those kinds of chances are in your life, take them and stop being lazy.

A third priority I strongly encourage you to be disciplined in is care for your fellow church members. The New Testament is full of "one another" commands. These are obligations which church members have to one another. Love one another. Serve one another. Pray for one another. Admonish one another. The collective weight of these commands leads us to conclude that our membership in our churches is a big deal! You may be thinking, "What does membership have to do with discipline?" It has a lot to do with it when Sunday morning rolls around and you're tempted to skip church for a sleep in or going to play golf with your work buddies. When your choice is to serve self or serve your church family, do not give in to spiritual laziness; be disciplined and serve your church family.

A fourth priority you should be disciplined in is your work. Whether your vocation is doctor or lawyer or stay at home mom, God has given you a work to do, and you should do it unto him. This means that you don't cut corners. You don't steal time from your employer. You don't get lazy at work. You don't lie. You don't slander your colleagues. You don't discipline

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your children in anger. You avoid procrastination and laziness. Positively, it means doing your best. Doing what you can to make the lives of those around you better. Contributing ideas and effort to improving your company or family's welfare. Whatever you do during the "9-5" hours, do with your whole heart and unto the glory of God.

You should plan good in each one of these areas. Think about practical ways you can be a more disciplined follower of Christ, spouse or parent or child, church member, worker, and learn how to stop being lazy. Write those things down in a plan for overcoming laziness and then get to work.

Find accountability

Okay, get a plan. Good. The next step is to share your plan with someone else. You could start with someone who is already at arm's reach like a spouse; or, a great place to go would be to your church. Ask a fellow member to review your plan and hold you accountable. To this end, I think we too often imagine that our business is none of our fellow church members' business. Maybe we're fine with someone asking us about our prayer lives or how our evangelism is going, but they better not mention our finances or our eating habits or our family relationships. My friend, if you're tempted to hold to a "private" kind of Christianity like this, hiding your procrastination and laziness, then I would especially encourage you to find someone trustworthy in your church and transparently share your entire plan for growing in discipline with them. Not only will you gain accountability, which is very helpful when it comes to overcoming laziness and growing in discipline, but you also learn to walk alongside others as they walk alongside you. Accountability is necessary to grow in discipline and transparency, and interdependency is necessary to grow spiritually. On this one we have a two for one special!

Pray often

It is startling how often I am under the illusion that I can grow without prayer. I wonder if you're ever like me in this, asking "why am I so lazy" but not praying about it. My friend, growing in discipline and learning how to stop being lazy will require strength that you don't have and wisdom that you can't conjure up. Spare me one more bit on marathon running. I am currently signed up for my third race. The difference this time is that I hired

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a coach. The planning was too elaborate, and I simply didn't know enough in order to optimize my training. So, I hired a coach who I could call and ask, "What should I do here?"

We already talked about being disciplined by going to God's Word (reading Bible verses about laziness) and praying. Here I want to emphasize praying to God for help specifically when it comes to growing in discipline. At the beginning of the day, pray something like this: "Lord, I know I am prone to waste time and being lazy. Please help me today to know how to serve you and others to the full capacity of strength that you have afforded me." Then, as you get to work, ask the Lord: "Lord, is it wise for me to spend time doing *this*? Does *this* glorify you or should I do something else? Help me avoid laziness in the Bible sense. I need wisdom, please give it to me!" James writes, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5).

Discipline too often is imagined to be something you do in your own strength to fix the causes of laziness. Christian discipline isn't like that at all. That's because Christianity is predicated on the understanding that you don't have any strength that doesn't come from God. Do you want to grow in discipline? You'll need the Lord's help. So, pray. Pray a lot. The Lord hears the prayers of his children and he delights to answer.

Rest

Finally, let me encourage you in your pursuit of discipline, remember to rest. God has given you your life to glorify him through service and service requires discipline. That is true. However, God has also given you rest in order to rejuvenate your body and soul. You're not going to bat 1000, and even if you get close, sometimes you need to sit and rest. Sometimes you need to simply enjoy what God has given you whether that be a book or a movie or a nap or a walk. I lead a community group at my church and we're currently studying Ecclesiastes. Of course, Ecclesiastes has a lot to say about work and what does the Bible say about laziness. But I was struck by the directedness of the writer on the point about rest and enjoying what God has given. He writes, "Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God" (Ecc. 5:18).

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Rest reminds us of my previous point which is that we're dependent on God. Rest rejuvenates our body and our soul. Rest encourages us where we would otherwise be tempted to burnout. Rest glorifies God because it allows us to enjoy what God has given.

So, my friend, don't neglect to rest in your pursuit of discipline. Appropriate amounts of rest won't make you lazy or guilty of being lazy. In fact, appropriate rest is necessary to be disciplined and avoid procrastination and laziness. So, rest and enjoy what God has given.

Reflection Questions:

1. What part of this gameplan regarding how to stop being lazy sounds most difficult for you? Why?
2. Have you had accountability before? In what form? How did you find it helpful?
3. Who do you have in your life right now who you can be accountable to?

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CONCLUSION

Discipline is something you'll need to chase your entire life. It's not as though one day you win a discipline trophy and for the rest of your days you get to rest on your laurels. No, disciplined people are disciplined because they keep saying yes to what they're supposed to do when they're supposed to do it. Nobody is perfect but real growth is possible such that we can be typified by this kind of discipline, successfully overcoming laziness. And we should want to be because discipline brings glory to God. It underscores our having been made in God's image. It serves those around us. And lastly, by being disciplined, we ourselves grow and stop being lazy.

So, you've read this entire guide on how to overcome laziness. What are you going to do now? I pray that the answer is that you're going to get busy for the glory of God and for the good of others.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ I am not saying that God's existence outside of his creative work in the world is characterized by laziness or that he only began to work at the time in which he created. Rather, I am considering God's free choice to act outside of himself in order to create the world for his good pleasure. His choice was free in that he was under no requirement to act. And yet, act he did.
- ² Zuck, Roy B. *The Speaker's Quote Book: Over 4,500 Illustrations and Quotations for All Occasions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997.
- ³ *The Westminster Shorter Catechism: With Scripture Proofs*. 3rd edition. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996.



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