

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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Idleness

"An idle man's brain is the devil's workshop." – John Bunyan

"Be always employed about some rational thing, that the devil find thee not idle." – Jerome

"Untilled soil, however fertile it may be, will bear thistles and thorns; so it is with man's mind." – Teresa of Avila

"The outlook for our country lies in the quality of its idleness." – Irwin Edman

"Trouble springs from idleness, and grievous toil from needless ease." – Benjamin Franklin

Rest and relaxation is good for us. Even our Lord encouraged it (Mark 6:31). But there is a difference in a period of rest and relaxation, and just being idle or lazy.

Even in the writings of wisdom, we find encouragement to not be idle. "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (Prov. 6:6).

There is a good reason for seeking to avoid idleness. It seems that when we are idle, is the time when we are more prone to think bad thoughts and commit sin. Our mind tends to focus on things that are not appropriate. Jesus said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:18-19). And in that period of idleness, James points out the fruit of unbridled thoughts. "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed" (James 1:14).

This is why the Psalms stress the importance of meditating upon God's Word. "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psa. 119:11). It is important that we seek to remain focused so that those evil things are displaced.

The apostle Paul addressed the problem in the first century of younger widows who were prone to sin. "And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5:13). In this case we see that idleness led them to sin by gossiping about others. And as busybodies, (as the word draws its definition), they were meddlesome. All of this because of idleness.

Isn't it tragic that even today, often the very ones that trouble the church are those who are idle. It seems that as long as we have something to do, or are devoting our thoughts to something, that we are not as prone to commit sin. But when we are idle for too long, we seem to find trouble.