

BEYOND CONFLICT

Leader's Guide

September 4 & 5: Lazy People

Series Overview

Some people are difficult to live with. They may cross your path every day at work, at school, at home or at church. They may be critical, phony, inconsistent or cruel. Each of us needs to learn how to respond to these people. We need to know when to confront, encourage and forgive, because we are supposed to live at peace with everyone.



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Sermon Highlights

Colossians 3:23, Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though working for the Lord and not for men.

Question:

What is the difference between running the race of life for man versus running the race for the Lord?

Colossians 3:1-17
1 Corinthians 9:25-27

Answer:

The difference is self rather than selflessness. It is working for a perishable crown instead of an imperishable crown.

Devotion is defined as profound dedication, to surrender all of one's self.

Example of misguided devotion: *Luke 18:18-25*

Example of true devotion to Christ: *Acts 20:22-24*

Christ-consciousness and Self-Consciousness

Christ deserves your profound dedication, your devotion and your total surrender. Will you give it to Him today?

On laziness...

- Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him. –Benjamin Franklin
- *If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks. –Ecclesiastes 10:18*
- *A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing. –Proverbs 20:4*
- *We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. –Hebrews 6:12*



Take it home ... Practical Applications

This week take some time to ask yourself: How have I run the race of life so far? How will I choose to run from this point on? Ask God to help you to live a life of complete surrender to Him.



Take it to the source ... Bible Study

Introductory question: What is your favorite way to spend a lazy day? How often do you get to do that?

Opening Thought

Many of us find it hard to stay faithful in our lives of following Christ. We tend to get distracted or we find it hard to keep working to develop our spiritual lives. Use this question to get your group thinking about being lazy or being diligent in all that it means to be a follower of Christ. This will get everybody thinking about the fact that following Jesus takes some effort on our part.

Read *Colossians 3:1-17*.

1. What are *things that are above* (verse 2)? How often do you think about such things? What can you do to make these part of your normal daily thoughts?
2. What do verses 5-17 say about the change that should occur in the life of one who is completely surrendered to God?
3. What does it mean to “clothe yourselves” with the attributes of God’s chosen people (verse 12)? What are some practical things you can do to wear the life of Christ before the people you encounter every day?
4. How can your actions act as a confirmation of the truth of the message of Jesus Christ? How can your actions hinder the message of Jesus Christ?

Key Point

Following Christ means we have to make the effort to focus our thoughts on God and the eternal things that are never going to change. We also have to make the effort to clothe ourselves with the attributes that reflect a Christ-like nature. Life with Christ is a free gift of God’s grace, but we have to do our part as the Holy Spirit works in us to make us more like Him.

Read *1 Corinthians 9:24-27*.

1. Do you think of the Christian life as a long-distance race or a short dash? Why?
2. What are some of the ways that you train yourself spiritually? How do these things benefit your life with Christ?
3. How often do you think about the crown that will last forever? How can this practically affect the way you live your life?
4. Do you ever feel like you are running aimlessly in life? What can you do by yourself or with your small group to help you stay focused on God’s purpose for you and your life?
5. Is there anything you need to change in your life if you are going to win the eternal prize? What practical steps do you need to take today?

Key Point

Paul describes the Christian life as being like running a race. There were important athletic games held every two years in Corinth, so the people would have identified with this image immediately. Paul is saying that discipline and preparation are needed in the spiritual life just like they are needed in the athletic world. Each one of us has to make the decision that we are going to train ourselves to be people who actually win the spiritual race that God calls us to.

Read Luke 18:18-25 and Acts 20:22-24.

1. What are your thoughts about the rich ruler? Do you sympathize with him? Why or why not?
2. How difficult do you find it to give every part of your life to God? What are some of the things that may keep you from complete surrender?
3. Are you a person that likes to know everything that is happening in your life? How comfortable are you in trusting God, even when you are in a situation that is beyond your understanding or control?
4. How important is it that you finish strong in your spiritual life? What can you do to continue to gain spiritual discipline and strength each day?

Key Point

Some people find it hard to let go of everything and trust God completely with their lives. This is all part of a complete surrender to Him though. As we devote every part of our lives to Him, He leads us into the fullness of His purposes and plans that He has for each one of us. He is the one who will help us to finish strong as we walk through this life.



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All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

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