

Unit 1: 7 Deadly Sins

Lesson 1.4 Sloth (Laziness)

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

For the Lesson: Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

Recommended Orthodox Study Bible [HERE](#).

Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition [HERE](#).

Scripture Reference: Proverbs 13:4; Colossians 3:23; Romans 12:11; Proverbs 6:9 - 11; Galatians 6:9; Matthew 25:26

Activities:

Implement based on available time. Detailed instructions and materials lists are provided in the lesson.

Words of the week:

ծուլութիւն - dzoo-loo-tyoon - laziness/sloth

յնտաձգել - hed-a-tseh-kel - to procrastinate

յետոյ - he-doh - later

Objective:

Students will understand that sloth is not about being tired or resting, but about becoming spiritually lazy and refusing to grow closer to God or serve others. They will recognize that sloth weakens their soul and wastes the gifts God has given them — and they will learn to fight back with zeal, responsibility, and daily habits of prayer and love.

Moral Character Focus:

Knowledge: Explain how sloth is a spiritual laziness that leads us to neglect prayer, service, and growth in our faith.

Understanding: Understand that avoiding responsibilities — especially spiritual ones — weakens the soul and opens the door to other sins.

Application: Identify areas in their lives where they've become spiritually lazy and make specific, small choices to respond to God with effort and joy.

Values: Develop a desire to serve God with energy, to use their time wisely, and to fight the temptation to delay or avoid what is good and holy.

Memory Verse:

**“Do not be slothful in zeal,
be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”**

- Romans 12:11

Lesson

Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

**Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տու՛ր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՛ւ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց եւ ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos yev paneets yen kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

Lesson Body: Sloth (Laziness)

Last week we talked about anger and learned how it like fire burns when left uncontrolled. Today, we turn to a more silent but equally deadly seed: sloth.

Sloth is sneaky. It doesn't shout or explode. It creeps in when we say things like:

"I'll do it later."

"I just don't feel like it."

"I'm too tired."

"It's boring."

At first, it just feels like you're taking a break. But over time, sloth steals your energy for prayer, service, and doing what's right. It convinces you that nothing really matters, that you can delay what's important, and that spiritual effort is just too much work.

In the garden of your soul, sloth is like letting the weeds grow because you don't feel like pulling them. Before long, the good plants die, and the whole garden starts to decay.

So, what is sloth? Sloth is more than laziness. It's not about needing a nap after practice or resting after a long week. Rest is holy, and God wants us to rest. Yet sloth is spiritual laziness. It is the refusal to care about the most important things: loving God, praying, learning, helping others, doing your best.

The Armenian word for sloth, ծուլութիւն (dzoolootyoon), refers to negligence or a lazy heart. It's what happens when we stop caring and just float through life, doing as little as possible, when we feel like it.

Examples of sloth:

1. Skipping prayer because "it's boring."
2. Never picking up the Bible even though you know you should.
3. Not helping your family because "someone else will do it" or "you don't feel like it."
4. Waiting until the last minute for everything, including things that matter to God.

Words of the Week:

ծուլութիւն - dzoo-loo-tyoon - laziness/sloth
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Memory Verse:

“Do not be slothful in zeal,
be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”
- Romans 12:11

What the Bible Says About Sloth

Proverbs 13:4: “The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.”

Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”

Romans 12:11: “Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”

Proverbs 6:9 - 11: “How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?”

What the Church Fathers Say

“Idleness is the enemy of the soul.”
— St. Benedict

“Be quick to begin every good work,
for the time is short.”
— St. Isaac the Syrian

“He who does not labor in prayer
will be poor in faith.”
— St. Ephrem the Syrian

Why Sloth Is Dangerous

Sloth doesn't look dangerous — it just looks like inaction. But that's why it's deadly: it slowly starves the soul.

Sloth does the following:

Wastes God's gifts: You don't use the time, talents, or chances God gives.

Weakens your faith: You stop praying, learning, or trying to grow.

Leads to boredom and despair: Life feels meaningless, and you lose joy.

Makes sin easier: When we stop doing good, we open the door to doing wrong.

St. Paul warned the early Christians not to grow weary in doing good (Galatians 6:9). Sloth ignores that and says, “I'll just scroll, sleep, or daydream instead.”

1. The Parable of the Lazy Servant

In Matthew 25:26 Jesus told a story about a man who gave his servants “talents” (a type of money). Two of the servants used what they were given and made more. But one servant buried his talent and did nothing with it. The master called him a wicked and lazy servant. The servant didn't waste the talent on evil things. He simply did nothing, and that was enough to displease God.

God gives each of us time, energy, skills, and opportunities. When we choose not to use them, we are telling God, “I don't care enough to try.” That's sloth.

2. The Spiritual Danger of “Later”

Sloth often hides behind the word “later.”

“I'll pray later.”

“I'll serve when I'm older.”

“I'll forgive after they say sorry.”

“I'll get serious about God someday.”

The devil doesn't always try to tempt us into big sins. Sometimes, he just wants us to delay doing what is right. But every time we say “later,” we miss the

chance to grow now. The longer we delay, the harder it gets to begin. Sloth makes us spiritually sleepy — and it becomes harder to hear God’s voice.

3. Sloth Dulls the Soul

When we let sloth grow in our hearts:

- Church feels boring
- Prayers feel dry
- Reading the Bible feels like homework
- Helping others feels like a burden

But the more we act with love and discipline, the more alive our soul becomes. Like muscles, the soul grows when we train it to love, pray, and serve.

The Church teaches that zeal and discipline are gifts of the Holy Spirit and they must be chosen and practiced, not just “felt.”

What Sloth Can Do:

- Makes us spiritually lazy
- Weakens our prayer life
- Dulls our love for God
- Leads to boredom and negativity
- Causes us to waste our talents
- Makes us say “later” until it’s too late
- Opens the door to other sins
- Robs us of joy in worship and learning
- Keeps us from helping others
- Blocks the grace of the Holy Spirit

Activity: “Later vs. Now”

Materials Needed: Index cards, pens, two baskets (labeled “Later” and “Now”)

Instructions:

1. Have students write examples of good things they know they should do (e.g. pray, help someone, read Scripture, speak kindly)
2. Then they decide: *Will I do this Later or Now?*
3. Place their card in the appropriate basket.
4. Close with a challenge: Choose just ONE “Later” card and make it a “Now” this week.

Video: [What the Bible Says About Your Laziness](#)



Special Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, true God, with your peace that surpasses all wisdom and understanding, comfort us your servants, by accepting our supplications. Through your beneficence, blot out our transgressions worthy of dreadful punishment. Expiate and hear us, remit and forgive our sins. Make us worthy to thankfully glorify you, together with the Father and the Only-begotten Son, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Խաղաղութեամբ քով Յոգիդ Սուրբ Աստուած ճշմարիտ, որ ի վեր է քան զամենայն միտս եւ զխորհուրդս, մխիթարեա զանձինս ծառայից քոց, ընդունելով զաղաչանս մեր. անցո ի մէջ զցասումն պատուհասի յանցանաց մերոց բարերարութեամբ քով: Ներեա եւ լուր մեզ, քաւեա եւ թող զմեղս մեր, արժանաւորեա գոհութեամբ փառաւորել զքեզ ընդ Յօր եւ ընդ Որդւոյն Միածնի, այժմ եւ միշտ եւ յաւիտեանս յաւիտենից: Ամէն:

Khaghaghootyamp kov Hokeet Soorp Asdvadz jshmareed, vor ee ver eh kan zamenayn meedus yev uzkhorhoortus, mukheetarya zantseenus dzarayeets kots, untoonelov zaghachanus mer. Antso ee mench uzsaomun badoohasee hantsanats merots parerarootyamp kov. Nerya yv loor mez, kavya yev togh uzmeghus mer, arjhanavorya kohootyamp paravoreyl uzkez unt Hor yev unt Vortvoyn Meeadznee, ayjhm yev meeshd yev haveedyanus haveedeneets. Amen.

Review

Memory Verse Review:

“Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”(Romans 12:11)

Words of the Week:

ծուլութիւն - dzoo-loo-tyoon - laziness/sloth
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Life Application

What are we going to do with what we have learned today?

This week let's commit to doing just one good thing each day even when you don't feel like it. Here are some simple ideas:

- Say a short prayer when you wake up.
- Offer to help at home without being asked.
- Spend 5 minutes reading a Bible passage.
- Write down one talent God gave you and use it to serve someone.

Ask God to help you be **fervent in spirit** at all times, not just when you feel like it.

Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. *What makes sloth different from needing rest after a long day or practice? (Rest is holy and God wants us to rest. Sloth is spiritual laziness, the refusal to care about the most important things like loving God, praying, learning, helping others, and doing your best.)*
2. *What is the Armenian word for sloth and what does it mean? (The Armenian word is ծուլութիւն (dzulutyun), which refers to negligence or a lazy heart, when we stop caring and just float through life doing as little as possible.)*
3. *How does the lesson describe sloth using the garden metaphor? (Sloth is like letting weeds grow in the garden of your soul because you don't feel like pulling them. Before long, the good plants die and the whole garden starts to decay.)*
4. *What are four ways that sloth harms us spiritually? (Sloth wastes God's gifts; weakens your faith; leads to boredom and despair; and makes sin easier by opening the door to doing wrong when we stop doing good.)*
5. *In Jesus' Parable of the Talents, what did the lazy servant do with his talent? (He buried his talent in the ground and did nothing with it. He didn't waste it on evil things, he simply did nothing, and that was enough to displease God and be called "wicked and lazy.")*
6. *How does sloth use the word "later" to trap us spiritually? (Sloth hides behind saying "later" in thoughts such as "I'll pray later" or "I'll get serious about God someday." Every time we say "later," we miss the chance to grow now, and the longer we delay, the harder it gets to begin. Sloth makes us spiritually sleepy so we can't hear God's voice.)*
7. *What happens to our spiritual life when we let sloth grow in our hearts? (Church feels boring, prayers feel dry, reading the Bible feels like homework, and helping others feels like a burden. We lose our joy in worship and learning, and our love for God becomes dull.)*
8. *How does the lesson compare spiritual growth to physical muscles? (Like muscles, the soul grows when we train it to love, pray, and serve. The more we act with love and discipline, the more alive our soul becomes.)*
9. *What does the Church teach about zeal and discipline? (The Church teaches that zeal and discipline are gifts of the Holy Spirit, but they must be chosen and practiced, not just "felt." We have to actively practice them, not wait until we feel like it.)*
10. *What is the challenge given at the end of the "Later vs. Now" activity? (Students are challenged to choose just ONE card from their "Later" basket and make it a "Now" this week, committing to actually do one good thing they've been putting off.)*

* Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesher-ee, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sa-sanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.