

## THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Now that we have covered the twenty-four virtues that hold up a knight's life like pillars, we need to cover what can destroy the life of a knight.

If you were an aspiring knight in the Middle Ages, chances are you would have been trained to avoid the Seven Deadly Sins: Pride, Envy, Gluttony, Greed, Anger, Lust, and Sloth.<sup>59</sup> These seven major or key sins have several references in medieval texts, but perhaps one of the most well-known is included in the book *The Summa de Vitiis* (or "Sum of the Vices") by the French Dominican William Peraldus, written in 1236. According to Michael Evans,<sup>60</sup> Peraldus' work was the "most ambitious of the scholastic treatises on the vices (deadly sins); it was also among the most widely circulated, the most influential, and the most original." Perhaps one of the reasons that Peraldus' work was so prominent during the Middle Ages was because of the painting included that framed the Seven Deadly Sins as grotesque enemies of the soul of the Christian knight. This image is provided on the following pages.

Invektive Contempt Presumption Disobedience Irreverence	Self-exaltation Vainglory Arrogance Insolence Disputatiousness		<b>Pride</b>
Maliciousness Repression of the good Jealousy	Slander Grumbling Perversity Ingratitude		<b>Envy</b>
Impudence Malice Rashness Fury Homicide Maliciousness	Hatred Contentiousness Insult Invektive Impatience		<b>Wrath</b>
Lack of Foresight Incaution Tepidness Laziness	Idleness Slothfulness Timidity Neglectfulness		<b>Spiritual sloth</b>
Rapaciousness Violence Unfairness Unjust Judgment Stubbornness Deceit	Ambitiousness Usury Robbery Perjury Theft Lying		<b>Greed</b>
Shamelessness Dishonesty Excessiveness Lack of Moderation	Gluttony Drunkenness Prodigality Lack of abstinence Immodesty		<b>Gluttony</b>
Unchastity Swinishness	Fornication Adultery		<b>Lust</b>

“Illumination from William of Peraldus, *Summa de Vitiis*.” British Library

The life of man upon earth is warfare. Job 7:1

The Spirit of fear of the Lord

Humility

The Spirit of Godliness

Gentleness

The Spirit of Knowledge

Sorrow for one's sins

The Spirit of Fortitude

Thirst for justice

The Spirit of Counsel

Compassion

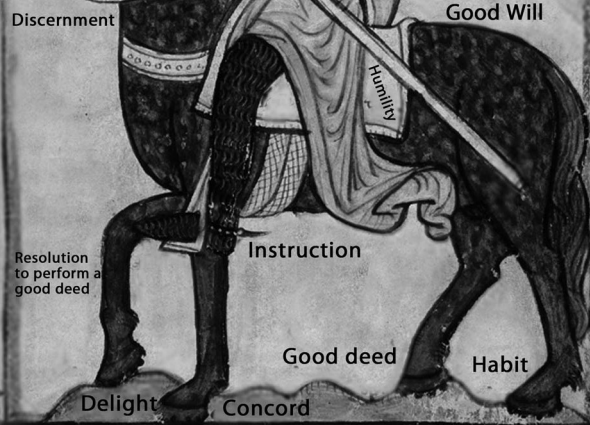
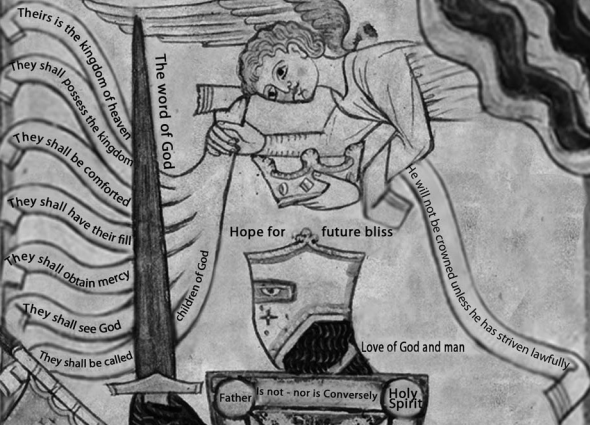
The Spirit of Understanding

Cleanliness of heart

The Spirit of Wisdom

Peace

Matthew 5:1-12



Harley Manuscript 3244. © British Library Board. Used with permission.

Provided only in ancient Latin, the meaning and symbolism represented in this painting were essentially kept hidden from most readers for centuries. In fact, after hours of research, only partial interpretations of this image could be found on this specific work. After recruiting a couple of ancient Latin experts, each word on the painting has now been translated into modern-day English for the first time.<sup>61</sup>

The heading at the top of the painting states, “The life of man upon earth is warfare” (Job 7:1). Even modern-day knights like the Reverend Billy Graham believed this reality: “I am engaged in spiritual warfare every day. I must never let down my guard.”<sup>62</sup> This header sets the stage for the spiritual warfare that is depicted in the image, with the entire right-hand side of the image representing the knight with his vast array of spiritual power (given by God), armor, and weaponry. The entire left-hand side shows his foe, which includes the Seven Deadly Sins followed by sixty-nine horrific monsters representing aspects of each.

On the right-hand side of the image, a knight is shown dressed in thirteenth century armor and weapons that are labeled with Christian qualities and virtues. The knight is being crowned by an angel of the Lord who carries a banner in his left hand that states, “He [the knight] will not be crowned unless he has striven lawfully” (2 Timothy 2:5). The trumpet in the angel’s right hand has seven horns that set out the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-10. Interestingly, the preface from each of the Beatitudes is removed, and only the “promise” aspect of each is provided.

The angel is preceded by seven doves representing the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:<sup>63</sup> Fear of the Lord, Godliness, Knowledge, Fortitude (strength), Counsel, Understanding, and Wisdom. Immediately below each of these (and directly opposite each of the Seven Deadly Sins) are the first sections of each of the Beatitudes (e.g., Matthew 5:3, “Blessed are the poor in spirit [poverty], theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [shown in the topmost horn in the angel’s trumpet]). The English translation of each word on the Peraldus painting is provided in the following table.

English Translation of the Latin Peraldus Image  
**The life of man upon earth is warfare (Job 7:1).**

Investive Contempt Presumption Disobedience Irreverence	Self-exaltation Vainglory Arrogance Insolence Disputatiousness	[Images]	Pride	The Spirit of Fear of the Lord	[Angel's banner on left arm:] <b>He will not be crowned unless he has striven lawfully.</b> [Angel's banners in right hand:] [from the Beatitudes]
				Poverty	
Maliciousness Repression of the good Jealousy	Slander Grumbling Perversity Ingratitude	of	Envy	The Spirit of Godliness Gentleness	<b>they shall be called children of God</b> [Shield:] [Upper left corner:] <b>Father</b> [Upper right corner:] <b>[Holy] Spirit</b> [Bottom corner:] <b>Son</b> [Center:] <b>God</b> [Between all three corners:] <b>Is not—nor [is] conversely</b> [Items connected with the knight:] [Sword:] <b>The Word of God</b> [Helmet:] <b>Hope for future bliss</b> [Chain mail:] <b>Love [of God and fellow human beings]</b>
Impudence Malice Rashness Fury Homicide Maliciousness	Hatred Discord Contentiousness Insult Invective Impatience	demon[s]	Wrath	The Spirit of Knowledge Sorrow for [one's] Sins	
Lack of foresight Incaution Tepidness Laziness	Idleness Slothfulness Timidity Neglectfulness		Spiritual Sloth	The Spirit of Fortitude Thirst for Justice	
Rapaciousness Violence Unfairness Unjust judgment Stubbornness Deceit	Ambitiousness Usury Robbery Perjury Theft Lying		Avarice	The Spirit of Counsel Compassion	
Shamelessness Dishonesty Excessiveness Lack of moderation	Gluttony Drunkenness Prodigality Lack of abstinence Immodesty		Gluttony	The Spirit of Understanding Cleanliness of Heart	

<b>Unchastity Swinishness</b>	<b>Fornication Adultery</b>		<b>Lust</b>	<b>The Spirit of Wisdom</b>	[Spear:] <b>Perseverance</b> [Banner on spear:]
				<b>Peace</b>	<b>Desire for the heavenly kingdom</b> [Reins:] <b>Discernment</b> [Saddle:] <b>Christian religion</b> [Horse:] <b>Good will</b> [Saddle cloth:] <b>Humility</b> [Spurs:] <b>Instruction</b> [Stirrup:] <b>Resolution [to perform a] good deed</b> [Front right hoof:] <b>Delight</b> [Front left hoof:] <b>Concord</b> [Back right hoof:] <b>Good deed</b> [Back left hoof:] <b>Habit</b>

While there are no Bible passages that contain the entire list of the seven deadly sins, two come close by including references to most of the seven:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name

of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Now let's take a closer look at each of the seven.

## PRIDE

Pride is excessive belief in one's own abilities. Pride is said to be the subtlest of the seven sins—one that grows and matures without the owner even realizing it. It is also one of the main sins from which the other sins arise.

Consider this: Proud people act and live *the way they want*. A line in a popular song says, "I did it my way." If you are doing it your way and not God's way, you are more likely to get tied up in the other deadly sins. Humble Christians live God's way because God said so, not because they necessarily understand why. Proud Christians rationalize God's Word and commands to conform to their own lifestyle choices.

A definitive work on the seven deadly sins explains true humility this way: "The humble person never engages in behavior in order to achieve honor or glory, but is motivated by benevolence or the glory of God. When praise is given him he reacts with indifference and thanks God for having made him an instrument for the benefit of others."<sup>64</sup>

Some key verses on pride:

For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever (1 John 2:16-17).

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom (Proverbs 11:2).

The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor (Proverbs 15:33).

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).

Before his downfall, a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor (Proverbs 18:12).

## ENVY

Envy is the desire for what others have, including their abilities, gifts, talents, possessions, or situations. Covetousness is part of envy, which is the strong desire for what someone else *possesses*. Jealousy is also part of envy, which is feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety over an anticipated loss of something or someone, particularly in reference to a human connection.

Why is envy deadly? Envy like pride is a “stealth invader” in the life of a knight. Envy has a way of sneaking into our thoughts—both conscious and unconscious—to destroy our lives and our effectiveness as Christians.

Envy comes in and begins gnawing at your thoughts: *How can they have this when I only have that? I've worked as hard as they have, but they are paid more.* Or, if you are employed by someone who possesses wealth, *They only have this or that because I've worked to make them rich.* Or for children, *My parents favor my brother (or sister), or They've given my sister more opportunities and resources than me.* I have been both the envier and envied of each of these situations. I have seen these thoughts take root in people, alter and change their thoughts, and grip their hearts with such strength that they have become consumed with rage and anger. In fact, you will notice that sometimes the deadly sins will work together—as in the case of anger and envy—to destroy a person's life.

Envious thoughts will come to us all, but those who *stew* in such thoughts will eventually have their hearts and later their actions taken



over by envy and all of its related evils (in fact, Proverbs 14:30 even says that “envy rots the bones”). Envy will drive you to be contentious with colleagues, neighbors, and friends, and sometimes *you will not even know that it is envy driving such behaviors*. Envy will drive you to minimize the accomplishments of others (particular those we envy), seek to find fault in them, and call out their weaknesses.

The good news is that there are antidotes to envy. Envy can be removed from your heart through prayer and gratitude. Counting our blessings, both in thought and by our actions, is one effective way for battling envy. Another way is to think through the other person’s life from a truly objective standpoint. This is how you can beat envy from a very practical standpoint—by actually retraining how you *think* and what you know about certain people or events.

Consider Jerry Rice, for example. Jerry played 238 games as a wide receiver for the San Francisco 49ers football team. During the season, his performance led him to be recognized by many as the greatest receiver in the history of football. He was the envy of many aspiring football players of that time.

Many probably envied Jerry’s abilities without even considering the investment that Jerry made to acquire the skills he developed. First, there was his off-season training routine, which lasted all day. In the morning, he would do cardiovascular work. In the afternoon, he would be in the weight room. In the morning, Jerry would run up a steep five-mile trail. During this run, he would pause at the steepest section and repeat ten, forty-meter wind sprints. Some of Jerry’s teammates who tried this conditioning with him were not able to keep up with him. In fact, Roger Craig (another famous 49er) tried running the hill with Rice and said afterward, “I felt like I was going to die.” In the afternoon, Jerry’s workout in the gym involved 630 repetitions of weight work.

I bet Jerry could tell story after story about how his friends, teammates, and opponents envied his life and his achievements. But how many of those people do you think ever bothered to look into what made Jerry such a great player? Even better, how many others do you think tried to match Jerry’s training routine? While

many others were enjoying off-season rest and stardom, Jerry was running hills.

In the white-collar work world, similar situations emerge. Others frequently envy the lifestyle and income of executives and professionals as a result of years of diligent work and discipline. The wealth amassed by senior financial investors is often envied by young aspiring professionals—many of whom do not stop to consider the early morning research done six days a week for three decades that has helped lead to their success.

During my training season in life, I was both a full-time student and a full-time employee for seven years. Most of my weekend and evenings were spent in either of these areas with whatever free time I had invested in the family. This discipline was a necessary investment for my calling in life. While others have envied me, seldom have they asked me about the training and investment season that preceded the later seasons of my life.

Some key verses on envy:

Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple  
(Job 5:2).

Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways,  
for the Lord detests a perverse man but takes the  
upright into his confidence (Proverbs 3:31-32).

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots  
the bones (Proverbs 14:30).

Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of  
those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon  
wither, like green plants they will soon die away  
(Psalm 37:1-2).

Finally, consider that envy, or covetousness, is one of the Ten Commandments: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Exodus 20:17).

A final thought about envy. Humility can be a very effective way to shield your heart against envy. We are admonished in Philippians 2:3 to "do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility *consider others better than yourselves*" (emphasis added). If we apply this verse in a very practical way, we can be shielded against the deadly sin of envy.

## GLUTTONY

Gluttony is an over-the-top desire to consume or own more than we need. This sin typically refers to food and eating, but it can also be applied to things we own (or want to own) that are beyond our needs. This is not to say that our desire for things we do not need is necessarily sinful, but it can be if we gloat or obsess about amassing more and more things well beyond our short-term and long-term needs.

Here is a simple example of gluttony that does not involve food. I consider myself a flashlight-o-holic; I simply have a hard time entering a hardware store without buying a flashlight. There is something inside of me that loves the newest, brightest technology. Besides, I just know there's going to be that one time on some dark road when my car breaks down and I am going to need a super-bright flashlight with six hours of runtime that uses only two AA batteries. I now try to give away my extras, and I have stopped buying so many (well, I am working on it).

Some key verses on gluttony:

After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not

live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:2-4).

Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags (Proverbs 23:20-21).

It is interesting that the Bible frequently equates gluttony with the “godless,” showing that those who do not have their heart set on something higher (God’s interests) are more prone to be obsessed with the fundamental desires of the flesh:

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people” (Romans 16:17-18).

For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things (Philippians 3:18-19).

## **GREED**

Greed is the desire for material wealth or gain, ignoring the realm of the spiritual. It is also called avarice in some of the earlier writings on knighthood. Before unpacking this deadly sin, let’s first dispel some myths about riches and wealth.

First, acquiring and growing financial resources *and giving*, should this be one of your spiritual and natural gifts, is a good thing.

Romans 12:6-8 explains that God has bestowed several different, but equally important, spiritual gifts to the body of Christ. And giving is right up there with teaching, encouraging, and serving:

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Jesus Himself equates responsibility with worldly wealth as a prerequisite for being able to handle spiritual wealth: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" (Luke 16:10-11).

A true knight acknowledges that wealth is nothing more than a resource for doing good, first for his family and then for his extended family and the family of God. As long as his heart is set this way, there is nothing wrong with accumulating more and more wealth, provided that he *flows it into action when the Lord calls for it*.

Joseph stored up resources under his stewardship that were later used to feed his father Jacob and his whole family (seventy-five in all) (see Genesis 41 and Acts 7). God used a believer named Agabus to predict that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world and then used the disciples, each according to his ability, to provide financial aid to Christians living in Judea (see Acts 11:28-30).

So much of what has to be said about wealth and greed honestly depends on a person's standing with God (their maturity level) as well as their calling in life. If you are married, your spouse should

also be in agreement with *both* your wealth building and distribution strategies.

Possessing wealth and taking actions like those described above describe the positive aspects of wealth and how wealth can be used for good. However, there is, of course, a flipside. This is where wealth and the desire for *more* wealth can turn into a deadly sin. Consider these key verses on greed:

Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).

Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them (Psalm 62:10).

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Timothy 6:8-10).

We are instructed in Scripture to *be on guard* against greed, *not have our hearts set upon riches*, and to *practice contentment* to avoid the pitfalls caused by greed.

## **ANGER**

Anger is a God-given emotion. Scripture even records two instances where Jesus Himself got angry:

He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus (Mark 3:5).

Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those selling doves. “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it a ‘den of robbers.’” (Matthew 21:12-13).

While anger is a God-given emotion, it is typically not handled by most of us in a godly way as Jesus did in the two examples above. Although He was angry and expressed his anger, He did so without sinning).

In the context of deadly sins, anger (or wrath) is not necessarily referring to the occasional outburst that many of us may have experienced. Anger does not typically turn into a deadly sin when it is quickly passed through one’s system. In fact, that’s just what Scripture encourages us to do with anger—allow it to quickly pass through our system but without sinning. Consider these key verses on anger:

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (Ephesians 4:26-27). The King James Version puts it this way: “*Be ye angry,* and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (emphasis added). Notice that being angry is not the sin; in fact, being angry in the form of experiencing our anger is encouraged.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each

other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 5:31-32).

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips (Colossians 3:8).

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you (James 1:19-21).

The four passages above meld into a single key message regarding anger: be angry, express it without sinning, and then be done with it! Anger turns into a deadly sin whenever it is held and cultivated, which enables it to take root into our hearts and take over our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

## **LUST**

Lust is an inordinate craving for the pleasures of the body. While this typically means lusting of a sexual nature, it can include other objects of our attention and affection. I am in my forties right now, and I have yet to meet a man who has not struggled with lust. While many would say that women tend to struggle most with the deadly sins of pride and envy, men clearly struggle intensely with lust.

Jesus closely equated sexual sin of the mind (i.e., fantasizing) with the actual sins of adultery and fornication (sex outside of marriage). Consider the following verses:



But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:28).

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exodus 20:17).

Martin Luther offers advice for avoiding lustful thoughts. He also explains how we are responsible for (and in control of) what we think about: "You should follow the advice of a hermit who was approached by a young man complaining of having lustful thoughts and other temptations. The old man told him, 'You can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but only let them fly. Do not let them nest in your hair!'"<sup>65</sup>

We will all have lustful thoughts, but we can *choose* whether or not we dwell on them. It is not the introduction of the thought that is sin, but rather the *dwelling* on the thought that is, or the action therefrom.

## SLOTH

Sloth is simply the avoidance of physical or spiritual work. It should not be confused with resting, which we all need to do (God has assigned us all a lifestyle of working six days and resting the seventh). The Bible takes idle living very seriously. God is not pleased with those who squander their God-given talents, abilities, and opportunities by being a "sluggard" as referenced in the Proverbs.

Nowadays, many of us say we are resting and recuperating in front of the TV after work or school, but that can constitute slothfulness. For example, Ecclesiastes 11:6 encourages us to make the most of *all* of our time, including both our day job and evening job: "Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this

or that, or whether both will do equally well.” Yes, there is a time and place for rest, including the occasional “vegging out” in front of the TV or a movie. But every night? And for how long? Consider the following admonishments from Proverbs about using our time effectively and what can happen if we do not:

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man (6:6-11).

Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth (10:4).

The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied (13:4).

The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway (15:19).

The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth! (19:24).

A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing (20:4).

The sluggard’s craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing (21:25-26).

I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man (24:30-34).

The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!’ As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly (26:13-16).

The apostle Paul is the most famous speaker/writer of Christian theology in all of history. Yet during his prime speaking years, he never demanded a speaker fee or stipend. While he was a traveling speaker, he covered his own expenses by working as a tentmaker:

Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you (1 Thessalonians 2:9).

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to

make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: If a man will not work, he shall not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:7-10).

Working hard is actually the *easy* way of doing work because it takes less effort than being *lazy in the long run*. By “putting your elbows into it” rather than slowly mushing your way through the day’s work, you will get your work done much faster and leave more time for rest and recuperation. The Lord knows what your best looks like, and *He wants all of it*.

### **REFLECT**

This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.”

—Jeremiah 6:16

She was right that reality can be harsh and that you shut your eyes to it only at your peril because if you do not face up to the enemy in all his dark power, then the enemy will come up from behind some dark day and destroy you while you are facing the other way.

—Frederick Buechner

It is not the temptation you have, but the decision you make about them that counts.

—Billy Graham

God promises no easy life or days without troubles, trials, difficulties, and temptations. He never promises that life will be perfect. He does not call His children to a playground, but to a battleground.

—Billy Graham

Temptation: Recognize it for what it is, and then reject it—immediately and without compromise.

—Billy Graham

***RESPOND***

1. Rank the seven deadly sins in the order that you think they might affect your life the most.
2. How might some of the sins you ranked lower on your list still be very dangerous?
3. What are the most effective ways to combat against these sins?
4. Take a moment to think about the “spiritual armor” described in Ephesians 6:10-20 that God gives us to fight against these seven sins and the other sins that try to come into our lives. We have the belt of Truth, the helmet of Salvation, the breastplate of Righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of Peace, the shield of Faith, and the sword of the Spirit. Why do you think God gives us five defensive weapons, and only one offensive weapon?

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