

# *Pathway*

PERSONAL CHRISTIAN GROWTH SERIES

Set aside a special time each day to go through a *Pathway* study. Even if you miss a day or two, don't skip those studies. Begin again where you left off! Each daily study is designed to take only 10-12 minutes, or longer ... it's up to you! Be honest with yourself. This is a private time just between you and God.

## **Introduction — *Laziness***

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Do you have moments when you just don't feel like doing anything? Probably! Nearly everybody does! Sometime, you need to take a critical look inside yourself and evaluate what you see or find. This is exactly what you'll do in this *Pathway* study. If you need a nudge to get up and get going in the right direction, God understands! See what He says!

## DAY ONE — Laziness

**Hiding It in My Heart:** Start the week off right - memorize this verse today:

*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ... (Col. 3:23).*

For a lot of teens, sleeping till noon spells laziness!

**PRAYER:** Talk to the Lord about things you do each day without much enthusiasm. Ask Him to help you accept the challenge of doing everyday tasks more “heartily.”

**VERSE TO THINK ABOUT:** *And let us not be weary in well doing ... (Gal. 6:9).*

## What’s the Cure?

Sandi lay in bed grinning at the ceiling. Today was wonderful! She had nothing to do but sleep in and sit around the house. She yawned and rolled over to look at her digital clock. It read 11:49 a.m.

On her way to the bathroom, Sandi stepped over the crumpled jeans and sweater she’d worn yesterday. Her school backpack (as of yet, unopened) still lay where she tossed it on the floor.

As Sandi nestled herself on the couch with a piece of chocolate cake and a glass of milk, the phone rang. “Hey,” Trish said. “What’re you doing? Let’s go to the mall!”

“No way,” Sandi answered. “I’m not in the mood to go anywhere! You can come over, though, if you just want to sit around and talk!”

How would you rate Sandi? **Check the descriptions that describe her best:**

- Very lazy
- Typical teenager
- Does just enough to get by
- Knows how to relax under pressure
- Takes advantage of free time

Actually, Sandi’s one of the most active and industrious teens in her high school. She plays basketball, actively serves on a pro-life committee, makes pretty good grades, and always attends church. But Sandi considers Saturday morning her time. Until late afternoon, she won’t leave the house. In fact, she probably won’t get dressed until then. Still, if you knew Sandi, you’d hardly call her lazy!

For many teens, however, sleeping till noon, putting off homework, and leaving clothes all over the floor spell only one thing — LAZINESS. What is laziness? Are you lazy? What does the Bible say about laziness? How can you overcome it?

Abandoning a lazy lifestyle can make your life much more fulfilling!

**A Look in the Book:** There’s a verse in the Bible which Sandi claims as “hers.” She has it taped to the top of her mirror. It’s Colossians 3:23. *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.* Remember, this verse isn’t a mere suggestion. It’s a command (instruction) to Christians.

**What does “heartily” mean to you?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why do you think this verse gives Sandi extra energy to keep going all week?**

**Write three things you want to begin doing more “heartily” and with more energy for the Lord.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

In the next few days, you’ll learn the secret of making Colossians 3:23 your own theme verse. Watch out! It might change your life!

## DAY TWO — Laziness

**SPEND TIME IN PRAYER:** Talk to God about your own “just don’t feel like it” moods. Explain to Him your feelings and ask for His wisdom on how to spend your time. Remember, He really does understand!

**VERSE TO THINK ABOUT:** *The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor (Prov. 21:25).*

## When I Don’t Feel Like It!

Laziness is a pretty popular sport these days. Everyone, including teens, have moments when they “just don’t feel like it.”

But wait a minute. Perhaps you’re the exception. Take a little test to determine whether you should skip these studies on laziness. **Check which of the following statements are true.**

- I’ve never skipped a homework assignment (or done a hurried, sloppy job) and watched TV instead.
- I don’t remember ever sleeping past 9 a.m. on a Saturday or Sunday unless I was sick.
- There’s never more than one day’s worth of clothes on my bedroom floor.
- I’ve never spent an entire evening (three hours or more) watching TV and/or talking on the phone.
- I never just feel like loafing.

Chances are, you probably couldn’t mark very many of the statements as true. That means you’re normal! Laziness is a common human problem. (It comes from our sinful nature.) You can’t deny it. Slothfulness hits all of us at one time or another.

**List five things you didn’t feel like doing during the past couple weeks and therefore “put off” until later.** Be specific. Your list might include chores at home, schoolwork, part-time job responsibilities, or even helping (serving) at church.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone can think of things that aren’t very much fun to do. Just putting something off once or twice, however, doesn’t make you lazy. Laziness is more than sleeping in on

Saturdays and neglecting homework one Friday night. Laziness is an unmotivated attitude which says, “I don’t care.” Laziness is using time unwisely. It’s sitting around the house and accomplishing nothing.

**A Look in the Book:** Very early in the Bible, God talks about this subject. **Read Genesis 2:15.** *And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. What job did God give to Adam?*

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Notice that it was God’s design from the beginning that Adam should have something to do with his time. Adam didn’t lounge around and twiddle his thumbs all day. It was his responsibility to care for the Garden! He had a job to do.

The same is true for you. You are responsible to accomplish certain things each day. But sometimes we make up excuses for not working and doing our “jobs.” **Read Proverbs 20:4.** *The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. What excuse does the “sluggard” give for not working?*

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Sounds a bit feeble, doesn’t it — to put off plowing just because the weather was too cold. But teens make up similar excuses. “I can’t stay up and finish my English homework because my eyes are tired.” Or, “It’s raining outside, so I better stay home from church.”

Oh, yes, God does understand that sometimes you don’t “feel like it.” But just because He understands doesn’t mean He considers such excuses valid! Remember the man in Proverbs who didn’t plow the ground? He ended up hungry! And if you don’t finish your English homework, you may get a poor grade. If you neglect to clean your room, you might get grounded.

Take a look inside yourself. Do you often have “just don’t feel like it” moods? Are there times when you’ve no interest in being ambitious? Sometimes it’s easy to hide behind flimsy excuses. But remember, God sees your heart. He knows exactly what you’re thinking. Pray and ask the Lord to give you a nudge in the right direction - just when you need it!

Do you often have “just don’t feel like it” moods? If you have allergies, a cold, or the flu, you might experience a real “downer” of a week. When you feel sick, it’s hard to be ambitious. In this case, don’t neglect to give your body the extra rest it needs!

### DAY THREE — Laziness

**PRAYER:** Ask God to help you accomplish today those things that really need to be done. Ask God to help you especially take time for Him.

## 24 Hours: How I Spend Them

After working a late evening at his office, Mr. Elson came home and walked past Brad's bedroom. One glance told the whole story - TV and lights on; empty pop can and half eaten bag of chips; unopened Computer book; Brad asleep in his clothes.

It doesn't take many brains to figure out what Brad's been doing tonight. And it's no wonder the next day he only gets a 52% on his Computer assignment. He also flunks a Geometry quiz.

Brad isn't like this all the time, however. Laziness only seems to hit him every few weeks. But when it does, his whole week turns into a flop.

Each of us is unique. There's no one quite like Brad, or quite like you. That's why when it comes to being lazy, everyone has different problems. **Which category do you come closest to fitting?** Be really honest!

\_\_\_ Laziness isn't a big problem for me. It only hits every now and then. (Example: "Boy! Tonight I feel so lazy. I think I'll just lie on the couch and watch TV.")

\_\_\_ I seem to have lazy spells often. (Example: "This whole weekend I haven't accomplished a thing.")

\_\_\_ Laziness is my way of life. (Example: "I don't do anything unless I'm forced to do it.")

**A Look in the Book:** The Bible tells us, as Christians, that we should use our time WISELY. This applies to us all, whether in the first, second, or third category listed above.

*Redeeming the time [making the most of time], because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16).*

**Read Proverbs 31:13-20.** *She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.*

**Write several things this industrious lady accomplishes for her family each day.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This certainly doesn't sound like a lazy person, does it? **Look specifically at verse 18: ... her candle goeth not out by night.** This means she works late into the evening hours. **Whether you're a "morning person" or a "night person," list one additional thing you could accomplish tomorrow** (or something you might perform better than usual).

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Using time wisely (when laziness strikes)

**Take inventory of what needs to be done. Then GET UP AND GET BUSY!**

- \* Write a term paper outline. (Get a head start!)
- \* Clean your room. (It probably needs it!)
- \* Write two letters. (Surprise your friends!)
- \* Wash Dad's car. (He might loan it to you!)
- \* Finish your Algebra homework. (Do tomorrow's, too!)

Be honest! Are you lazy in using your time? Ask yourself: "Am I taking a nap this afternoon because I'm really tired?" If so, that's okay! Teens often need naps at funny times. Your body is growing and may require extra sleep.

## DAY Four — Laziness

**SPEND TIME IN PRAYER:** Ask the Lord to help you develop the proper attitudes and actions concerning laziness in your life.

### Just Get Up and Get Busy!

*But how's it all done? Dan wonders in frustration. How do I get rid of this lazy attitude? If people knew what a bum I really am, they'd lose respect for me.*

*Talk about doing things heartily for the Lord? I'm about as bad as they come. I get passing grades, but I'm hardly ever proud of my work. I lead games for the younger Awana Clubs at my church, but I'm never prepared. I guess I'm a good faker, because no one has caught on yet.*

*Someday it's all gonna catch up with me, and I sure wish I didn't have to be around when that happens. I don't begin things on time. I don't finish things very well. And then, I make excuses for myself. What can I do?*

Some teens really are diligent. They can't identify with Dan's feelings. But even they (or you) surely have some lazy attitudes inside, even if no one else knows.

Yet Dan knows that God sees what no one else sees. And He's ready and willing to help you make Colossians 3:23 "yours."

Remember Colossians 3:23? Did you memorize it on Monday? *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.*

**A Look in the Book:** *Take a look at Proverbs 6:6-8. Read this example of the OPPOSITE OF LAZINESS. Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.*

1. **What is God using as the example here?** \_\_\_\_\_

(Does it humble you a bit to look at the ways of a lowly ant?)

2. **If we consider her ways, what will we be (verse 6b)?** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Without having any guide, overseer, or ruler** (anyone to boss her around), **what does the ant accomplish** (verse 8)?

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**Now look at verse 9.** In essence it says, "How long are you going to lie around and sleep, you lazy bum? When are you going to wake up?"

When we look at the example of the ant, we learn an important principle in overcoming laziness. **JUST GET UP AND DO WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO!** It's really not a difficult concept. Just get busy. The ant diligently performs her responsibilities. What about you?

For Dan, overcoming laziness means a change of two things - attitude and action.

First, look at the ATTITUDE. Dan needs a desire to improve. Laziness is an attitude of indifference which the Lord can change! When you spend time with Him each day, He'll help you see how much there is to accomplish for Him. You'll begin to see that you can glorify the Lord in everything you do!

Second, Dan has to assess the situation and take ACTION. Dan might ask himself these questions. **You answer them too!**

1. **What is one area of laziness in my life?** (For Dan, it's not planning his Awana Game Time.)

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2. **When can I spend more time on this?** (Dan could plan games during lunch hour on the day of club.)

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3. **When will I start?** (Dan decides he will start this Thursday.)

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4. **To whom am I accountable?** (Dan humbly explained his problem to the club Director. Each week from now on, the Director will check up on Dan's preparation.)

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**On My Own:** Talk to a young Christian adult you respect (preferably age 20-25). Ask this person to think back to his/her high school days and describe those areas in which he/she was most lazy. If he/she could do it over, ask what would change. Record your findings below.

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Laziness is an attitude of indifference which the Lord can change!

## DAY FIVE — Laziness

**Hiding It in My Heart:** *Memorize this Bible verse today: The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain (Prov. 15:19).*

When the “lazy blues” hit, fight them with already-established promises to the Lord.

## Busy for the Lord!

Kelly constantly goes to bed late. She spends an extra few minutes finishing her homework, an extra half hour talking on the phone, and an extra little while getting her clothes ready for the next day. By the time she finally turns off the light, Kelly usually has less than six hours to sleep.

In the morning, Kelly habitually gets up late. She just loves those extra minutes under the warm blankets. Then she races around the house like crazy to catch the school bus on time!

And so Kelly’s day goes by — without even a glance in God’s Word or a moment of prayer to Him. Lazy? Unmotivated? Uninterested? **How would you describe Kelly’s attitude to Bible reading and prayer?**

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In Kelly’s case, as for most Christian teens, the answer is laziness — a lack of motivation. If Kelly wanted to, she could easily find time to fellowship with the Lord. As you surely noticed, she finds time for everything else!

Now what about you? **Do you think it is important to spend time reading God’s Word daily?**

- Yes  
 Not sure  
 No

**How often do you read your Bible?**

- Less than once a week  
 Two or three times weekly  
 Daily or almost every day

**How important do you consider prayer (talking to the Lord)?**

- Very important  
 I pray when I need help  
 Not important

**How often do you talk to the Lord?**

- Seldom  
 Maybe once every other day  
 Continually

**Now for the big question you knew was coming. Are YOU Lazy in your relationship with the Lord?**

- Yes, I know I’m a lazy Christian  
 I’m lazy at times  
 I try not to be lazy  
 I’m not lazy in this area!

**Go battle against laziness in your spiritual life!**

1. First, realize that it’s sin to ignore God’s command — even under the disguise of laziness. This is just what Satan wants. He wants you to be slothful in the Lord’s work. He’ll use every trick in the book to get you to “put it off” until later.
  - **Concerning prayer:** *Read **Philippians 4:6**. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*
  - **Concerning witnessing:** *Read **Matthew 28:19-20**. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*
  - **Concerning Bible reading and memorization:** *Read **Psalms 119:11**. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.*
  - **Concerning daily living:** *Read **Colossians 1:10**. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*
3. Make a commitment to the Lord as a direct response to your laziness! Establishing priorities can be the first step. Then when the “lazy blues” arrive, you fight them with your already-established promises to the Lord. Remember these words: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13).*
  - **Prayer:** You can talk to the Lord anytime — while riding the school bus, before going to sleep, in study hall, etc.
  - **Reading God’s Word:** God wants to communicate with you every day. He does this through His Word, the Bible.
  - **Witnessing:** It’s easy to neglect telling others about the Lord. But it’s so important! Name two people who need to hear about Christ. **Write when you will try to talk with them this month.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## DAY SIX — Laziness

**SPEND TIME IN PRAYER:** Thank the Lord for everything you've learned this week. Ask for His continual guidance in what you plan and accomplish each day.

### Everyone Likes to Take a Rest!

A lot of teens spend every Friday night together or with friends. After a week of classes and studying, they feel they deserve an evening of fun.

Similarly, on Memorial Day and Labor Day, children, teens, and adults across the country enjoy a whole day of picnicking and rest.

Christmas vacation brings relief to students, especially those who've worked hard all semester.

A break, or holiday, is a special time designed for relaxation! ***What special moments do you recall as memorable times of rest and relaxation?*** (Include times with family, friends, and by yourself.)

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Do you ever feel guilty (or lazy) when you take a well-deserved break from the routine?

- Yes  
 Sometimes  
 No

The key word above is "well-deserved." If needed and earned, a break should never make you feel lazy or guilty! Remember, laziness is an attitude of indifference. It says, "I don't care. I don't feel like doing anything but sitting around."

In contrast, taking a break is not laziness! In fact, God is the designer of breaks.

**A Look in the Book:** *Read Exodus 23:12. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.*

Notice the reason pointed out in this verse for resting - TO BE REFRESHED. Yet in order to be refreshed, you must have something (work) from which to be refreshed. (That makes sense, doesn't it?) The Bible has a lot to say about working and being industrious (the opposite of laziness).

**Look up the following Scriptures. Paraphrase each verse so it applies to you as a teenager.**

*Ecclesiastes 9:10a: Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ...*

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*1 Thessalonians 4:11: And that ye study [be ambitious] to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.*

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*Romans 12:10-11 (paraphrase only verse 11): Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*

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***After a long, hard week (and following the advice of the verses above) can you honestly say you deserve a Friday night break?***

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If the answer is negative, then perhaps this whole week of study will prompt you to take action! You need to get up, get busy, and remember that the Lord sees everything you do.

But if you can answer "yes," then learn to enjoy your Friday nights or Saturday mornings. Savor special holidays with family and friends. Learn to be an industrious, hard worker — and then enjoy your well-deserved rests!

