

*Laziness is rooted in self-love. It's taking ourselves off the hook, opting for the comfortable instead of the best. Grace isn't lazy.*

It's hard to hear. We want to think it applies to others and not us. It's bad news that we need, but don't really want to consider. Here it is—as long as sin lives inside us, laziness will be an issue for us all. Before you quit reading and skip to the next devotion, let me explain.

Second Corinthians 5:15 says that Jesus came so that “those who live might no longer live for themselves.” Embedded in this phrase is a diagnostic that applies to every person who has ever lived. Paul is arguing here that the coming of and sacrifice of Jesus were necessary because the DNA of sin is selfishness. Sin causes me to ignore God's existence and his rightful claim on every area of my life. Because God is not in his rightful place in my living, that is, in the center of it all, I then insert myself in that place. My life becomes all about me. The borders of my concern go little further than my concerns for me. I reduce my focus down to the small space of my wants, my needs, and my feelings. In ways that really do shape my living, I make it all about me. The desires of my heart are gobbled up by my ease, my comfort, my pleasure, and my success. I want what I want, and when I get what I want, I am happy.

Now, because as a sinner I tend to make life all about me, I work to avoid anything that is hard or uncomfortable to do. I tend to curse hard work, the need to serve others, the call to persevere, the inescapable reality of suffering, the requirement of daily labor, the call to engage myself in the work of a bigger kingdom than my own, or the moral requirement to use my gifts for the glory of someone other than myself.

There are ways in which sin makes us all work avoiders. It tends to make us all think that the good life is the life free of the need for labor. But the fact of the matter is that we were created to work, and not just for the good of our own lives, but in willing and joyful submission to the One who created us. Work is not a curse; it is our created identity. One of the reasons we were put on earth is to care for the physical world that God made. It is true that the work that we are called to do in submission to the One who made us has been made more difficult because we now labor in a seriously broken world; but before the fall of the world, Adam and Eve were instructed to work. So laziness is another one of those ever-present arguments for our need for grace. Until grace has completed its work, we will tend to find work more of a burden than a calling and a joy. Grace and grace alone is able to make otherwise lazy people industrious workers to the glory of God.

*For further study and encouragement: Genesis 1–3*