

WEEK 3: Combatting Sloth

FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

- ✓ Start your group discussion with the “Check-in” question to help your members reflect back on their week and follow up on last week’s application challenge.
 - ✓ Review the “Big Idea” to help you gain clarity around the heart of this week’s message and focus your group’s discussion towards a clear direction.
 - ✓ Read this week’s scripture passages together and guide your group through the “Discuss” questions to initiate meaningful dialogue around key concepts or insights from this week’s message.
 - ✓ Move your group discussion to a deeper level by leading them through questions in “Apply”. Use discernment to customize these application questions to meet the needs & dynamics of your group.
- NOTE:** You do not have to cover all the questions provided in “Discuss” and “Apply”.
- ✓ Connect with God together as a group through this week’s “prayer practice”, which can be in the form of a prayer exercise or some guidance on what to pray for in relation to the message or application.

CHECK-IN	What was your biggest take away from Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil’s sermon, “Finish Line Faith” ?
BIG IDEA	Somewhere in the message all of us should be able to identify places and spaces where we have seized to care - places or spaces where we are coasting instead of climbing. Sloth is not just laziness, but is any form of distraction that habitually takes you away from what’s important and most valuable.
DISCUSS	<p>Read Proverbs 6:9-11, Matthew 26:40-46, and Ephesians 5:8-18.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What distracts you more from God and spiritual practices, busyness or rest? Distraction or laziness? Explain and give examples. 2. What distracts you most from the present moment, regrets of the past or longings for the future? 3. Brian suggests that sloth is not really a lack of discipline but a lack of devotion. How have you seen this play out in your walk with God? 4. What is the difference between being with God and doing for God?
APPLY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As you were hearing the message this past week, was there a moment where it was hitting pretty close to home...a moment where you could identify with the reality of sloth in your life? How can your devotion to Christ help in this? 2. What are some practical things you could take away or put into practice this week to help cultivate devotion to God? How do you move from laziness to love, from distraction to devotion this week? What would make you more attentive to God? 3. Brainstorm three ways of practicing being with God and three examples

	<p>of doing for God as a group. How could your group integrate one of each into your group meetings?</p> <p>4. Do you find it easier to “do” for God or “be” with God? Why? What would a good balance look like?</p>
PRAYER PRACTICE	<p><u>Facilitation Options:</u> If your group is accustomed to taking prayer requests and praying for them as a group, select one person to write down the requests and send them out to the group to pray for individually throughout the week. This may free up some time for more focused prayer on devotion to God during your present meeting.</p> <p>Split into groups of two to four and share your personal barriers to devotion to God and love for God (prayer, Bible reading, fasting, serving, etc.). These barriers could be anything discussed above. When dividing into groups, try to be aware of giving groupings at least one person who is mature and comfortable with leading the little cluster of people in prayer.</p> <p>Start by giving a time of silence, starting with the prayer of something like, “Lord, reveal to us what gets in the way of our devotion and love for you. Help us to see how we organize our weeks in your eyes.” Then give a few minutes of silence for people to reflect. After reflection, have each person voluntarily share what each person heard and then pray accordingly for each other.</p> <p>If your group is not new or small, challenge your group to take this step of smaller clusters for a more intimate prayer experience. You know your group best and ask God to give you wisdom and discernment before the meeting on how to organize this exercise. Be bold, and try new things!</p>