

The Gospel Project for Adults, Winter 2014-15  
Extended Instructional Approaches for Session 4

**Introduction:** *Engage your group by stimulating their thinking.*

Ask your group members if they have any tasks or “honey do’s” that they have been putting off. Chances are great that someone, if not everyone, will say yes. Ask them why they haven’t gotten around to doing them.

**Part 1:** *Assist your group members in their understanding of the root of sloth.*

Sloth or laziness is an area in which we all struggle. Have a group member read the following poem. Ask your group members to listen to the poem while it is being read.

*Lazy day why oh why did you have to stop by?  
Tired, sleepy, reluctant too, having absolutely nothing to do.  
Your bed calls, drowsily you fall.  
Nap time doesn't help at all.  
Boredom chips slowly away at the long and dreary day.  
Unsatisfied with your toys today brings no joy.  
Hours pass slowly by finally you say goodbye  
To that awful lazy day that happened by your way.*

As your group members listen to the poem, ask them for their insights. Ask, “The author blames laziness on things outside of herself. What are they? What do you think about her accusation?”

[Emily Coon, “Laziness,” Hello Poetry [online], 15 October 2010 [cited 27 October 2014]. Available from the Internet:  
<http://hellopoetry.com/words/26093/laziness/poems/>]

**Part 2:** *Help your group members connect to the major theme.*

The text states that sloth is a worship problem. One of the ways we can discern if we are slothful in the work that God has given us to do is to perform a self-evaluation. List the following three statements on the board: “Your work is merely

a means to an end, a place to serve your own needs,” “Your work totally frustrates you,” and “Your work becomes divorced from your Christian discipleship.”

[Sebastian Traeger and Greg Gilbert, *The Gospel at Work: How Working for King Jesus Gives Purpose and Meaning to Our Jobs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 38-42.]

Ask your students to spend a few minutes in self-evaluation as they ponder these ideas. If they answer in the affirmative in response to any of the three statements, then they might have a worship problem that shows itself in these “symptoms.” Before we can have a cure for sloth, we must see if we are “sick” with the “disease.” Hopefully this exercise can assist them in a proper evaluation of their current condition.

### **Part 3: *Illustrate the principle.***

Read the following article to your group members:

*Nehemiah, the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes, had received permission to return to the city of Jerusalem with a company of workers. It had been destroyed some 70 years before. Its wall lay in ruins, the temple in ashes, while Judah pined away in captivity.*

*In answer to prayer, Nehemiah was allowed to return to rebuild Jerusalem. When he arrived he found the city devastated. The men of Judah came to Nehemiah and cried, “There is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall” (Neh. 4:10).*

*We too are builders. Sin has caused utter ruin of the house of humanity. We have the remedy for this lost world in the Word of the gospel. Yet how ineffective our work often is because of the rubbish in our own lives. The rubbish of indifference, spiritual apathy, laziness, sinful pleasure, materialism, worldliness, questionable habits, doubt and worry, and lack of prayer and Bible study. All this must be cleared away before we can serve the Lord effectively.*

*On our knees we must confess our sin, accept His forgiveness, and begin building on a clean foundation. Then we will be able to offer Him something that will abide forever.*

*Search me, O God, and know my heart today;  
Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.  
See if there be some wicked way in me;  
Cleans me from every sin and set me free. —Orr*

*God's grace in the heart brings forth good deeds in the life.*

Ask your students for their impressions and thoughts, especially on the last statement, “God's grace in the heart brings forth good deeds in the life.”

M.R. DeHaan, “Rubbish Piles,” *Our Daily Bread* [online], 26 April 1996 [cited 28 October 2014]. Available from the Internet: <http://odb.org/1996/04/26/rubbish-piles/>

### **Conclusion: *Challenge for application.***

Type out the content in the “Sloth Diagnostics” box on page 53 of the Leader’s Guide and give individual copies to your group members. Challenge them to take it home with them, fill it out, and act upon the results.

### **Teaching Tip of the Week**

Howard Gardner has done some trailblazing work on multiple intelligences. His two classic books on the subject are *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* and *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. He posits that we learn in more ways than we traditionally understood. In the next four lessons, we will examine some approaches to teaching that might enhance your lessons and allow different types of learners to understand and assimilate the principles you teach more effectively.

The *visual/spatial* learner can be assisted through the use of pictures or objects relevant to your lesson. Try displaying maps, artwork, using video clips, pictures, use colors, and/or photographs.”

[Barbara Bruce, *Seven Ways of Teaching the Bible to Adults: Using Our Multiple Intelligences to Build Faith* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 52.]

To help these learners, try incorporating some of the following in your lessons: Write or draw thoughts about the lesson, have them sketch their thoughts on the lesson, and illustrate the Bible lesson as often as possible. Their ability to comprehend will be remarkably improved!