

7 Deadly Sins #1

Lust

Evangelist Dea Warford

II Peter 1:4

April 30, 2009

This is the first in a series on "The Seven Deadly Sins."

All scriptural quotations are from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1981, unless otherwise noted

Word: *"by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (II Peter 1:4).*

Wisdom: According to the wikipedia.org, "The seven deadly sins, also known as the capital vices or cardinal sins, are a classification of the most objectionable vices that were originally used in early Christian teachings to educate and instruct followers concerning (immoral) fallen man's tendency to sin. They are: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride. The Catholic Church divided sin into two principal categories: "venial", which are relatively minor, and could be forgiven through any sacramentals or sacraments of the church, and the more severe "capital" or mortal sin.

Mortal sins destroyed the life of grace, and created the threat of eternal damnation unless either absolved through the sacrament of confession, or forgiven through perfect contrition on the part of the penitent. Beginning in the early 14th century, the popularity of the seven deadly sins as a theme among European artists of the time eventually helped to ingrain them in many areas of Christian culture and Christian consciousness in general throughout the world."

Although the Bible doesn't specifically list the so called "7 Deadly sins" anywhere in the bible, they are certainly referred to often though not necessarily along with the other related vices. Protestants differ with Catholics in that Protestants believe that all sins are mortal, and therefore can damn the soul. Jesus said if you look on a woman to lust after her, you have committed adultery with her in your heart (Matt. 5:28). If you hate your brother, you are guilty of murder. God sees the heart and "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." We are sinners, period. And, "the wages of sin is death". (Romans 6:23), so all sins are "deadly", not just seven.

There doesn't seem to be a lot of preaching on sin today. But, Jesus preached a lot on sin, Paul preached on sin, so I guess Dea should preach on sin, at least some times. And I suppose the so called 7 deadly sins are as good a place to start as any. Let's examine this list together:

Deadly Sin # 1-LUST: 2 Peter 1:4: *"By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Thank God, through the promises of the Word of God, we can overcome lust. And, we must do this, because lust is surely a "deadly sin". According to our devotional verse today, it brings "corruption" to our world.*

Webster's dictionary defines lust as, "intense sexual desire or appetite, uncontrolled or illicit sexual desire; a passionate or overwhelming desire or craving." Lust is usually associated with sexual desires and could be simply defined as "The choice and act of desiring and meditating on a sex object; either a person, picture or thing other than your wife or husband."

In god's eyes, the sin of lust is the equivalent of the sin of adultery. Matthew 5:28 says, "I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart". To better help us understand what Jesus said, C.S. Lewis explains, "He that but looketh on a plate of ham and eggs to lust after it hath already committed breakfast with it in his heart."

Lust is truly the sin of the age in America and it has a horribly corrupting influence. I think Hugh Hefner is both its primary prophet and one of its primary examples of how lust can permeate one's life. Hugh began his Playboy magazine in 1949 (the year I was born). It was first called the "Stag" magazine. A pictorial of a nude Marilyn Monroe was in its very first issue. Marilyn Monroe was singularly used of the devil as perhaps no other woman in history to make "sex" appeal very public and very popular.

And, Hugh Hefner used her and a litany of women ever since to further promote the sin of lust. I think it is ironic (more so than Hugh thinks, I am sure) that Hugh Hefner's future crypt is right next to Marilyn Monroe's. He went through various wives and girlfriends like a knife goes through butter. He's a liberal and a libertine; believing in personal liberties over governmental control. And, he's an admitted atheist; reporting that "religion was invented to help explain the inexplicable." I'd like to tell him that "Playboy Enterprises was invented to help corrupt the corruptible." He is 83, unashamedly sings the praises of Viagra and continues to make public appearances and cameos in movies as an American symbol of our lust. Playboy magazine for many years was Satan's number one tool to encourage lust among men.

Playboy magazine has faded; thanks to the internet. The internet has now become Satan's greatest tool in history to hold people in bondage to lust. I do not and will not go to an internet porno site. But, in research for this message, I simply googled "sex" and counted the available websites (without going to any). There were 970 some odd "sex" websites you could get to just by typing in 3 letters. Many of those sites would have immediately displayed nudity, sexual acts, or perversion for the benefit of anyone desiring to act upon the deadly sin of lust: lust that is literally at their fingertips!

How deadly is the sin of lust? Ask Hugh Hefner one hour after he dies: and to talk to him, I don't mean go to his crypt next to Marilyn Monroe. He won't be there. He'll be elsewhere, and I wouldn't want to be in his shoes when he dies. Ask David, the King of Israel, who was one of God's favorite all-time persons and of whom God himself said he was "a man after my own heart." David lusted after Bathsheeba as he observed her bathing while he was walking on his rooftop. He asked his men bring her to his room and committed adultery with her. When she became pregnant as a result, he had her husband killed and then married her. As God's judgment upon him for this great sin, Nathan the prophet told him that "the sword shall not depart from the house of David".

Three of his sons died: two violently. A daughter was raped, publically humiliated and remained unmarried in David's house. And, he lived a life without peace, fighting one battle after another until his death. No wonder in the book of Proverbs it warns, "Do not give your strength to women, Nor your ways to that which destroys kings." (Prov. 31:3). Hundreds of years after David's death, the fruit of his lust was still mentioned alongside his name: "David the king begot Solomon by her (Bathsheeba) who had been the wife of Uriah." (Matt. 1:6).

In the 80's one of the leading evangelists in America, Jimmy Swaggart, was discovered in a motel room with a prostitute, not once, but twice. His name was plastered in headlines around America. His internationally loved TV programs dwindled; His Bible College that he had founded which once boasted of over 2000 students, dwindled down to about 80; and sinner's found great encouragement from his fall.

One scoundrel I knew personally, reported that he had boasted at a bar to other men, "Why, we don't even do the things Jimmy Swaggart does!" Jimmy's lust became a great stumbling block to preachers who preached against sin all over America. Donations to ministries diminished (I know one orphanage in Belize that reported giving went down 40% after Jimmy Swaggart's fall). The devil had a field day. Truly, "no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself". The sin of lust destroys a man's authority over his body, distracts him from the things that are really important and righteous, and when yielded to, not only damages one's personal life and spiritual life, but can result in many other lives being affected.

We would do well to heed the words of a man who also struggled with the sin of lust. Solomon, himself a sinner but the wisest sinner that ever lived, said it all in these few words: "Do not lust after her beauty in your heart." (Proverbs 6:25). Paul put it this way in Romans 13:14: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." You have the mind of Christ. So start thinking like he does; and he never lusts.

The opposite of lust is the virtue Chastity. That should be our goal, because it is Christ's goal for us: In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul wrote, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Let's not be conformed to the image of Hugh Hefner (Romans 12:1, 2). Let's instead count it a privilege to practice chastity, as the captain of our salvation, Jesus did.

Prayer: "Father, open my spiritual eyes to discern how ugly the sin of lust is in your eyes. Help me to never yield to it!"

Confession: "I will not lust after anyone!"

Evangelist Dea Warford

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7 Deadly Sins #2

Gluttony

Evangelist Dea Warford
Proverbs 23:2
May 1, 2009

All scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are from the New King James Translation, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1981

Word: "Put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony." (Prov. 23:2-NIV)

Wisdom: Webster defines Gluttony as: "Excessive eating and drinking". I think gluttony could further be defined as, "Anything that is overindulgent or harmful to our spiritual lives that enters by the mouth." In our devotional verse, I don't think Solomon is saying "commit suicide" if you are a glutton. Rather, he's counseling us to, "Do whatever it takes to stop this sin from controlling your life."

Thomas Aquinas, a Medieval church leader, argued that the sin of gluttony could also include "an obsessive anticipation of meals, and the constant eating of delicacies and excessively costly foods." Following is an interesting list of ways someone could commit gluttony, in Thomas Aquinas' opinion: eating too soon; eating too expensively (I'm sure not that kind of glutton! What about you?); eating too much (In a sense, most of us in America are probably gluttons, aren't we?); eating too eagerly (I'll never forget one of the kids in my youth group when I was a minister of youth. He was as obese as any teenager I'd ever seen. At one of our church dinners, I glanced over at him eating his meal and saw a facial expression I don't remember ever seeing before or sense.

As he quickly stuffed his mouth, his eyes were wide open and he beamed as though at the bottom of the plate was a thousand dollar bill he could spend as soon as he was done eating. This may be what Aquinas had in mind when he said "eating too eagerly". Incidentally, never "judge" someone who is obese; many obese people eat no more than you or I; they have a very slow metabolism); eating too daintily (I assume he meant by this that you make such a big deal out of even how you eat, that you are giving food an inordinate priority in your life); and finally, eating wildly (like the Romans, mentioned below).

The ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus said, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Paul the Apostle was doubtless quoting this Epicurean maxim in 1 Corinthians 15:32: "If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" The Epicureans followed the philosophy of Epicurus who lived for the pleasure of the moment. The Romans took this philosophy to the extreme as they began having orgies (which originally were not sexual in nature). These orgies were feasts where they would serve as many as 10 courses at extravagant parties and dinners. Those in attendance would relax at couches gorging themselves. Then, they would dismiss themselves and go to the "Vomitorium" and relieve themselves; only to come back to the party and keep gorging food down their throats. This is probably the best example in history of gluttony.

I myself struggled with the sin of gluttony. In the summer between my freshman and sophomore year in Bible College, I had either read or heard the word "gluttony" and didn't know what it meant. So, at work one day, as I was sweeping the floor and passed the desk of a pastor who worked there, I asked him, "What is gluttony?" He answered, "Overeating". Immediately, I thought to myself, "I over eat then." I

ate a lot as an 18 year old. I worked hard and had a lightning fast metabolism. (I have even won 5 eating contests in my lifetime!) So that night at the college buffet, I put significantly less food on my dinner plate because I didn't want to be a glutton. I plowed through that little plate in no time flat. I was still hungry. I glanced over at the buffet line. Turning my head away, I thought to myself, "I don't want to be a glutton." Ah, but, I could smell the savors. I glanced at the buffet again; turned my head and said, "Get behind me, Satan!" My resistance spent, I got back in line and filled my plate again. After quickly eating it, I felt so guilty. "I have sinned. I'm a glutton! Well, if I am going to sin, I might as well do a good job of it!" I got back in line and filled my plate again and again. I left the cafeteria feeling so depressed and disgusted with myself.

That night at the midweek service, I went down to the altar and repented of the sin of gluttony. I felt so much better. But, the next morning, they had pancakes for breakfast. I love pancakes! But, not wanting to be a glutton, I piled my plate with just a short stack. In no time, those few pancakes were barely filling my tummy ¼ full. I glanced at the buffet line. Turning away I thought to myself, "I don't want to be a glutton!" Ah, but I could smell those hotcakes beckoning to me. "Get behind me, Satan!" I cried. My resistance gone, I went back and piled high my plate again. Oh, I felt so guilty. "I'm a glutton!" Thus began the first great trial of my Christianity. I discovered food was everywhere; beckoning me. I'd buy a candy bar for a dime, eat half of it, and throw the other half away; so mad at myself for being a glutton.

I would gorge at a meal; then go outside feeling so full that I would stick my finger down my throat and try to regurgitate. (I never could do that. I think God was protecting me from Bulimia, before I even knew it existed). I went to a deliverance minister's church meeting and when I told him of my problem, he said I had "14 demons of gluttony" and proceeded to "cast them out". That guy didn't do me a bit of good. Immediately after the service, I went to the 7/11 and bought a pie, a candy bar and an ice cream bar. I gained 20 pounds which, with my super-fast metabolism, would probably be like most of you gaining 200 pounds! It was one of the most difficult years of my life.

I know a demon was involved in my battle. And, I know was truly guilty of the sin of gluttony. But, the real problem was that I did not understand the grace of God, nor His power to set free. It was only after taking a class on the Book of Romans at college that I found my deliverance. Studying the truths of Romans (the truths that birthed the reformation in Europe), I discovered such truths as: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Romans 5:1) and "There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1). I began to understand that my salvation was not predicated on eating the perfect amount of calories. And, as my heart was more at peace, there was not that driving need to eat so much. It didn't happen overnight, but gradually I put less and less on my plate. I began to eat one piece of pie instead of two. I lost that extra 20 pounds (without even trying). And, my great trial with the sin of gluttony was passed.

My struggle was with overeating and being too preoccupied with food. I don't think there is a precise line of demarcation for gluttony: a weight of food or amount of calories that if you exceed that standard, you are a glutton. I think this sin is individualized between a man, his meal and his Messiah. But, don't for a moment minimize the sin of gluttony: The "glutton" and the "drunkard" are mentioned side by side in Proverbs 21:20. I believe alcoholism or drug addiction; perhaps even cigarette smoking fits under the category of gluttony. God grant that none of us reading this have any vices because of anything that enters our life through our mouth.

The opposite of gluttony is the virtue we call "Temperance". 1 Corinthians 9:25 says, "And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown." Let us strive for that imperishable crown, as Paul recommended, by being "temperate in all things". Gluttony is certainly a "deadly sin" because it will likely cause an early death by heart disease, cancer or sugar diabetes: diseases which can all be caused by putting too much of the wrong foods in our mouth. Control your diet, for your health's sake and to not let that same demon that

tormented me or inspired the Romans defile you. Let the Lord have His way with you: the way of temperance or moderation.

Prayer: "Father, forgive me if I am guilty of the sin of gluttony. I want to take care of my body; "the Temple of the Holy Spirit". Help me to get any beam out of my eye, so I can help others in bondage get the splinter out of theirs."

Confession: "I will put a knife to my throat lest I be a glutton."

Evangelist Dea Warford

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7 Deadly Sins #3

Greed

by Evangelist Dea Warford

1 Timothy 6:10

May 2, 2009

You're invited to our service Sunday night at 6 PM at "The Power Station" 2235 E. 4th St. Ontario, Calif

Word: All references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1980

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10)

Wisdom: Webster's Dictionary defines greed as, "excessive or rapacious desire, especially for wealth or possessions; avarice; covetousness." We might add to that list "materialism" as Webster defines it, "Preoccupation with or emphasis on material objects, comforts, and considerations, as opposed to spiritual or intellectual values."

Proverbs 1:19: explains, "So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; It takes away the life of its owners." How can greed "take away the life of its owners"? Easily, because Jesus said in Luke 12:15, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Our life is really not about physical things. They do not satisfy. One bumper sticker said, "He who dies with the most toys wins." This is the wisdom behind greed.

Proverbs 15:27 warns, "He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house." Many Christians don't attend church regularly. For a lot of them, the reason is simply because they are pursuing the good life through their employment. They want to "provide for their family." But, Solomon says when they do that to the point of "greed", they "trouble (bring problems) to their own house". I remember one man who worked two shifts a day to "provide financially" for his family. His daughter became a homosexual. (Christian social scientists say that an absent father is one of a number possible precursors to homosexuality). Truly, this father "troubled his own house". Of course, we have to make a living for ourselves and our families.

Still, Solomon warned in Proverbs 23:4: "Do not overwork to be rich." Now, precisely what is meant by "overwork" you'll need to determine for yourself, before your God. But, I submit to you that, if one's job makes church attendance neglected and a secondary thing in life, or for that matter Bible reading, prayer, or other spiritual disciplines, that person should consider a change of employment! In our devotional verse today, Paul warned that some have "strayed from the faith" because of their greediness.

Solomon enlightens us in Ecclesiastes 1:8: "All things are full of labor; Man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing." In other words, the greedy by "labor" will never find satisfaction. Horace, the Greek poet said, "He who is greedy is always in want." They asked Rockefeller, "How much is enough?" His answer was, "Just a little bit more." The Iceman was a moniker for a cold criminal (who later became a preacher. I heard his testimony). After robbing a bank and as he drove down the highway, he opened his briefcase filled with the cash. His first thought, he would later report, was, "It isn't enough."

We could talk about a lot of greedy people. Judas betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver. Jezebel had the

righteous man, Naboth, killed just so her husband could have his grape vineyard. Alexander the Great apparently had an insatiable need to subjugate others. When he at last conquered the final territory of the then known world, it is said that "He wept, because there were no more worlds to conquer." Someone has suggested that Henry VIII was a great historic example of greed: He was married 6 times; divorced twice and had two wives beheaded. It's estimated that he also had over 70,000 people executed during his reign. "The greediest person of the year" was awarded by one website to a pensioner from America's Pennsylvania state. This man is so greedy that he cleans and washes dental floss after use in order to use it again. Peter Novac (76) cleans every dental floss of his after two weeks of using it, then he sterilizes it with alcohol, and uses it again.

I think it would be a serious mistake, however, to think that every one of us is not subject to the sin of greed. Remember, one of Webster's definitions of greed is "covetousness". In Luke 12:15-21: Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'"

But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Jesus defined greed by giving this graphic story about a man who lost everything at death, and then warned, "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Hell will be full of rich and greedy men: those who have "pierced themselves through with many sorrows" as our devotional verse forewarns. I trust you and I will not be one of them? Instead, let's be "rich toward God".

The opposite of greed is the virtue charity. Webster's Dictionary defines charity as, "Donations or generous actions to aid the poor, ill, or helpless." Charity is an old English word used throughout the King James Translation instead of love. Charity or love will truly vanquish any greed for 1 Peter 4:8 (King James Version) says, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins". Greed is indeed a "deadly sin", but love will cover it! Let go of any greedy aspirations. Instead, replace them with acts of charity and love.

Prayer: "Father, Forgive me for being so mindful of physical things. I want to be a charitable person. Thank you for teaching me to love others."

Confession: "I will be rich toward God today."

Evangelist Dea Warford

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7 Deadly Sins #4
Wrath

by Evangelist Dea Warford

Proverbs 19:19

May 3, 2009

You're invited to our service Sunday night at 6 PM at "The Power Station" 2235 E. 4th St. Ontario, Calif

All references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1980.

Word: "A man of great wrath will suffer punishment; For if you rescue him, you will have to do it again." (Proverbs 19:19)

Wisdom: Notice that "Anger is one letter short of danger." As Solomon warned in today's devotional verse, "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment." There is danger in anger.

Webster's Dictionary says wrath means, "Stern or fierce anger; deep indignation". Secondly, it means "vengeance or punishment as the consequence of anger." Thus, any inordinate or uncontrolled emotions of anger which result in hatred or other sins toward a person, thing, or towards God fits under the sin category of wrath.

Proverbs 14:29 promises, "He who is slow to wrath has great understanding." A corollary of that might be, "He who is quick to wrath has little understanding." My sister Elaine, overheard a couple who often got into big fights arguing with one another in the next door apartment. She heard the man say, "One of us has got to change. And, I can't!" Wrath results in people who do not learn to control their anger.

Proverbs 29:8 says, "wise men turn away wrath." Be wise and tell wrath to "take a U-turn". Don't let anyone get your goat. As Elizabeth Kenny wisely said, "He who angers you conquers you."

The first example of the sin of wrath in the Bible is Cain. Cain "was very angry" and this anger led him to eventually kill his brother Abel. (Genesis 4:3-15). His punishment was to be "cursed from the earth": the "man of great wrath suffered punishment".

Job 5:2 warns, "For wrath kills a foolish man." A good example of how wrath killed a foolish man is in Esther 3:5: "When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath." In his wrath, Haman then conspired to have not only Mordecai killed, but every Jew in the kingdom. But, his wrath killed only himself, as the tables were turned on him and he was hanged on the very gallows he had built for Mordecai.

The greatest example in the Bible of the sin of wrath is Moses. Moses was sick and tired of Israel's stubbornness. The Lord had instructed him to speak to a rock and water would pour out of it to provide for the complaining Israelites. In his anger, instead Moses struck the rock with his staff, disobeying the Lord's command to speak to it. As punishment for this sin of "wrath", God would not let him enter the Promised Land. Psalm 106:32 tells about it: "They angered Him also at the waters of strife, So that it went ill with Moses on account of them."

Wait a minute, you might be thinking to yourself, what about "righteous indignation"? Righteous indignation is the anger that God and righteous men and women feel at the injustice and evil in the world. (God is angry at the wicked every day. And, Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the Temple with a

whip). There is a place for "righteous indignation", but, we don't express this by ranting, raving and striking out in uncontrollable yelling or hurting others. Righteous indignation drives us to our knees; drives us to the Word for answers; and drives us to do everything we can to combat evil. And "righteous indignation" is truly the exception to the rule about anger. You can be sure that virtually all your outbreaks of "wrath" are but the fallen nature and thus need to be controlled. As James put it in 1:20: "For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." Ambrose Bierce wisely warned, "Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret."

Thank God, there are scriptural ways to deal with wrath . . .

Colossians 3:8: "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth". "Put it off", Paul says. Like you would a Bee that landed on your head; swat it off; don't let it stay there! Notice it also says "filthy language". Probably the first manifestation of wrath among most people is swearing, cussing and speaking obscenities. Such wrathful expletives must be deleted from our lives!

Job 36:13: "But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath; They do not cry for help". If you have a problem with wrath and anger, cry out to God for help. Ask him to deliver you from this sin and claim by faith his promise to do so. To dismiss your wrath (My Irish temper); to excuse it (you shouldn't have done that); to celebrate it (by obscenities) Job says is hypocritical.

Psalms 76:10 gives an interesting antidote for wrath: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise You." When you get mad, try lifting your hands and praising God. Thank Him for Christ's power to deliver you from anger. Thank Him that you are forgiven of your wrath. Thank him that all these things that make you so mad will eventually "work together for good." And, remember, "For every minute you are angry, you lose sixty seconds of happiness."

The opposite of wrath is the virtue of patience. We might also add forgiveness. Because wrath is only unforgiveness in action; if we forgive people, we won't be mad at them. Likewise, if we have patience toward others, we won't have wrath toward them. Phyllis Diller said, "Never go to bed mad. Stay up and fight!" More wisely, Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:26: "Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath". If you experience wrath, the Bible warns you to not let it lead to sin. And, be sure to get over it before you go to sleep. Say, "I'm sorry". Make that phone call and make amends. Get on your knees and deal with it. Otherwise, the next verse of Ephesians 4:27 says you might unwittingly "give place to the devil." Unresolved anger becomes wrath which gives "place to the devil." Don't give Satan any territory in your life. Don't give him an inch, or he'll take a mile. Have patience. Forgive! "Put off" wrath.

Prayer: "Father, I thank you for delivering me from wrath. But, I know I need to work more on my anger. Forgive me for not letting go more quickly."

Confession: "I'm not mad at anyone. Temper . . . coolest thou it."
Evangelist Dea Warford

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7 Deadly Sins #5

Envy

by Evangelist Dea Warford
Proverbs 14:30
May 4, 2009

Word: "A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones. (Proverbs 14:30)
All scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1981.

Wisdom: Our devotional verse today warns that envy "is rottenness to the bones." If you can think of no other reason to overcome the sin of envy, try warding off the disease it can cause. I think we can take that "rottenness" literally! As Job 5:2 says, "Envy slays a simple one". Envy can kill you! It is truly a "deadly sin".

Webster's dictionary defines envy as, "A feeling of resentful discontent, begrudging admiration, or a covetousness with regard to another's advantages, possessions, or attainments; desire for something possessed by another" Envy then is "a longing to possess something awarded to or achieved by another." Harold Coffin wisely said, "Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of your own." Closely related to envy would be the sin of jealousy which, according to Webster, "denotes a feeling of resentment that another has gained something that one more rightfully deserves." Proverbs 27:4 categorizes jealousy along with wrath (another "deadly sin"): "Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, But who is able to stand before jealousy?"

Let me then differentiate between envy and jealousy: you might envy Bill Gates for having so much more money than you; but, If he stole your wife or husband, you would be jealous of him! Shakespeare in Othello called jealousy "the green eyed monster." Both envy and jealousy are monsters that are forbidden in scriptures. (Though, of course, we are within our rights to guard and protect our mates from other paramours!)

Envy is "little". Josh Billings said, "Love looks through a telescope; envy, through a microscope." In other words, envy is the realm of the "little". And, it also doesn't see the big picture of God's vast eternal plan wherein each one of us have our personal allotment here; one which we are to be content with. As 1 Timothy 6:6 says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

Jealousy is "cruel". Song of Solomon 8:6 says, "Love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame." The grave is so cruel. It snatches loved ones from us. It's ugly and frightful and macabre. But, the Holy Spirit says jealousy is just as cruel. How many men have been killed by jealous husbands? Sometimes, it is the man who gets killed by the jealous wife. The Associated press gave the following report from NORRISTOWN, Pa. - A woman killed her longtime husband hours before he was to leave on a trip to Morocco to try to impregnate his new second wife, prosecutors said in murder charges filed Thursday. Myra Morton, 47, turned herself in Thursday to face murder and related charges in the death of Jereleigh Morton, 47, who was shot in his bed early Sunday morning in his million-dollar home outside Philadelphia.

The killing happened just hours before Jereleigh Morton was to travel to Africa to try to conceive a baby with his second wife. Prosecutors charged Morton with first-degree murder, third-degree murder and related counts. She turned herself in Thursday, dressed in traditional Muslim garb with a full black cloak and a face veil that left only her eyes showing. The Mortons converted to Islam about 20 years ago.

Morton met his second wife, Zahra Tournal, 35, on the Internet in December 2006, investigators said. She lives in Morocco and married Morton there on March 19. Myra was reluctant to accept the second marriage and she told friends that she was upset her husband was "no longer paying attention to her." As one investigator reported, "She was really trying to protect her turf." Notice she was "protecting her turf" by killing someone.

Jealousy really is closely related to the grave as the Song of Solomon says. Jealousy and Envy, like greed, are also closely akin to covetousness. Exodus 20:17 is the 10th commandment: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's." I don't have any problem not coveting people's donkeys, but their home?"

O.K. I'm sure you are convinced envy is a no, no. So, you'll likely appreciate the following:

Scriptural steps to take to overcome envy . . .

Proverbs 23:17: "Do not let your heart envy sinners, But be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day." Be zealous to help lost sinners discover the fear of the Lord and you won't have the slightest interest in the things sinners possess (which they won't take to hell with them, will they?).

1 Corinthians 13:4: "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy". If you love someone, you won't be envious of them. You will be happy for what they have. You will rejoice with their good fortune. As Romans 12:15 says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep". To many of us selfishly weep with those who rejoice, and rejoice with those who weep. That ought not to be!

Hebrews 13:5: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Learn to be thankful and content for the things you have. After all, compared to so many in the world, you are truly rich. And, besides that, you have the best thing in the universe: Jesus!

The opposite of envy is suggested to be kindness. Galatians 5:22 says, "The fruit of the Spirit is kindness." To the degree we grow in kindness toward others, we will conversely have less problems with envy and jealousy. Let's be kind to one another today. Especially, today . . .

Today is my birthday. I turned 60. (Boo-hoo!) I'm not envious of you who are in your twenties or thirties and full of decades to come, full of energy and full of hair. I'm not envious; not at all . . . not at all . . .not at all.

Prayer: "Father, forgive me for envying those who have more than I do. Forgive me for being jealous for my "turf". May I ever grow in kindness toward others."

Confession: "I rejoice with all who are rejoicing; even those who have more than me."

Evangelist Dea Warford

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7 Deadly Sins #6

Sloth

by Evangelist Dea Warford

Proverbs 18:9

May 5, 2009

All scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1981)

Word: *"He who is slothful in his work Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer." (Proverbs 18:9)*

Catholic explorers in South America came upon a very slow moving creature they had never seen before. They called it a "sloth" after the sin of sloth. Interesting picture, isn't it? Webster's Dictionary defines sloth as: "indolence; laziness". It defines indolence as the noun for the world indolent which is, "having or showing a disposition to avoid exertion". It defines laziness as the noun form of the word "lazy" which means, "averse or disinclined to work, activity . . . slow moving."

So, a person who is guilty of sloth is slothful, an adjective that is used 17 times in the King James Version. Six times the KJV uses the word "sluggard" as a noun to describe slothful people. Other versions use words like laziness, hesitant, etc. The sin of "sloth" is not so much that a person is sitting around doing nothing, but rather that he is not busy doing something. It is called the sin of omission: not doing something that you should be doing. All of the other deadly sins are sins of commission: that is, doing things that you should not be doing. Among the seven, only sloth is a sin of omission. So definitions such as "showing a disposition to avoid exertion" or "disinclined to work" or "slow moving" when compared with so many scriptures in the Bible that exhort us to good works, helps us to understand why this is such a serious sin. Let's look at just two . . .

Romans 15:30: "Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me". Pray is hard work. We should be "striving" to help others on our knees. Not praying for those we should pray for would be a sin of omission: the sin of sloth.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." We are supposed to be doing "good works". We are to "walk in them". "Works" and "Walk" imply activity which is the opposite of sloth.

The late comedian, Mitch Hedberg, shows the spirit of the sin of sloth. He said, "I want to get a job as someone who names kitchen appliances. Toaster, refrigerator, blender . . . all you do is say what the (expletive deleted) thing does, and add "er". I wanna work for the "Kitchen Appliance Naming Institute". Hey, what does that do? It keeps stuff fresh. Well, that's a fresher . . . I'm going on break."

In Proverbs 6:6-8, Solomon uses the ant as an example to try to motivate sluggards: "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest." Ants are fascinating little creatures. We can learn a lot from them, at least Solomon thinks so. We rarely give a thought to ants, until they show up in our kitchen. But, ants are very important to us. It is estimated that there are 10 quadrillion ants in the world. That is over a million ants for every man, woman and child on the earth. They are a highly organized society. They aren't called "worker ants" because they are slothful! Of all the creatures in the

animal kingdom Solomon could have referred us to, he chose the ant. I think it is significant that and one of the ant's most significant functions on our planet is to help get rid of dead corpses. They literally strip corpses to the bone. They rid the world of the smell, the disease and the "death" that corpses bring. Imagine a world without ants!

Solomon told us to "consider her (the ant's) ways and be wise." If ants get rid of corpses, so should we! If you are going to learn from the ant then you too should strive to be a soul winner to help get rid of "dead corpses". "Let let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:20). Sloth is a "deadly sin" because it leaves sinners dead in their trespasses and sins.

Further, ants know how to work as a team. Hebrews 10:24 tells us we should be learn to be team players, encouraging and egging each other on: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works." Sloth has no place in the Christian experience.

The opposite of sloth is the virtue of diligence: Contrast the following references to the virtue of diligence compared to the sin of sloth . . .

Proverbs 13:4 promises: *"The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich."*

(Proverbs 22:29 KJV): *"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings."*

Hebrews 11:6: *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

The importance of overcoming the sin of sloth is revealed by understanding that we will be judged as Christians by the works we do. Christians are saved by grace through faith and not by their works (Eph. 2:8). But, what kind of a reward they will enjoy forever in heaven will be determined by their works on earth:

1 Corinthians 3:8-9: *"Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building." and vv.13-15: "Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*

Every time you get off the couch and go to do something for God, for His Kingdom, and for others you are adding to your eternal rewards. And, just as importantly, what kind of eternal punishment a person receives in hell is determined by his works on earth. Revelation 10: 11-15: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

Titus 3:8: *"those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works."* Are you carefully maintaining good works in your Christian life?

Titus 1:16: *"They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work."* You profess that you know God. But, are you denying him by your works?

James 2:17: *"Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead"*. It's clear, isn't it? If you don't have Christian works, your Christian faith is dead. Repent today if such is your case.

Saved people aren't slothful: they "work" for God. They go to church; they study the Bible; they pray; they try to witness and get others saved. If you aren't doing good works, you are going to be judged by your bad. So, repent of slothfulness. Take your salvation by faith. But, in any case, get to work for God! Remember the ant!

Prayer: *"Father, forgive me for being lazy and slow to work for you. I repent of the sin of sloth. Show me how to live a life of productive, good works."*

Confession: "I will work like an ant today. I'll help get rid of the dead."

Evangelist Dea Warford

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7 Deadly Sins #7

Most Deadly!

"Pride"

by Evangelist Dea Warford

I Timothy 3:6

May 6, 2009

All scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1981

Word: *"Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride, he falls into the same condemnation as the devil." I Timothy 3:6*

Wisdom: I am writing about the most deadly poison today. But, first by way of introduction, I did some interesting studying about poisonous animals and chemicals and I think you'll find the following worth reading . . .

Animals-The most venomous Animal is arguably the **Box Jellyfish:** About a hundred people a year die from this jellyfish. The pain is so horrible that many people die by drowning because they are unable to swim out of the water. The best defense against this jellyfish is to swim wearing pantyhose (ha, ha!)

Marbled Cone snail: Less than a drop of its poison could kill at least 19 adults.

Stonefish: its venom causes the most terrible pain known to man. Those bitten often beg to have their limbs cut off because of the pain.

Inland Taipan (snake): One bite has enough venom to kill more than a hundred adults.

Poison Dart Frog: Likely the most deadly poison in the animal kingdom, ounce per ounce. A minute amount can kill a large animal or human.

Which animals have killed the most people throughout history? There are three serious contenders for that distinction.

1. **The rat:** The bubonic plague, also known as "The Black Death", is considered one possible explanation for the spread of this virus which ended up killing an estimated 75 million and as much as over half the population of Europe in the 14th century
2. **The mosquito:** has spread malaria through the ages causes an untold number of deaths
3. **Snakes:** kill over 100,000 people a year: in India alone, over 50,000 die annually!

Chemicals- Botulinum when eaten causes people to die in great pain, yet some use it cosmetically (You've heard of Botox). **Anthrax** if inhaled causes flu symptoms and you don't improve; then your

ability to breath breaks down until death. *Tetrodotoxin*, if ingested, is deadly. It's found in the puffer fish (a Japanese food called fugu) and can cause paralysis and death. A handful of Japanese die each year from eating puffer fish improperly. *Amatoxin* is found in a family of mushrooms and causes great pain until one enters a comma ending in death. *Strychnine* (if taken orally or through the lungs) is still used as a pesticide. It causes muscle spasms that don't stop until you die from exhaustion.

Guess which chemical poison kills the most people each year; one which most everyone reading this has in his house probably regularly? (Did you guess it?) It's . . . Carbon Monoxide! This odorless gas which comes from furnaces, ovens, and fireplaces causes more deaths and injuries than any other poison.

Spiritual: What was the first and most deadly spiritual poison? Pride!

1/ The History and Definition of Pride . . .

The history of pride is the history of one being. As our devotional verse today states in 1 Timothy 3:6: "*Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he falls into the same condemnation as the devil.*" Paul teaches in this verse that a newer Christian should not be given a position of leadership in the church. The reason? Because neophytes are more likely to commit the same sin that Satan committed (pride). And just as Satan fell from heaven because of his pride, they too might fall out of the ministry (or worse; from grace) because of it. We read about Satan's sin of pride in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 28: 12: *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart (The first sin, pride, was a sin of the heart): 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; 14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' 15) Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit."*

Notice in the above text, five times Lucifer said, "I will". Lucifer had an "I" problem. Pride can simply be explained as an "I problem." His pride blinded him into thinking that he could be like God which, of course, he couldn't. That's what pride does. It deceives you into thinking you are something you aren't or that you can do something you really can't do (or, once you have done it, to feel you deserve the credit for it). Pride is usually birthed in the area of our greatest strength. For instance, of Satan it was said in . . . Ezekiel 28: 17: "*Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.*" Beauty, intelligence, physical skills, riches and the like can be a root of pride. So God warns us in the above verse. Lucifer was probably the wisest and most lovely created being of all time. But, one day he looked in the mirror; loved what he saw; and believed what his heart told him.

"The basic conceit of man is the thought that we're different." CS Lewis said. So, the definition of Pride could simply be the erroneous thought that, "I am different"; "I am better"; or "I am special". Barry Bonds hit more home runs in a season than anyone in history. Apparently he didn't have the best relationship with sports writers. One Sport's magazine with Barry on the cover had this headline: "I'm Barry Bonds . . . and you're not!" I don't know Barry and I'm not judging him. But, "I'm () and you're not." Says "pride" best!

We would have far less propensity for pride if we but take to heart the truth of 1 Corinthians 4:7: "*For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*" If any area of your life happens to be greater than 2 out of 3 people or even 99,999 out of 100,000, that is still no grounds for pride. God simply created you that way.

Unfortunately, greatness and the pursuit of greatness is prominent in the American psyche. But, what

does God think about this pursuit of greatness? Jeremiah 45:5: *"And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them."* Muhammad Ali's famous boast, "I am the greatest" worked for him in his early years. He bragged about his beauty, his intelligence and his skills as a boxer. But, as the years progressed he lost 5 times. And, now is rapidly aging and humbled by Parkinson's disease (arguably the result of being hit too many times in his boxing career).

Muhammad is just further proof of the scripture 1 Peter 1:24: *All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass, The grass withers And its flower falls away.*" Ali probably changed the sports world more than anybody else in history. He was instrumental in a transition from where sports heroes were careful to be humble, good role models for youth to one where athletes now brag and strut and remind everybody of how special they are.

When Jamaican Usain Bolt crossed the 100-meter finish line in a world record 9.69 seconds at the World Olympics last summer, the world watched as he thumped his chest like Tarzan. Usain would be wise to note what God says in Psalm 147:10: *"He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man."* God isn't impressed by how much we can accomplish with our legs, or our muscles, or even our brains. Most of us wouldn't thump our chest in front of the world, but most all our chests thump inside when we beat others at anything. The Lord is pleased when you understand that if you do ever accomplish anything, it is only because of enablements that He gave you in the first place.

Jesus said, *"He that would be great among you, let him be your servant."* The pathway to overcoming pride is learning to serve others instead of yourself. This way, you'll avoid the negative consequences of serving self, which is exactly what pride does. Tomorrow, we'll examine those consequences.

Prayer: "Father, I acknowledge that any good thing in me or any good thing I do and especially anything that might hint of greatness, is the result of what you have put in me. Please help me to *never* fall into the same condemnation as the devil."

Confession: "I give you the credit and the glory for all that I am and for all you do through me."

Evangelist Dea Warford

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Bonus Related Article:

"The Consequences of Pride"

(Scroll Down)

The Consequences Of Pride

by Evangelist Dea Warford

James 4:6

May 7, 2009

All scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1981

Word: *"He gives more grace. Therefore He says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6*

Wisdom: There are consequences to pride that need to be seriously considered. Our devotional verse today, James 4:6, tells us that God *"resists the proud."* To understand what this means to our personal life, we need to take a look at electricity. In electrical science, "resistance" is a measurement of how much various objects oppose the passage of an electrical current through them. An "insulator" is a type of matter that resists this flow of electrical current. So, when we yield to the deadly sin of pride, we "insulate" ourselves from receiving the "flow" of God's grace (His protection, prosperity, answered prayer, etc.). The prouder we are, the more resistance we build up against God; and the humbler we are, the less resistance we have to His grace. Thus, the consequences of pride are . . .

1/ Pride hinders your prayers from being answered (because of resistance);

2/ Pride keeps one from coming to God in prayer or meditating on His Word: "The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts." (Psalm 10:4). Pride says, "I can do it on my own, so why seek God?" Pride is selfish and thinks only of itself; not God;

3/ God hates pride: Pride is one of seven things the Bible lists that God hates and pride is the first sin mentioned on the list. "These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look . . ." (Proverbs 6:16-18). Think of the significance of having something in your life that God actually hates!

4/ Pride eventually leads to a fall: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall". (Proverbs 16:18). Daniel chapter 4 tells the story of King Nebuchadnezzar's fall because of pride. One day while walking through his kingdom admiring all his accomplishments, he began puffing up with pride, reveling on it all. For that reveling, God took away his kingdom from him and made him spend 7 years in a mental institution (actually, he was living in the wilds eating grass like a wild animal). Daniel explained what happened in 5:20, *"When his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was disposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him."* After his seven year "fall", he was at last humbled enough that God restored to him his kingdom. This was one of the severest punishments on earth ever given to any man for a sin. But, such is the degree of "falling" that the Lord has to sometimes allow us to experience in order to humble us. Have you ever been humbled by the Lord? If so, you never forget it!

When I was a young preacher, I was used quite a bit to minister in Junior High youth camps. I enjoyed it and God blessed my ministry. But, I really wanted to preach to the older teenagers who were high school and college age. Why? Because it would have made me feel more important and besides, I thought I was a better preacher than to have to minister to the younger youth. So, one year I told the supervisor that I felt my ministry was over with the junior highs, hoping or hinting that he would ask me then to be the speaker the following year for the older youth. But, my proud plan backfired on me. Instead, he didn't ask me to speak at all that summer. But, someone else did. A pastor invited me to be the guest evening

speaker for a children's camp (About 4th grade to 6th grade). So, that summer, instead of ministering to the Junior or Senior highs, the "I'm the greatest" camp speaker spent his vacation speaking to even younger kiddies. It didn't take a rocket scientist to know that God was not pleased with my pride and ambition and let me know in this graphic way; fulfillment of Daniel 4:37: "*Those who walk in pride He is able to abase (humble).*" There are indeed consequences to pride.

The root of pride is not accepting your position, your skill-set, or your calling (whether it is being a church janitor, musician, secretary, pastor , faithful laymen, or Jr. High speaker), and to aspire to "greater" and "higher" things (not because you long to be used more for God, but rather because you need to feel affirmed or to prove your greater worth). Isn't this exactly what Satan did? His job was to be the "anointed cherub that covered" the throne of God. He was to help lead angels in worship of God. What a privileged assignment! But, it wasn't good enough for Him. He aspired to instead be like God; a position that was not his to seek.

Humbly accept what and who you are and what God has called you to be and do. Then, seek to be the best you can, for His glory. "Bloom where you're planted." And, when your blossom is beautiful and others comment how beautiful it is, be careful to give God all the glory. Otherwise, "Be sure your sin (of pride) will find you out" and you will suffer the consequences.

Prayer: "Father, I don't want to insulate myself from the flow of Your grace toward me. Please remove any resistance in my life from receiving from You."

Confession: "I humble myself; therefore I expect to receive His grace."

Evangelist Dea Warford

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