

VICE
HABITS OF SIN
SLOTH / ACEDIA

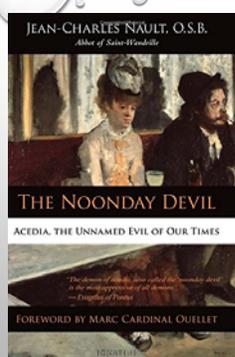
WEEK 4 FEBRUARY 11, 2018

As you take your seats, please read through
 2 Peter 1:1-12

WHAT IS SLOTH?

- **Sloth** (12th c.)
 - 1 a : disinclination to action or labor; indolence
 - 1 b : spiritual apathy and inactivity

(www.merriam-webster.com)

“The demon of acedia, also called the ‘noonday devil’ is the most oppressive of all demons.”

**Evagrius of Pontus
 (346-399)
 Praktikos**

Reading from pg 28-29.

WHAT IS ACEDIA?

- **Acedia** (B.C.)
 - apathy or boredom (www.merriam-webster.com)
 - *akedia*: without care; not burying your dead

OPENING REMARKS

- Thank you, John Gould.
- Questions (and answers) are welcomed. Please hold comments to the end (time permitting).
- **Be gracious with yourself.**
- Remember, **I address not those who are dead in their sins, but alive in Christ.**

ACEDIA & CHRISTIAN VOCATION

- **“Original Call”**: born from above; **BIRTH/ORIGIN**
- **“General Call”**: vocation as image-bearers, Christ followers, union with Christ; **IDENTITY**
- **“Specific Call”**: specific vocation discerned, specific Spiritual gifting; **WORK**

Acedia undermines the joy of our identity in Christ & the work of our specific calling.

SLOTH/ACEDIA AS VICE

- **Evagrius:** "lack of care given to one's own spiritual life"
- **Cassian:** "distancing oneself from one's identity and investment as a member of a spiritual community bound by its love for God"
- **Aquinas:** "sorrow for spiritual good" and "sin against the joy of participating in God's life" which leads to "disgust with activity" & "sloppiness that prevents one from acting"
Nault, *The Noonday Devil*

SLOTH/ACEDIA AS VICE

- "...the slothful are inwardly unwilling to be moved; they are stuck between a self they cannot bear and a self that they cannot bear to become."
- "Sloth prefers the easy way out."
DeYoung, *Glittering Vices*

SLOTH/ACEDIA AS VICE

- "Acedia is a sin against the joy that springs from charity; it is sadness about what ought to gladden us most: participation in the very life of God... Acedia is a sin against charity when it crushes or paralyzes activity, because then it affects the deepest [motivator] of activity...the participation of the Holy Spirit."
Nault, *The Noonday Devil*

SLOTH/ACEDIA AS VICE

- "Acedia is a profound withdrawal into self. Action is no longer perceived as a gift of oneself, as the response to a prior love that calls us..."
- "Acedia is metaphysical boredom in an empire of desire."
Snell, *Acedia and its Discontents*

SLOTH/ACEDIA AS VICE

- "Sloth is the old sinful self resisting transformation into the new self in Christ."
- "Sloth is opposed to...diligence—that powerful sense of responsibility, dedication to hard work and the conscientious completion of one's duties..."
DeYoung, *Glittering Vices*

Faith without works is awesome, says Seattle man



"SEATTLE — After cramming his calendar with volunteer events for the last six years, Al Simpson finally quit all ministry activity and discovered that "doing nothing for the Lord feels way better than I expected."...

"Faith without works is an amazing lifestyle," he says. "A little piece of me comes back to life every time I tell someone, 'No, thanks. Find someone else.'"

LARK NEWS <http://www.larknews.com/archives/5925>
Note Well: This is a fake Christian news site.

SLOTH/ACEDIA IS NOT LAZINESS

- "...sloth cannot be defined [simply] as laziness, since slothful people often pour great physical effort and emotional energy into the difficult task of distracting themselves from the unhappiness of their real condition... Sloth chooses spiritual suffocation to the birth pains of new life and spiritual growth." (DeYoung)

ACEDIA RESISTS GOD'S GOODNESS

- **Listlessness**
- **Distractibility**
- **Boredom**
- **Discontentment**
- **Complaining**
- **Restlessness**
- **Desire for change**
- **Rationalization of wants**
- **Loss of meaning**
- **Anxiety**
- **Excessive concern with the body**
- **Hypochondria**
- **Fear**
- **Sadness**
- **Despair**
- **Nihilism**

2 PETER 1:5-12

- For this very reason [that you may become **partakers of the divine nature**], **make every effort** to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being **ineffective or unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having **forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins**. Therefore, brothers, **do your best to make your calling and election sure**, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ACEDIA RESISTS GOD'S APPOINTED WORK

- **Laziness**
- **Sleepiness**
- **Curiosity**
- **"Killing time"**
- **Garrulousness / "blathering"**
- **Busyness**
- **Mediocrity**
- **Flightiness / Transience**
- **Activism / Workaholism**
- **Grandiosity**
- **Fleeing God in prayer, Scripture, liturgy, sacrament, silence, solitude**
- **Dereliction of duty**
- **Moral laxity**
- **Unfaithfulness**

ACEDIA RESISTS GOD

ACEDIA RESISTS GOD'S GOODNESS.

ACEDIA RESISTS GOD'S APPOINTED WORK.

ACEDIA REVEALED IN US

- **Adolescence / Young adult**
- **Marriage**
- **Singleness**
- **Parenting / Family care**
- **Occupation**
- **"Mid-life crisis"**
- **"Empty Nest"**
- **Retirement**
- **Widowhood**
- **Infirmity / Pain**
- **Church membership**
- **Ministry**

BATTLING ACEDIA

- **OPERATIONAL PLANNING**
 - **Gift: set free from sin** (Rom 6:22-23)
 - **Work out our salvation** because **God works in us** (Phil 2:12-13)
 - **Wrestle against spiritual forces of evil** (Eph 6:10-12)
- **EQUIPMENT & TACTICS**
 - **Scripture / Prayer / Liturgy** ("Worship service")
 - **Flee, talk back, remember, confess, Lord's Supper, work, community, Sabbath rest**
- **OBJECTIVES** (Phil 3:12-14)
 - **Repentance, Perseverance, New Creation**

BATTLING ACEDIA

- **What can you do to battle acedia?**
 - **Silence.** Listen to God. Pray. Fast.
 - **Engage.** Avoid needless, purposeless distraction.
 - **Work.** Worship. Mission. Service. Labor. Study. Giving.
 - **Feed.** Be sustained by the Bread of Life in Word and Sacrament.
 - **Persevere.** Steadfastness. Tears. Together.
 - **Rest.** Sabbath. Re-orient. Re-create.
 - **Celebrate!** Gratitude. Feast. Merriment.

REPEAT

BATTLING ACEDIA

- **Evagrius' Remedies for Acedia**
 - **Tears**
 - "To weep is to acknowledge that one needs saved."
 - **Talking back**
 - "When evil thoughts come into one's heart...dash them against Christ immediately."
 - **Prayer and Work**
 - **Meditation on death**
 - **Perseverance** *Nault, Noonday Devil*

BATTLING ACEDIA

- **WORK:**

"We meet God in our work, we reach out to his divine friendship when we stay in our cell, loving our place and the goodness of residing in its things and tasks and mandates. We are perfected, our objective world is developed, our character is sanctified, the fully integrated Gospel is born witness, and we co-redeem the garden through our work, even as we provide adornments with which God, in delight and pride, fills his eternal and cosmic temple. Good work is what we are made for, and through it, assisted by grace, all manner of things are made well." (Snell, 121).

BATTLING ACEDIA

TALKING BACK: What to say to yourself?

"Turn my life from looking at worthless things and give me life in your ways." (Psalm 119:36)

"Restore to me the joy of my salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit." (Psalm 51:12)

BATTLING ACEDIA

- **REST:**

"...we can seek in activism and overworking a secret pleasure, as though we needed to **cram our schedules full in order to have the feeling of being alive**. Time free of a useful, profitable occupation makes us uneasy; therefore we fill it up so as to dispel the anxiety of emptiness... To agree to **devote time to something gratuitous**—prayer, spiritual reading, friendship—helps us to let go of the illusion that we control our lives and enables us to wait humbly and confidently for God's gift: this is the meaning of the Jewish **Sabbath** and the **Christian Sunday**, which punctuate each week by reminding man that his **work does not find it's accomplishment in itself but, rather, awaits it from God...**"

E. Ricard, "Pourquoi l'acedia?", Sources Vives 84 (1999): 22-23. Quoted in J Nault, *The Noonday Devil: Acedia, The Unnamed Evil of Our Times*; Ignatius (2013): 134.

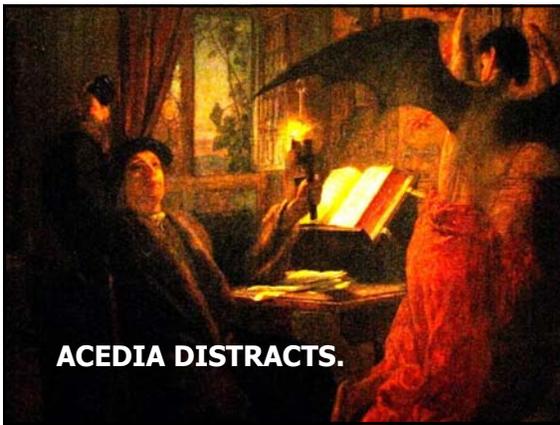


MISSION: FOLLOWING JESUS



REFERENCES & RESOURCES

- DeYoung RK, *Glittering Vices*, Brazos (2009).
- Hütter R, "Acedia and Pornography", *First Things*, April 2012.
- Nault J, *The Noonday Devil: Acedia, The Unnamed Evil of Our Times*, Ignatius (2013).
- Snell RJ, *Acedia and its Discontents: Metaphysical Boredom in an Empire of Desire*, Angelico (2015).



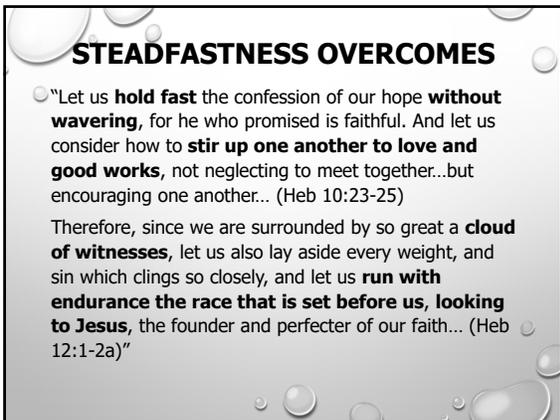
ACEDIA DISTRACTS.



GRACE TO HELP IN A TIME OF NEED

HEBREWS 4:14-16

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Rich Lanning | Colleen Grogan |
| Michael Lyons | Erin Lyons |
| Rick Schatz | Sharon Schatz |
| Mark Verhagen | Becky Verhagen |
| Steve Langdon | Stephanie Langdon |
| | Sue Crosset |



STEADFASTNESS OVERCOMES

“Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope **without wavering**, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works**, not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another... (Heb 10:23-25)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a **cloud of witnesses**, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus**, the founder and perfecter of our faith... (Heb 12:1-2a)”