

# DEADLY SE7EN

## Week 7: Sloth

### Focus Scripture

1 Samuel 2-4

### Main Point

Eli's laziness led to a neglect of his roles as father and priest, and it eventually led to his death.

### Introduction

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

What characteristics come to mind when you think of someone being lazy?

How do you react when you see these characteristics in the lives of others? How about in your own life?

Sloth, the first of the "seven deadly sins," is defined as spiritual or emotional apathy, neglecting what God has spoken, and being physically and emotionally inactive. Sloth can also indicate a wasting due to lack of use, concerning a person, place, thing, skill, or intangible ideal that would require maintenance, refinement, or support to continue to exist. As an example of sloth we'll consider the life of Eli, one of Israel's priests, whose story is told in 1 Samuel 2-4. Sloth is evident in Eli's life through his indifference to his responsibilities as a father and as the high priest of Israel.

### Understanding

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

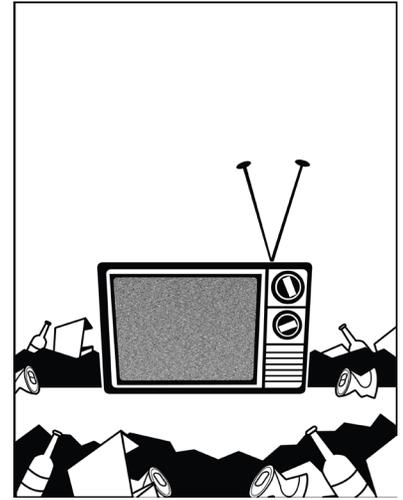
#### **Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-26.**

**What responsibilities were Eli's sons entrusted with (see also Lev. 7:22-36)? How were they abusing their positions?**

**Why do you think Eli didn't do anything to his sons? How do we see his laziness in this interaction?**

**As a father and the high priest, Eli was doubly responsible for how his sons were acting. What does laziness toward our God-given responsibilities communicate to God?**

**What are some of the God-given responsibilities you have? What things has God trusted you with? How might you be demonstrating laziness toward your responsibilities?**



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### **Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 2:27-36.**

**What was God's response to the sins of Eli and his sons? Why does God extend to Eli the responsibility for the sins of his sons?**

**According to verse 29, what was another side effect of Eli's laziness?**

**What did the people of Israel need in a priest? Where was Eli failing to live up to his responsibility?**

### **Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 3:1-18.**

**Read Exodus 27:21. Who was responsible for tending the lamp? How is Eli's laziness further exhibited here?**

**What do we learn about God's discipline from this passage?**

**How might this whole situation have gone differently if Eli had not been lazy in his discipline of his sons?**

### **Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 4:1-18.**

**What does Israel's defeat teach us about our ability to control or manipulate God?**

**Look at verses 12-13. What seems to be Eli's first concern? What new insight does this give us into his character?**

In the end, Eli's laziness led to his death, which occurred while he was sitting on a chair, watching and waiting in fear (1 Sam. 4:13). When the word got back to him that his sons had died and that the ark fell into Philistine hands, Eli fell backwards in his chair, broke his neck, and died.

## **Application**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**At the beginning of the study, we defined sloth as "spiritual or emotional apathy, neglecting what God has spoken, and being physically and emotionally inactive. Sloth can also indicate a wasting due to lack of use, concerning a person, place, thing, skill, or intangible ideal that would require maintenance, refinement, or support to continue to exist." In what aspect of your relationship with God are you most tempted with this sin?**

**How does knowing you were chosen by God to be a part of His body of believers affect the way you view your church and your involvement in it? How does it affect the way you view your work?**

**What are some specific things we can ask God to accomplish through us?**

## **Pray**

Thank the Lord for gifting us with the ability to work and to serve in His mission. Pray that your group members will have an increased desire to serve God and His church this week and will live on guard to the tempting lure of laziness.