

PROVERBS SERIES SIX
HOMERITIS
Pastor Glenn Barteau
Luke 16:1-15; Proverbs 6:9-11; 26:14; 22:13; 24:30-34
Romans 12:15; I Cor. 6:20

(Hook) Homer Simpson – After 3 or 4 tempts to reach the remote on the couch he says: “Ah, I’ll give it a chance.”
↳ Homer is a guy who doesn’t show a lot of initiative... He’s more of a “go with the flow” kind of guy. Take the easy path... **the path of the couch.**

Luke 16¹⁻¹⁵

Jesus tells a story about a manager who learns that he’s about to be fired, so he says to himself “I’m too weak to work in the fields” (good thing he didn’t have my dad!).

“I’m too proud to beg in the street...” He doesn’t know what the next step is, but he knows he’s going to be in need of a job sometime real soon.

So rather creatively, he decides to create some... lets say generous discounts on behalf of his master. He never cheated, lied, or put anything into his pocket illegally. And surprisingly the master commends this guy’s initiative.

~ This is not a parable about ethics; it’s more a parable about initiative.

This guy understands that his life is tracking in the wrong direction and the Homer path... the path of the couch... is not the direction he wants to go.

So he takes some initiative to change the course of his life.

Of course the Homer Simpson’s of the world adhere to a different philosophy for life... they say...

- If I just stay on my present course (the path of the couch) things will just get better for me, somewhere, someday, in someway.
By doing precisely nothing I will eventually drift into an improved set of circumstances.
You might call this **Homer-itis**

(ILL)

People who suffer from Homer-itis have their own mantra; someday...

- ✓ Someday my ship will come in
- ✓ Someday I’ll meet a guy, who knows a guy, who knows a guy, who will offer me a 6 figure job... that only takes 30 hours a week...
- ✓ Someday someone knew... like a supermodel will want to marry me.
- ✓ Someday my credit card companies will go bust and I won’t have to pay them back... and the next day I’ll win the lottery
- ✓ Someday my marriage will just improve
- ✓ Someday my kids stop acting up
- ✓ Someday my metabolism will speed up and my fat will just burn away.

- ✓ Someday I'll stop leading a lukewarm life and I'll be a devoted follower of Christ.

T>> Those with Homer-itis don't understand there's a natural drift in life and it's not up. Life drifts down not up... toward defeat, not victory.

i.e. This principle holds true for our bodies as well, as I've discovered. The skin on our bodies has a particular drift and it's not up, and if it's not down it's out.

i.e. Q: When's the last time your car broke down and it ran better?

~ If we sit back and just go with the flow, it's important to know that the flow goes South.

T>> You know what the book of proverbs calls the Homer Simpson's of the world? Sluggards – the book of Proverbs says there are a lot of people who without realizing it are sliding toward Homer-itis.

Stage One Procrastination - You allow your self motivation to slide. You'd rather lie in bed than tackle the problems of the day.

Pro 6:9-11 "How long will you lie there, you Homer Simpson?" When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man."

Pro 26:14 This is the first step in Homer-itis. It's a warning against procrastination. Putting off tasks that should be done now.

(Story) My mom would ask me to go feed the dogs or sweep the porch... and I would say. "Sure mom, after Gilligan's Island is over, after dinner.

Sometimes my dad would hear this and say, Glennon, I what you to do it... now! **It aggravated me at the time.** I thought dad's got issues or something.

- However, as it turns out my dad was maybe a little wiser than I realized. Because he knew that dangerous patterns could form if I got into the habit of avoiding my responsibilities.

T>> This was one of those issues that needed constant management in my life as I was growing up... to prevent the drift... Because if the drift continues it leads to stage two Homer-itis.

Stage Two We start making excuses

i.e. An able bodied person is on their way to work and they suddenly remember a difficult task that awaits them, and they decide that rather than face the challenge they will make up an excuse to not come in, so they can avoid some hard work.

Pro 22:13 The sluggard says, “There’s a lion outside!”

(ILL) I found out they actually have web sites where you can go to find excuses for missing school, work,... And you can win money if you submit a really good excuse. (The Mother of All Excuses Place)

1. I had to be rushed to the hospital for coffee burns on my lap.
2. The city is paving my street today and I can’t get out of my driveway.
3. I’m stuck in the blood pressure machine down at Wal-Mart.
4. My car caught on fire today so I can’t make it to work
5. My car broke down next to a car that caught on fire and I had to push it out of the way, but I got a stomach hernia and I have to go to the doctor.
6. I saw a guy pushing his car out of the way of a burning car, and he got a stomach hernia, so I had to take him to the doctor.

Proverbs says you know you’re getting in trouble when you start spending your energy coming up w/ excuses rather than putting that energy into actually getting your work done.

Stage Three Implosion stage – This is where the “path of the couch” comes to an end.

Pro 24:30-34 Proverbs is telling us that when we become lazy in an area of our life it opens us up to destruction.

(ILL) The writer uses the illustration of a field. Each field was equally fertile... Each guy makes a different set of choices. One guy is lazy and does nothing to cultivate his field, while the other guy takes the initiative to plow, sow, and harvest.

T>> Right about now many of you are thinking what in the world does this sermon have to do with me... You need to take a peek at my lawn... it’s in order. I’ve never made an excuse for not coming to work... I don’t even take the sick days I’ve got.

In general, laziness isn’t an American problem... if anything we suffer from being workaholics. There’s not a lot of Homers at Casas.

Selective Homer-itis

Let me tell you what my concern is. It's "**Selective Homer-itis**", small compartments of life that are allowed to drift. Inner places that we settle for less than we should, because we want to divert that energy to another place.

I fear that we live in such a driven society... that many of us fall victim to driving so hard in one area, that w/o realizing it we neglect other important parts of our life.

- ✓ It's the dad who achieves promotion after promotion at work, shoots a 4 handicap on the golf course, but doesn't come close to meeting the emotional needs of his wife and kid's.
Someday... I'll spend more time w/ my kids... wrestling on the floor, helping them w/ home work... asking them about their day, their friends their lives.
- ✓ It's the working mom who manages to excel at work, and pours her heart into her home, but fails to develop any kind of deeper relationship w/ God.
Someday... I'll take time to pray... Go to a Bible Fellowship.
- ✓ It's the relational dynamos, who build countless relationships... they're always there for their friends, but they never seem to have time to invest anything into their own personal lives.
- ✓ It's the man or woman who just got real careless with their spending. Over spending a little here or there... until one day their money controls them more than they control it.

~ **Selective Homer-itis** is deadly. Because most of us are motivated in most areas of our lives it can be easy drift in some small but critical areas.

(Story)

Twelve years ago I got into an discussion w/ a dad. Successful, very likeable guy w/ lots of friends. Healthy and physically fit.

But when it came to building up his children emotionally and spiritually he was really an obstacle.

He had two kids that were getting used to existing w/o any emotional energy from dad... And at lunch He vented his frustration w/ me about his kid's not understanding his schedule.

I knew him well enough to have a stronger conversation with him. "What is it that you want your kids to understand...? Because the thing they will understand is what you do, more than what you say.

He pushed back, "Not you, come one I work hard, put food on the table, I vote, do jury duty... easy up on me."

"Great, so you've got like 9 out of 10, how does that help two kids. It's one thing to short change yourself, but being lazy in this area is hurting your kids.

~ You only need one area of laziness in high stakes area to do real damage.

(Story) Eli – Godly man, a great leader, he did so much for the nation of Israel, but he got **Homer-itis** in one area... parenting.
 His two boys grew up to be un-Godly abusive men. And by that time it was too late, the damage was done. *But he got 9 out of 10!!!*

Prepare your heart to listen to God.

Inventory Six areas of our lives. As I go through this I want you to listen to God, Try to discern God's prompting.

Family¹

Relational Diligence

One of the greatest legacy's you can leave is a legacy of love.

Parents – It's easy to slip into the keeper of the rules, the family police officer, or to just back off and let your kids go... It takes diligence to spend time w/ them, invest in them – to know when to push them, and when to guide them.

Teenagers – It's great to build social circles beyond your families... but take the time to know your family... Believe me, some day your family be there for you in ways you can't understand yet...

Grandparents – Your work is just beginning. You offer a relational investment that is unmatched... You give family depth, and relational richness

Friendships²

Maybe you're being strong willed over something that's hurting a friendship, maybe you're not taking the time to invest in some friendships

Rom 12:15

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”

Physical Health³

Now this is where I start meddling... I know some of you would prefer that I just skip this one... and I suppose I could... if I were adequately bribed... Ha, Ha

1 Cor 6:20

“You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

I'm not saying we should all become health nuts or inner the Iron Man Triathlon. But if the bulk of your daily nutritional value comes from things under gravy, or glazing... maybe you need to rethink your long term approach.

↳ I'm not saying to cut out Krespy Kremes, but maybe one, rather than an entire box.

If you're feeling there's a lack of fairness here

My spouse has a NASCAR level metabolism and good genes... while I'm stuck with the metabolism of a golf cart...

Well... It's not fare... deal w/ it! (It's the only body you've got)

If your doctor says you've got to change your diet to keep from having a heart attack... or to prevent diabetes from setting in... don't be a sluggard with your diet. (Don't cut your ministry short by dieing early)

Work place⁴

You may be taking plenty of initiative here... Hard work, on time, produce a lot

Q: Maybe the bigger issue here is, are we exhibiting inner character at work. In all you accomplish do you display, joy, honesty, and genuine care for those around you.

Q: Do you accomplish job with integrity?

Finances⁵

It doesn't matter if you have a little or a lot... being lazy with the handling of your money can have a very negative impact on your life.

Some of us who don't have a lot of the stuff can be tempted to say: "what's the use of getting all heated up about my little pile, because it doesn't seem like there's enough of it to worry about."

↳ If there's only a little of it, it should be stewarded w/ enormous attention.

- It matters to us personally. The Bible says the way we manage our money is an indicator of our spiritual maturity.
- It matters to our children. Our model will have an enormous impact on how our children derive their own financial values.
- It matters to those in need.

(ILL)

For the next few weeks we have some of our children's ministries collecting food for the poor. One bag of food may not be a super big deal to most in NW Tucson, my kids just want to eat the marshmallows out of the Sponge Bob serial. But for many poor, or struggling families... one bag of food is a big, big deal.

- It matters to the church. To the purposes of God. Our staff works real hard to take the money we receive from you and to steward it.

(Story)

I was talking w/ another pastor – "It must be nice working a big church w/ plenty of money to do whatever you want."

After I combed the hair on my neck back down... "It's not ours, the people of our church are giving that money as a tithe to God, and we are given the awesome responsibility to manage it on God's behalf for his kingdom."

↳ How you handle your money matters to God's Kingdom.

Luke 16:10-12

Jesus taught that the person who's faithful with a little will be entrusted w/ a lot.

Spiritual⁶

Jesus tells a parable of a man who's a business tycoon, and focused his whole life around building a successful career... while shunning the promptings of the Holy Spirit he comes across the mother of all business deals.

He knows better... but he does the deal he's set for life... and then boom... he dies.

Jesus calls him a fool. A fool, because he became rich with possession only to be dirt poor spiritually.