



[Proverbs 18:9](#)

(9) One who is slack in his work
is brother to one who destroys.

New International Version

Could we picture ourselves strapping on a bomb under our coats, walking into a crowded shopping mall, and blowing ourselves to smithereens along with several hundred [innocent victims](#)? Could we imagine ourselves as hostage takers, poised with a scimitar to decapitate a helpless prisoner? Could we picture ourselves cowardly donning ski masks and kidnapping women and children to use as human shields to accomplish our sinister objectives?

Most of us would loathe having to perform what these disgusting images portray, yet amazingly, we may have unwittingly brought such a judgment upon ourselves. [Proverbs 18:9](#) reveals that the slothful or lazy man "is a brother to him who is a great destroyer." In other words, the sluggard or lackadaisical person is just as culpable in the act of destruction as one who ignites a car bomb.

The word "destroyer" in this scripture is from the Hebrew *mashchiyth* (Strong's #4889) whose verb, *shachath* (Strong's #7843), denotes "to corrupt, spoil, ruin, mar, destroy." This verb appears 150 times in the Old Testament, and *mashchiyth*, twelve times, including describing the angel of death, "the destroyer," that [God](#) sent to devastate Egypt's firstborn ([Exodus 12:23](#)).

[Sin](#) and evil have an active and a passive component, often referred to as "sins of commission" and "sins of omission." Interestingly, the first two of the capital sins listed in [Revelation 21:8](#), "cowardly" and "unbelieving," are sins of omission calling for execution in the [Lake of Fire](#). Likewise, [Jesus](#) warns in [Luke 9:61](#) of the person who begins the [conversion](#) process but then reconsiders: "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the [kingdom of God](#)" ([Luke 9:62](#)).

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Proverbs 18:9 (<http://www.theberean.org>)
As much as we may think to the contrary, passivity and neglect can destroy as thoroughly as active terrorism or militant aggression.

— David F. Maas

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