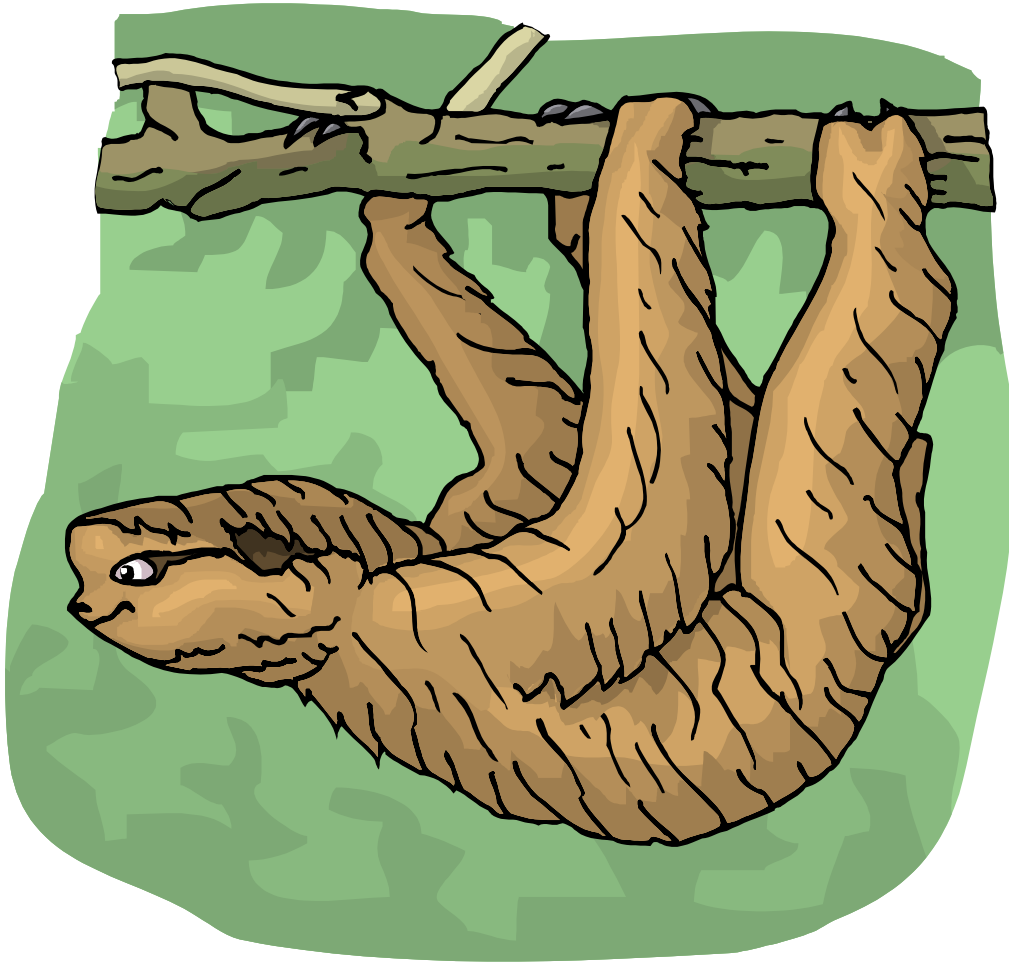


God's Animal Kingdom Classroom

Sloth



The sloth is an animal that lives almost entirely in trees. The sloth has become the symbol of laziness because it hardly moves at all and when it does, it moves very slowly. The sloth must move at this slow speed since its long claws do not allow it

to move about in trees quickly, nor can it walk on the ground easily. The sloth depends on slow speed to escape notice by its enemies.

The sloth has another marvelous way of hiding from its enemies. Its long hair will become covered in lichen so that when the sloth hangs upside down from a tree branch it looks like a clump of moss rather than an animal.

What can we learn from the sloth?

The sloth teaches us to live within the limitations God has given us. There are many people who are elderly or have health problems that prevent them from moving freely or quickly. There are many examples in the Bible of people who were crippled or handicapped in various ways. God used these people to teach us valuable lessons about how He loves and provides for us no matter how weak or strong we are. The Apostle Paul tells us in **2nd Corinthians 12:9**, *“(The Lord said) ‘My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in*

persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak then I am strong.”

The sloth is also used to teach us not to be lazy. The slow moving and lazy appearance of the sloth is used to teach us the dangers of being lazy and how we may lose all that we own by being lazy. The sloth is not a lazy animal, but God uses its slow speed to give us a visual picture of the lazy person. Even the weakness a person has can be used for good by God.

The sloth also teaches us to wrap ourselves in the protection that God gives us. The sloth's hair becomes covered in lichen which protects it from being seen by its fast moving enemies. We are encouraged to clothe ourselves in the righteousness that comes from Jesus for protection from Satan and sin. The Bible tells us in Romans 13:14, *“Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”* The Bible also tells us in Ephesians 6:11, *“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes... (which includes) the breastplate of righteousness.”* Just as the sloth is covered in lichen for protection from its

enemies, we are covered in righteousness for protection against our enemy Satan and sin.

The sloth really teaches us a lot about how to live with our weaknesses as we trust in God to help us. The sloth also teaches us how to clothe ourselves for protection against our enemies. The Sloth is pretty good for a “lazy” animal!

