

When are you going to get around to it? The challenge of procrastination

Intro: Years ago a friend of mine walked up to me in the music building with a big grin on his face and said, “Have you gotten around to it?” What? “Have you gotten around to it?” In my confusion, I begin to think, “What did I promise Rick that I hadn’t done?” He opened us his hand to show a small wooden coin with the word “tuit” on it! Maybe somebody played the same joke on you.

One thing is for sure. All of us have had a problem at times “getting around to it.”

Several years ago one of the members a congregation where I was working handed me a little note with three words, “sin of procrastination”. She said I want you to preach a sermon on that. And I said; I sure will and I did...2 years later!

Almost every day I see something that I've been planning on doing for quite a while, but never could get around to doing. How about you?

It's just easy to procrastinate--to postpone, to put off until tomorrow what we should have done yesterday! The consequences of doing that may sometimes be harmless; but spiritually it is extremely dangerous!

Why do we procrastinate?

We are afraid of change.

We are comfortable with familiarity. We get used to where we are even if sometimes we really don't want to be there.

We tend to resist work!

Mark Twain once quipped, “I do not like work, even when another person does it!” Change requires an investment and mental, physical, and intellectual energy. Procrastination requires none of these.

We live under the “tyranny of the urgent”!

Because important changes are often crowded out by the legitimate but less important demands of life.

We lack motivation.

The first four are the excuses we give; but the reason we procrastinate is because we lack conviction or courage to do right.

Is procrastination a sin? It is not found in any sin catalogue of the Bible; yet the idea of postponement is repeatedly condemned in principle. If procrastination is not a sin, at least it makes us sin.

Why procrastination is wrong and dangerous!

It presumes what we do not have—another day!

Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we shall go to such and such a city, and .spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your lfe will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes

away. (James 4:13-14)

We don't know that we'll have another day; yet procrastination presumes that we have plenty of time to do later what we should be doing now.

It creates a false sense of security.

We almost begin to think that there will be a tomorrow because we have decreed another tomorrow. Paul was concerned that the Corinthian had postponed making needed corrections and consequently it was possible that they had received God's grace in vain. He urged them to make correction not "someday", but "today". *And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you"; behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:1-2)* We hear those verses often read to encourage sinners to obey the gospel; but Paul wrote that to the saved to encourage them to make needed changes.

It is essentially disobedience to God.

Good intentions may cause us to fail to see the essential wickedness of procrastination. The truth is knowledge and intentions are not sufficient before God.

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

Whenever we are untrue to the leading of our conscience we sin!

But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

Or as the old saying goes, The road to hell is paved with good intentions!

It makes our lives become a force for evil rather than good (To our friends, fellow-workers, family).

"He who is not with Me is against Me," and he who does not gather with Me scatters. (Matthew 12:30)

Don't we all want our lives to count for the Master rather than be a voice against Him?! But if we procrastinate obedience we actually become a force for evil, if only by failing to do what we know is right.

It hardens us to the need for change!

But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still cal/ed "Today, "lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:13)

The scary truth is that the more we postpone doing the right thing the harder it is to change. Attitudes and actions gain momentum with life.

The more we do a thing the harder it is to change it. The devil knows that if we will find a way to ignore the pleadings of our conscience, he has nothing to worry about! His has a tighter grip upon us than before.

It makes spiritual actors out of us.

Procrastinators think faithfully and act faithlessly! We speak of our

intentions to do right; but then fail to live out those intentions. Such a faith is dead!

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead (James 2:26)

And such faith makes spiritual actors out of us! Dee Bowman made this observation, “The man who realizes his responsibility and continually ignores it, even if “only” by postponement, may be the biggest hypocrite of all”! Ouch!

It robs us of the blessings of serving God now!

We cannot have every spiritual blessing without submission to Christ. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3)*

By procrastination we cheat ourselves out of the many opportunities to be blessed and to share our blessings with others. Cf. Laura’s remarks about Art who waited so long to become a Christian. For so many years, I could not talk with him about spiritual things.

Conclusion: Each of us needs to work to close the gap between our talk and our walk. God will not settle for less. We cannot be saved with anything less. Don’t put off what you really in your heart want to do. You can take charge of your life and make it count!

In Ac. 24:25, Paul preached to Felix. His heart was stirred. Had he been in church his heart might have raced a bit and tears might have come to his eyes. He might even have even thought within himself, “I’m not rejecting the gospel; I’m just not ready to make a commitment”. And so he said, “Go thy way for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you”. Two years later Felix had not found time. So far as we know he never found time and died lost! He had his chance; but he postponed his decision. God is giving you a chance. Do something about it before you lose it!