

Procrastination

I have put off writing this article because I know I am going to find it painful correction.

Most of us feel we are pressed for time, there is just not enough hours in each day to accomplish all we feel we should.

We are afraid to be alone with our thoughts, because those thoughts inevitably turn to things we should be doing.

Many of such problems are caused by procrastination, the habit of needlessly putting things off until the last moment.

Procrastination is a subtle disease that we sometimes fail to recognise an attack of it.

We are down with a case of procrastination if we:-

- Regret not having accomplished anything of real worth by the end of the day, even though there was nothing really stopping us from completing a long list of tasks.
- Deliberately working slow at something, planning to speed up later to finish it.
- Delay putting a great idea into action, telling ourselves we will start tomorrow.
- Find ourselves running needless errands instead of getting down to the important task at hand.

Some people are hindered by procrastination more than others, but everyone is guilty of it sometime.

Shrugging our shoulders and saying “*that’s the way I am*” or trying to forget about it are **not** solutions.

Successful people overcome such weaknesses as procrastination.

Revelation 2:7 [NIV] “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*”

Christians are expected to overcome weaknesses to receive a reward from the Creator God.

Procrastination deprives us of any satisfaction and peace of mind

No problem is ever solved by tossing it into a tray marked “*pending*” or “*do it later*”.

Years ago Edward Young wrote “*procrastination is the thief of time*” but I think it is much more than that.

Procrastination is the thief of our self-respect, and deprives us of the full realisation of our ambitions and hopes.

Procrastination is very damaging to our maturing as Christians.

Do we “*put off*” prayer and Bible study because we “*don’t have the time*”?

What does it matter if we don’t write that letter or telephone a friend who needs encouragement as they face a trial in their lives.

Tomorrow is always another day we tell ourselves.

That is exactly what one person said whose house burnt down the month after they had let their insurance lapse.

James 4:13-17 [NIV] “Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. **Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.**”

What causes procrastination?

Procrastination may in a few instances be the result of illness, but we cannot make it an excuse in most cases, only if we have very poor health.

Some chronic procrastinators had parents who did more for them than was necessary.

Perhaps their parents picked up things after them and did things for them that they were asked to do.

Thus the children never learned that there is a penalty for putting off their duties, someone else will always do the work!!

We are all inclined to postpone doing things that are distasteful or difficult.

We would rather “*potter around*” with unimportant matters so we have an excuse for not doing the unpleasant jobs.

But none of us can escape our quota of disagreeable tasks.

Ignoring jobs that must be done will **not** make them fade away.

Or as my wife tells me “*don’t put this one at the bottom of the pile.*”

Writers [ouch!], composers, business executives and other people engaged in creative work sometimes claim they are “*waiting for inspiration*” to do something.

As a writer I’ve found, however, that the best way to gain “*inspiration*” is to place a blank sheet of paper in front of me and hold a pen in my hand and after writing the subject title at the top of the page **not** allowing myself to get out of my chair until “*inspiration*” flows.

Other people hide procrastination in a maze of “*red tape*”, protesting that they must first consider the problem from every conceivable angle and think of all the possibilities before they do anything.

To put off a decision while gathering pertinent information is wise, but be sure you are not just stalling.

Great leaders deliberate with caution but act boldly and decisively.

Overcoming inertia

So how do we overcome procrastination?

Begin in a small way, be orderly in whatever you do.

Write down what you want to achieve physically, mentally and spiritually. Then act!

Schedule your time.

Estimate how long you need to perform each of your tasks and add some to cover unforeseen delays.

Number each task in order of importance.

Then wade through them.

Be punctual, start the task at the beginning of the time allotted to it.

Immature people excuse themselves for being late by saying they have “*no sense of time*”. If this were true they would be early as often as they are late!!

Remember that fulfilling our personal responsibilities is **not** merely a matter of doing the things we should, but also doing them when we should, whether we feel like it or not.

Concentrate on the job at hand, but also look ahead and plan what needs to be done next.

If we do this at the end of each day, we will be able to look back at a number of accomplishments.

This will give us a sense of satisfaction, and will encourage us to do even greater things the next day.

Once you make a decision, follow it through and carry out the task involved until it is finished.

There is no greater method for getting things done than to start and refusing to stop until the task is finished.

Don't defend or find excuses for procrastination.

By constructive thought and energetic application we can eliminate procrastination from our lives.

We will then accomplish much more than we ever have before.

Happiness and a fuller, more enjoyable life will be our reward.

It worked!! I didn't procrastinate and it feels really great.