

## Why Do People Procrastinate?

Everyone has procrastinated about something? Whether it be yard work, house cleaning, getting the oil changed in the car, or doing laundry, everyone procrastinates. Procrastinating about these ordinary matters in life is not that important, but we had better take care that we do not procrastinate about life's more serious circumstances. This involves the greater danger. There are four reasons why people procrastinate regarding obeying the gospel and then engaging in the Lord's work.

First, we might be lazy. Laziness is defined as, "slow moving; sluggish; resistant to work or exertion; disposed to idleness." In contrast, the Bible teaches us to be diligent. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." When we find something to do, God says we best get to it. Romans 12:11 says that we are not to be "slothful in business," but we are to be "fervent in spirit." We need to all work for the Lord for the night is coming when we can work no more (John 9:4-5).

Second, we might be distracted by worldly affairs. These worldly affairs might be our work or it might be what we choose for entertainment and recreation. These might be so engrossing that we neglect the work of the Lord. In contrast, the Bible teaches us to prioritize. Jesus, in rebuking Martha, said, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42; cp. Matthew 6:33). Instead of using all of our time for carnal pursuits, we should be redeeming the time (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Third, we might have a fear of persecution. We may not be able to stand up to family or friends, so the best alternative (we think) is to procrastinate. In contrast, the Bible teaches us to fear God: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). If we do not love and fear the Lord above all others, we are not worthy to be called His disciple (Matthew 10:37).

Fourth, we might think we have plenty of time to obey later. Time seems to be the one commodity that we think will never be depleted. In contrast, the Bible teaches us to obey the gospel now. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." No one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:57-62).

Now that we have seen the more common reasons why people procrastinate concerning their service to the Lord, perhaps it would now be advantageous to examine four dangers of delay. Every procrastination involves consequences which must be paid.

First, we simply do not know what tomorrow will bring. Ecclesiastes 6:12 says, “For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?” Can you really depend on what will happen tomorrow?

Second, one may lose the desire to act. This is otherwise known as searing the conscience. Paul warned of this when he wrote, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron ...” (1 Timothy 4:1-2). Some only have a short period in their life when they will consider the gospel. Once that time passes, they may never think of it again, and that is so sad. Will you harden your heart today or will you let it be molded by the gospel (Hebrews 3:12-15)?

Third, one may be incapable of performing these duties later. Ecclesiastes 9:12 says, “For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.” I have personally known of people who realize their condition shortly before they die, but are physically unable to obey the Lord’s commands because of infirmity — they waited too late (cp. James 4:14-16).

Fourth, the Lord may return and we are unprepared for the day of judgment. Matthew 24:36 says, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” It would truly be a sad occasion to find the door shut and not be opened to let us enter (Matthew 25:10-13).

Not getting the laundry done is one thing, but failing to obey the Lord is quite another. Will you put off procrastinating and turn to the Lord today?

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