

June 21, 2023, Bible Study - Procrastination Part 1

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Wednesday, June 21, 2023 – Spring Semester

Queens Chapel UMC

7410 Muirkirk Road * Beltsville, MD 20705

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler

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### **Facing the Giant of Procrastination**

#### **"The Danger of Putting Off Till Another Day"** (Part 1 of 3)

#### **Acts 24:22-27 (NLT)**

22 At that point Felix, who was quite familiar with the Way, adjourned the hearing and said, "Wait until Lysias, the garrison commander, arrives. Then I will decide the case." 23 He ordered an officer to keep Paul in custody but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to visit him and take care of his needs.

24 A few days later Felix came back with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 As he reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment, Felix became frightened. "Go away for now," he replied. "When it is more convenient, I'll call for you again." 26 He also hoped that Paul would bribe him, so he sent for him quite often and talked with him.

27 After two years went by in this way, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And because Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jewish people, he left Paul in prison.

- Procrastination kept Felix and his wife Drusilla from becoming Christians.
  - **Who was Felix familiar with? (Verse 22)**
  - **How did Paul witness to Felix and Drusilla? (Verses 24-25)**
  - **How did Felix respond to Paul? (Verse 25)**
  - **What did Felix hope Paul would do? Why? (Verse 26)**

- **How long did this interchange between Paul and Felix take place?**

Fill in the blank:

**“If I knew then what I know now I wouldn’t have waited or put off so long to \_\_\_\_\_”**

### **In this lesson:**

- 1) We’ll define Procrastination
- 2) We’ll explore the Five Personality types of Procrastinators

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### **1) What is Procrastination?**

- To avoid or put off needlessly an action that needs to be taken.
- The habit of delaying what needs to be done, which results in both inner and outer repercussions
  - *Inner repercussions* range from feeling discouraged and dejected to struggling with guilt, distress, and despair
  - *Outer repercussions* range from missed deadlines and/or missed appointments to lost employment and lost relationships

#### **Proverbs 18:9 (NIV)**

“One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.

- Procrastinators are pictured in Scripture as slothful, sluggish, and lazy.

#### **Proverbs 6:9**

“How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?”

Procrastination can be clearly seen in the *Parable of the Talents*. Even though the word procrastination itself is not found in Scripture, many

characteristics, causes, and cures are in plain view throughout the Word of God.

### **Matthew 25:14-30 (NLT)**

14 "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. 15 He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

16 "The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. 17 The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. 18 But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money.

19 "After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. 20 The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.'

21 "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

22 "The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.'

23 "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

24 "Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. 25 I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.'

26 "But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate, 27 why didn't

you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.'

28 "Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. 29 To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. 30 Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

## 2) What is the difference between Procrastination vs. Laziness?

- Procrastinators are not always lazy. Laziness is one cause of procrastination.
- A lazy person is negligent in handling his/her responsibilities because he/she chose not to do what needed to be done.

One the other hand:

- One may be considered a highly productive person but in no way lazy.
- He/she can still procrastinate by failing to start a task on time or not accurately predicting how long the project will take. In other words, this type of procrastinator desires to work and yet delays
- Whereas the lazy procrastinator lacks desire and refuses to work

### **Proverbs 15:9**

"The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway."

## 3) The Five Personality Types of Unintentional Procrastinators

Professionals believe procrastinators who don't want to procrastinate typically do not understand themselves at all, especially when they repeatedly miss self-imposed and other imposed deadlines.

The truth is, they feel like failures and they browbeat themselves over their lack of discipline and irresponsibility in failing to meet time commitments. In other words, they procrastinate not by design, but by default.

Therefore, this negative behavior is an outgrowth of [five unintentional procrastinator types](#). Read each one and think about how you would help each individual.

- 1. **Perfectionist Patty**

- Overly consumed with what she does—not who she is.
- She works under unrealistic standards she set for herself
- She feels she must perform perfectly
- She focuses on performance-based acceptance—*"I must do this perfectly, anything short of perfection is failure"*
- She engages in self-deception, she works hard. Prerequisites must be in place—*"I can't start until I have everything right."*

**Why does Patty procrastinate?**

**What does Patty not understand about God's grace?**

**2 Corinthians 12:9**

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

- 2. **Poor Self-Worth Paul**

- Overly controlled by what others think
- Paul struggles to get started on a project because he views himself so poorly

- Since he feels unacceptable by others, he assumes nothing will be acceptable even if it's on time
- Paul's goals are unattainable because he continuously talk negatively to himself—he says. *"Why try?"*
- When Paul makes a mistake, rather than learning from it and persevering to its completion, he simply gives up— *"I feel so insignificant, so incapable, so incompetent, so worthless."*

**Paul lacks God's perspective in his \_\_\_\_\_ ?**

**Paul can't see what about himself?**

**Paul doesn't realize that God not only created him, but God also considers him His \_\_\_\_\_.**

### **Ephesians 2:10**

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

- 3. **Fear-Based Freddie**
  - Overly afraid of people
  - Shies away from unknown circumstances instead of investigating and facing it.
  - Freddie runs away or sidesteps responsibility in order to feel safe.
  - When faced with an assignment, he feels anxious— *what if I make a mistake?*

- Freddie's fear paralyzes him from following through with a task because he expects a negative reaction from others.
- Freddie's procrastination is focused not only on his own performance—which he perceives as flawed—but also on the opinions of others.
- Freddie procrastinates to avoid conflict—*"If I put it off, I won't have to deal with it"*

### What would you tell Freddie?

### What Scripture would you direct him to that will help him to trust in God?

#### **Psalms 27:**

"1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—so why should I be afraid?

The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?

2 When evil people come to devour me when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall.

3 Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid.

Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident."

- 4. **Lack-of-Goals Larry**
  - Overly dependent on others for decision making
  - Larry has no clear direction for his life thereby having problems setting goals, making decisions, and staying focused

- His lack of focus makes it difficult for him to set goals—*"I don't know why I'm doing what I'm doing?"*
- Larry feels lost because he has no direction for his life— *"Why start the task when it really doesn't make any difference."*
- Larry procrastinates because he says to himself, *"I need to wait until I can figure out what I really want to do."*

### How would you help Larry to become productive?

### What does Larry need to learn?

#### **Titus 3:14**

"Our people must learn to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be unproductive."

- 5. **Overwhelmed Carolyn**
  - Overly committed to being a people pleaser—her work area looks like a disaster zone
  - Someone is coming by in five minutes but she is already 10 minutes late for another meeting
  - Carolyn works feverishly but finds no way to get on top of it all— *"I'm doing the best I can but there's no way I can finish on time."*
  - Carolyn is ill-equipped for handling tasks—*"My life feels out of control."*
  - Carolyn procrastinates because of being overloaded— *"I just need to work harder and faster."*

**Carolyn procrastinates because she feels responsible for more than she can handle. Is it right for her to feel this way?**



There are three things for Carolyn to learn how to do. What do you think they are?

A) Set Boundaries

B) Ask for Help

C) Prioritize her time

**Ecclesiastes 8:5-6**

5 Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.

6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a person may be weighed down by misery.

**Next Week**

Is it ever right to procrastinate intentionally and postpone working a task?

Did Jesus ever intentionally procrastinate or delay?