



LIVING LIBERATED

Are we bound forever to vices, bad habits, addictions, and other sins that shackle and put us in bondage?

Today we can learn HOW to free ourselves from that bondage by the power of Jesus Christ!

Steve Flatt

FREEDOM FROM PROCRASTINATION

Freedom From Procrastination

Procrastination... millions of lives are less than they can be or should be spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally, etc., because they perpetually procrastinate. How do we get freedom from procrastination?

Procrastination is a universal problem that most of us put off dealing with. Most of us know what to do but we just tend to put it off and after a while, it becomes our lifestyle. Are you a procrastinator? Do you constantly put things off? Does this little poem describe you? Procrastination is my sin, It only brings me sorrow. I know that I should give it up, In fact, I will, tomorrow.

This lesson discusses the causes, costs, and cure for procrastination.

Causes

1. Indecision.

Have you ever been in a restaurant, the waiter comes over and you make him go away because you can't make up your mind? Or, have you ever perused the menu, order and after the entrees arrives say, "I wish I had selected what you ordered." Indecision makes us procrastinate, makes us put off buying a car, choosing a college, or changing jobs.

2. Fear.

When I'm afraid I put things off. Has anyone ever postponed a visit to the dentist you know you need? Anyone put off needed surgery? Have you put off sharing your faith with a co-worker? Why? It's because you're afraid. Fear makes us procrastinate.

2. Perfectionism.

Perfectionism tends to make us procrastinate. Solomon said, "Whoever watches the wind, will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap." (Ecclesiastes 11:4) In other words, if you wait till everything is just right, the clouds and barometric pressure, you'll never get it done. The Living Bible paraphrases that verse: "If you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done." Amen. Perfectionism will cause procrastination.

4. Anger.

Procrastination may be a way of getting back at people that we don't like, or people we don't want to please.

Have any of you who are parents ever told your children "Turn off the TV, wash your hands, and come to the table to eat?" Two minutes later you repeat, "Turn off the TV, wash your hands, and come to the table to eat" Five minutes later, "...". Why is that? Is it because the show is so good, or kids are masters at procrastinating to let you know that they are wanting their independence?

Does anybody have a mate that you've been asking to do a certain thing for months, and they're not doing it? One reason may be that they are resisting your control. Procrastination is sometimes a form of passive resistance. It may be caused by anger.

5. Laziness.

The most frequent of all causes is pure and simple, laziness. Proverbs uses a word to refer to a lazy person; "slug" and refers to a slow crawling mollusk of which we are well familiar. "The sluggard (lazy) desires and gets nothing, but he who is diligent will prosper." (Proverbs 13:4)

Our generation has a low tolerance for sacrifice and pain. I can remember when my great-grandfather worked diligently out in the field right up into his early 80's. By contrast, our "couch potato" culture loves the word, "easy." If it's easy, I like it, if it's hard, I don't. Have you ever seen how often the word, "easy" is used in advertising? Easy to use, easy to apply, easy to get. Would these books become bestsellers; "Ten Difficult Steps to Change Your Life" or "Seven Gut-Wrenching Ways to Get Into Shape"? Who would buy them? We want it easy. Two common misconceptions about procrastination are (a) "It's easier to avoid this problem than to face it" and (b) "It will be easier to handle tomorrow." No, the longer it is delayed the more difficult. It's rarely easier tomorrow. **Cost**

1. Procrastination creates obstacles.

"The way of the sluggard (the lazy procrastinator) is blocked with thorns." (Proverbs 15:19) Procrastination always makes the problem worse. What happens when you put off that leaky roof, and put it off, and put it off? You need a new roof! Has anyone ever had a major engine repair because you've put off checking or changing the oil in your car? Procrastination turns a problem into a crisis. It creates obstacles.

2. Procrastination wastes opportunities.

"A sluggard does not plow in season, so at harvest time, he finds nothing." (Proverbs 20:4) The procrastinator doesn't take advantage of the opportunity to plant, so he doesn't reap. When opportunity knocks, open the door.

John Greenleaf Whittier said, "The saddest words of tongue in men are, 'It might have been.'" "If only" are two of the most useless words in the English language. While we are postponing, life is passing. Procrastination wastes opportunity.

3. Procrastination hurts other people.

Laziness keeps us from being loving. Love requires commitment and effort. A lot of people don't want to exert that effort.

It's easier to be lazy, than it is to be loving. I can't tell you how many marriages break up simply because two people are lazy. They put off doing what they know they should do. I've heard couples sitting in my office and say, "I know what I should do, but I just can't." No, it isn't you can't, it's you won't. You think you'll put it off, and it will get better.

People who procrastinate hurt their children. Lazy parents produce problem children. It creates problems with your children if you put off (a) teaching them about the facts of life, when you know they need it, (b) discipline to build character and responsibility and (c) postpone another family vacation where family bonding occurs and fond memories are developed. You're destroying your children. Procrastination really does hurt other people.

Cures

1. Quit making excuses.

"The sluggard says, 'There's a lion outside', or 'I'll be murdered in the street.'" (Proverbs 22:13) If you missed the point of that proverb, let me make it clear. How many lions do you suppose roam the Land of Israel, in the days of Solomon? Solomon is saying the procrastinator comes up with all kinds of excuses. Everybody else has excuses, but I have reasons. I ran across something this week that I thought was great. It was a list of excuses that people had submitted to insurance companies to collect for accidents. One of them said, "The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him." How about this one? "I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and drove over the embankment." Another fellow said, "In my attempt to kill a fly, I drove into a telephone pole." I like this one, "I've been driving my car for 40 years when I fell asleep and had an accident." Well, no wonder, that's a long time. How's

this guy, talking about an excuse, trying to put responsibility somewhere else. "The telephone pole was approaching fast; I attempted to swerve off its path when it hit my front end." My favorite is this last one, "The pedestrian had no idea which way to go, so I ran over him."

What's your excuse? What is it that leads you to say, "One of these days..."? The Bible says, "The lazy man is full of excuses." Benjamin Franklin said "People who are good at making excuses are seldom good at anything else." The number one excuse people use for procrastinating "When things settle down, I'll _____" (You fill in the blank.) I've got news for all of you. Things will never settle down. They will only settle down when the Lord comes again.

2. Stop stalling.

For the procrastinator "One of these days," is "none of these days." Stop stalling, do it today. Start now.

If you tend to procrastinate, these three words will change your life. "Do it now." Write that down. Take a magic marker, write on piece of cardboard; put it on your refrigerator, bathroom mirror, desk or on your car visor. Have it staring you in the face, "Do it now!" Every time you begin to think, "I'll get to that later," look those three words in the face and do it now!

NASA tells us that the greatest amount of energy expended is getting the rocket off the pad. Once it gets into orbit, it's a cinch. Stop stalling, get started and if it cannot be finished today, do part of it. Do 10 minutes today, 10 minutes tomorrow, and 10 minutes the next day. See how much you will accomplish in six short weeks. It will astound you.

3. Start scheduling.

"Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house." (Proverbs 24:27) In other words, set your priorities, what needs to be done first, and schedule a time to do them. You don't ever have time - you must make time!

Schedule the important and the unimportant. Schedule time for personal and family Bible study, time to be with your wife, additional time for family and schedule time to be alone (your quiet time). If you don't commit time for things, they simply won't get done. However, just scheduling something is not sufficient; you must work your schedule and more than once per day. On rare occasions when waiting on someone or for something, it may be impossible to continue working on your top priority task. Then work on a less important task until the obstacle is removed or resolved on the top priority task.

"Make the most of every opportunity." (Ephesians 5:16) There was a famous author who wrote his first book while he was riding on the subway in New York, and he made the most of every opportunity. Another man memorized a thousand Bible verses at stop lights. That's making the most of every opportunity! Wise men and women plan, schedule and execute.

4. Face your fears.

Remember, the main cause of procrastination is fear. When you're avoiding something, you're probably afraid of it. Identify it and face it. The greatest fear is the fear of failure. That's why we put more things off than anything else. We're afraid we'll fail. Folks, just face up to it, fear isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of humanity. Mark Twain said, "Courage isn't the absence of fear, it's moving on in spite of your fear." If you flee from your fears, they grow bigger. If you face them, they grow smaller.

There are two things to ask yourself when facing a fear: (a) "What's the worst thing that can happen?" Usually, it's not nearly as bad as you think and (b) Recite Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Recite that over about three times, it becomes easier to tackle whatever it is in front of you knowing God strengthens.

5. Focus on the reward for your efforts.

There are very few things in life are easy. Life is tough. You have to persevere to see the reward. Concentrate on the gain beyond the pain. Concentrate on how good you'll feel when you finish the task.

Here is a little illustration. When children come home from school, if they sit down and complete their homework first, they will enjoy the rest of the afternoon and they will enjoy their evening more because undone homework is not hanging over their head.

It's the philosophy "you can pay now and play later, or you can play now and pay later."

The principle is, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at a proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9) The wrong question is "what do I feel like doing". The right question is "what does God want me to do". It's only a very immature person who lives his life by his feelings. Everything above leads us to the following two questions.

What is it that needs changing in your life?

- Is it "one of these days I'm going to become a Christian"?
- Is it "one of these days I'm going to get involved in the ministry God has assigned to me?"
- Is it "one of these days I'm going to read and study the Bible daily?"
- Is it "one of these days I'm going to quit drinking, be a better parent, spend some time with the wife and kids or whatever I've have been putting off that I know needs to be done?"

What is it going to take to get you in gear?

God says, "I want to help." The biggest mistake in life is to postpone or delay the opportunity for Jesus Christ to change you and to save you.

" I don't know of anybody who doesn't eventually want to get their life right with God. They say, "One of these days, I'm going to make that commitment. One of these days, I'm going to get my life in order. One of these days, I'm going to obey God by repenting of my sins, confessing my belief that Jesus is God, to be buried for remission of my sins in water baptism and to arise a new Christian cleansed being forgiven of all my sins." Why not now? A good intention is only procrastination. You know the old saying, and it's true: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Why not today
Amazing Grace Lesson #1200

Questions:

1. The Causes of Procrastination.

- Indecision
- Fear
- Perfectionism
- Anger
- Laziness
- All the above

2. The Cost of Procrastination.

- it creates obstacles Prov. 25:19
 - It wastes opportunity (Prov. 20:4)
 - It hurts people
 - All the above
3. The Cure.
- Quit making excuses
 - Stop stalling
 - Start scheduling
 - Focus on the reward of your efforts
 - All the above
4. A procrastinator's favorite expression is "one of these days I" whereas God states "Today is the Day."
- True
 - False
5. What is the most important thing generally postponed by a procrastinator?
- Expressing their feelings of love to a family member
 - Telling someone of their sorrow asking forgiveness
 - Salvation, obedience to God for forgiveness

Answers to Questions

1. All the Above
2. All the Above
3. All the Above
4. True
5. Salvation, obedience to God for forgiveness