

“The Quiet Giant of PROCRASTINATION”
by Rom A. Pegram (8/23/20)

A scholar once surveyed the scriptures to discover the most significant words in the entire Bible. He wanted to find the saddest word, the happiest word, the most emotional word, and so on. When he came around to the Bible’s most dangerous word, he identified it as ... *tomorrow*...

The word is a thief, he said, that robs dreamers of their dreams ... and the talented of their greatest achievements. It keeps men and women from coming to Christ and discovering the kind of life God longs for them to have. That prince of preachers, Charles Spurgeon, once agreed in this way: “Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow!” he wrote. “Alas, tomorrow never comes! It is in no calendar except the almanac of fools.”

As we begin today, let me ask you this question, as we think about that incredible GIANT in our lives called ... *procrastination*: ARE YOU SOMEWHAT OF A PROCRASTINATOR ... AND, IF SO (IF YOU ARE BRAVE ENOUGH TO ADMIT IT), WHAT AREA OF YOUR LIFE HAS THIS GIANT AFFECTED?

As I began to study the GIANT of procrastination, I approached it—at least at first—with the thought of being ‘an innocent bystander’ when it came to ... ‘those who procrastinate.’ That wasn’t me. I’m not a procrastinator! That’s so and so. *That’s not me*... Surely, I’m not guilty of procrastination! And I’m sure all of us can think of some family member who’ve we’ve been calling a procrastinator for years...

But, I began to study the topic—this GIANT we’re all tempted to face some time in our lives, and it finally became clear to me. Folks, *just ask me how long it takes me to make a dentist appointment ... even when I know that I’m past due!* **If we’re honest, we’re all procrastinators ... of some sort.** Maybe we’re not all *chronic procrastinators*, but we all *procrastinate* from time to time. It’s a GIANT we all must face at some point in our lives...

That being said, let me now say this: IT’S A DANGEROUS GIANT! Out of all the things I could’ve covered—Giants that threaten our lives from time to time, why on earth would I choose something like procrastination? ‘Because ... *it’s dangerous*. I believe it might just be one of the #1 causes for this little thing in life called ‘regret.’ So, with all that in mind, let me share with you today 3 ways procrastination can be dangerous to our lives:

PROCRASTINATION ROBBS US OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE. Not just service for service’s sake—service because we are good humanitarians ... but, service whose actions are eternal—*service that makes an eternal difference in both our lives as well as others*. Procrastination robs us of these opportunities ... and that can cause *deep regret* in our lives (or at the end of our lives). It’s been said that ... “(Use of) Time is the ballot that records your vote on what matters in life.” Folks, what would Jesus have to say about our use of time? How strongly did he feel about the issue of time-wasting? Listen to our scripture for today (Luke 9:59-62, NLT)...

He said to another person, “Come, follow me.” The man agreed, but he said, “Lord, first let me return home and bury my father.”⁶⁰ But Jesus told him, “Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God.”⁶¹ Another said, “Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family.”⁶² But Jesus told him, “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”

Some might say, “What has Jesus got against funerals?” Or, “Why would Jesus not want us to communicate with our families, letting them know if we’re going to leave for a while?” Here’s a little insight...

Charles Hummel once wrote a powerful little book called “Tyranny of the Urgent.” It was all about our tendencies to put those things which are urgent in life ... ahead of those things that are important. You’ve heard the old saying, “The squeaky wheel gets greased.” But, is that always right? Should we always put those things that are urgent in our lives ... ahead of what’s most important? Should we spend our lives acting ... or reacting? What would Jesus say to that?

Folks, I believe what Jesus was saying to those he confronted in the Luke passage ... was this: *they should always be aware of our tendency to put the big things aside for the small ones.* He’s making a point here that a commitment to him; will reprioritize our life’s values ... radically ... and effective immediately!

Procrastination—not being immediately obedient when Jesus nudges us to do something with our lives—can rob us of God’s very best ... for our lives and for the lives of others we affect...

I can’t help but think of the 3 disciples who went with Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray (Matthew 26:36-46). Jesus told the disciples he had a sorrow unto death itself; he implored them to stay with him and pray, but what happened? He checked on them 3 different times ... and were they interceding on his behalf ... supporting him with their prayers? No...

And I really believe all of us have tendencies, in life—in our walk with Christ, to be just like those disciples on that night: **WE REALLY DO DESIRE TO SERVE GOD THE RIGHT WAY ... BUT OUR HUMANITY KEEPS GETTING IN THE WAY ...** and it robs us of opportunities for making an eternal difference in this world—of leaving an eternal legacy, not just a temporal one! We need to learn what the disciples needed to learn on that night in the garden: We need to learn to hear God’s still small voice, particularly as it pertains to the immediate use of our time. Next...

PROCRASTINATION ROBS US OF OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SUCCESSFUL. I don’t want to spend a lot of time on this point but suffice it to say ... *there is no successful person in this world who is a procrastinator!* One of the great secrets of success is simply taking each moment as it comes and investing it the best way possible. Study the stories of men and women who’ve found success in this life ... and you’ll inevitably discover that they were ... *people who took time seriously!*

Charles Schwab (then Chairman of Bethlehem Steel) hired a management consultant by the name of Ivy Lee to come in and help him (and his company) to be more productive. Lee came in, smiled, and gave Schwab an underwhelming simplistic plan that went like this: He said, “Each evening, write down the six most important things you should do the following day. List them in order of importance. The following morning come into work and do whatever tops the list. When you’ve finished that one, move to the next one down” and so forth... Schwab asked Lee how much he was going to charge for such advice. Lee replied, “Use the plan strictly for several months. Then you decide on the value of the plan ... and send me a check.” Eventually, Lee received a check for \$25,000 from Schwab, for that simple piece of advice—a good bit of money at the beginning of the 20th century!

It’s all about time, isn’t it? Everything is composed of time—your career success ... your marriage and your family success ... and your relationship with God. *It’s all measured in time.* Will the time chart of your life please you when you get to the end—to give an account of it? Here’s the next thing procrastination does...

PROCRASTINATION ROBS US OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SALVATION. I want you to take a quick look at Acts 24 with me: Governor Felix, was in charge at Caesarea (by the Sea) and decided to hear Paul out when he was arrested and transferred from Jerusalem down to the coast. He heard him out ... in front of his Jewish accusers ... and ‘brought the hearing to a close,’ saying that he would decide the case soon. God has a way of turning the tables, however—that’s the power of God’s Spirit ... as it works in and through people’s lives. Felix, and his wife Drusilla (a Jewish daughter of one of the Herods) wanted to hear more about what Paul believed, so they sent for him ... and listened ... as he began to talk with them about things like ... righteousness ... and self-control ... and finally judgment. After awhile, instead of Paul on trial, it seemed as though Governor Felix and his wife, Drusilla, were on trial—especially when Paul got to the part about ‘judgment.’ Listen, now, to Acts 24... **(READ ACTS 24:24-25 NOW!)** In other words, ‘someday’ ... don’t call me; I’ll call you... You get the idea... ***Procrastination will rob us of opportunities for salvation—either ours ... or others...***

Procrastinators, folks, are *those who misuse time...* As we close, let me share with you the 2 greatest mistakes made by those who misuse time:

- **Procrastination does not take into account the uncertainty of life...**

Tomorrow ... is an uncertain proposition ... isn’t it? Proverbs 27:1 (NLT) says, “Don’t brag about tomorrow, since you don’t know what the day will bring.” Again, folks, *tomorrow ... is the most dangerous word in the Bible!*

The Apostle James has something to say about that, too in his 4th Chapter, vv. 13-14: “Look here, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.’¹⁴ How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little

while, then it's gone." So, *here James is saying that tomorrow is a very dangerous word.* It is lazy. It is presumptuous. It is reckless. The word God prefers is *today*. Governor Felix should have been so wise ... but *procrastination doesn't take into account the uncertainty of life...*

- **Procrastination does not take into account the uniqueness of conviction...**

The Spirit of God convicts us, when we open ourselves up to God's entering into our lives and helps steer us in directions that God knows are best for all concerned. But, *the funny thing about conviction is ... it can be here today, gone tomorrow.* God will nudge. If we respond, great; God will continue to nudge. If we choose not to respond, the sense of conviction can begin to fade in our lives. God's not going to waste time arguing with us; either we choose to be obedient, or we do not!

The truth is, we may never hear again the voice of Christ in our hearts as clearly as we do today; when God speaks, the moment is NOW! If today is the day that God has chosen to get your attention on something, please know that there are no coincidences with God. Don't delay. Don't push it back. Don't lose the moment. St. Augustine once said it this way: "God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination." This GIANT does not take into account the uniqueness of conviction...

So, let me ask you today: What are *you* waiting for? As we close this time together—with God ever present with us, *what is your response going to be to the gift of time God has given you?* Will you use it wisely? Will you take your cues from God's Spirit, as he leads and 'nudges' you? What will be priority in your life?