

Volume 12 Issue 1

January 1, 2017

PROCRASTINATION

"I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. 'A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,' then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man,"

(Proverbs 24:30-34). As I sit down to write this article, I am surrounded by books piled up all around me in the corners of my office which should have been put on the empty book shelves standing behind me months ago.

(Hangs head in shame.)

After putting my desk

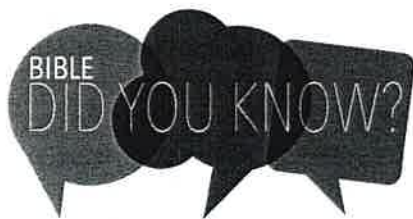
together and arranging the computer and printer and other useful items I depend upon, I looked at the books stacked in the corners and uttered that most deceptive, tempting, and convincing of lies... "I'll do that tomorrow." If the sting of conviction I commonly hear after preaching a sermon is described as having "stepped on your toes", then believe me, for me, this passage is like being kicked in the face with a steel toe grip Kodiak work boot. In fact, the irony of how bad I need it is that I find myself being tempted to say, "There are other topics I could cover for now...I'll write about procrastination next month. Now let's take another crack at that high score on Donkey Kong."

And there lies the true essence of the deceptive lies we convince ourselves to utter when procrastination is in full swing. I'll delay just a little. I'll put it off just for a moment. While the obvious true tell for someone struggling with procrastination is to constantly put things off for tomorrow, the more subtle and destructive way it works is when we finally face the job needing done and the result is nothing got done. "Alright, today's the day." We put our work clothes on, roll up our sleeves and begin tackling the giant mountain of work we've let pile up so high from all the "tomorrow's" we've ascribed to them. At the end of the day, the mountain doesn't seem like it's gotten any smaller and any progress seems so miniscule it's as if no work was done at all. "But I've been working so hard! How could this still not be done!" The truth...we've let little moments of procrastination throughout the job to sidetrack us enough times that nothing gets done at all. Our intentions are

always good. We never mean to avoid the job altogether. We begin working only to stop for just a moment for "*a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest.*" When procrastination is at its worst, we get really good at finding convincing moments in the middle of a job to stop "just for a moment" and find something else to do with our time. And most of the time, we're really good at convincing ourselves these little momentary sidetrack jobs are just as important if not more so than the job we are already working on. Stopping in the middle of an important job to go get a haircut may sound very urgent and pressing in our minds, but really it's just a way of stalling and folding the hands. Interrupting progress in the middle of a pressing urgent job to spend 40 minutes on a trip to Walmart because we just remembered we forgot to buy toothpicks when we last went grocery shopping may sound like a dire need at the time, when really it's just a way to put off work for a little

folding of the hands. By the end of the day, all of these little momentary pit stops have resulted in not much being accomplished at all, only to then put the rest of it off until tomorrow. Solomon says this is the same as being robbed in the middle of the night. Procrastination is a thief which robs us of our time as well as our progress. At the end of the day, after little moments of procrastination have occurred, we realize the day is gone, and the time we could have spent on making progress has been robbed from us. It's not coming back, and so we literally have to borrow time from tomorrow to make up for what was lost today. Some people drown in financial debt constantly having to borrow money to cover what they can't afford to pay. Others drown in time debt. Constantly having to borrow time from every day chores just to cover what they didn't have time to cover yesterday when they were honing in their skills at defending their family from rabid black squirrel attacks...because,

really, you never know. The end result is what Solomon observed. A broken down wall with thistles overgrowing in the yard as a testament that nothing ends up ever getting done. Don't let that happen to the goals and resolutions you've made for yourself for 2017. Take advantage of the time we have and get to work today with the plans you've made for yourself to be a better father, mother, brother, sister, Christian or anything else you've set as a goal for this year. Our life is but a vapor and if the Lord wills, the time for wrapping up 2017 will be here before you know it! Don't put off until tomorrow the things we can accomplish today.
-Daniel Ruegg



***Jesus is heir of all things (Heb. 1:2).
Christians are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).***



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Read The Entire New Testament Challenge

Eph. 3:4 "By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ."

Let's start off 2017 with a fresh reading of the entire New Testament! When Peter was rescued by an angel of the Lord from prison he was told, "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life," (Acts 5:20). While we certainly profit from studying specific topics and sections of scripture, it is always rejuvenating and refreshing to hear the whole message of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its entirety! From Matthew through Revelation, let's center and renew our minds this month on the entire message of Jesus, the whole message of this life. While larger books like the four gospels, the book of Acts and Revelation may need to be broken up over several days to read through, try to read the letters to the churches the whole way through in one setting. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness," (2 Tim. 3:16).

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Ephesians 2:1-8

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."