



What Can I Do Now About Procrastination Later?

2 Peter 1:10: (NASB) *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.*



We are not even going to ask the question because, let's face it, we all know what the answer is. We all procrastinate. The only real question is: What kind of procrastinator am I? Do I put things off only when I'm not in the mood to do them? Do I avoid some tasks like the plague because I thoroughly dislike them? Or, am I the guy who just does not seem to want to do anything? You know, the guy who has mastered the fine art of creative avoidance, which makes me actually look like I am busy and productive when in reality I am running and hiding. What are the implications of being a Christian procrastinator? Our lives are supposed to be all about doing the will of God through Jesus, and that is not really something we ought to be toying with. What is the answer? How do we face, understand and finally defeat the urge to procrastinate?



Joining us today is Julie, our CQ volunteer and today's personal perspective contributor: (Julie's comments are in pink.)

Procrastination is pervasive and debilitating.

Procrastination comes from the Latin *pro*, meaning "forward, forth, or in favor of," and *crastinus*, meaning "of tomorrow."

Merriam Webster:

procrastination: transitive verb

To put off intentionally the doing of something that should be done.

(Source: *The Procrastination Equation* by Dr. Piers Steel, Professor at Human Resources and Organizational Dynamics Area, University of Calgary) A good working definition is: "To voluntarily delay an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse-off for the delay."

There are two main kinds of procrastination: those with deadlines and those without deadlines.

First, an example of procrastination with a deadline: This song is about Charlie Brown and his friends. They are supposed to be writing a book report on *Peter Rabbit*. Charlie Brown is a procrastinator and he is having difficulty beginning his report. This song identifies the difference between Charlie Brown and the others.



"A Book Report on Peter Rabbit," (Excerpt) You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, 1999

If I start writing now
When I'm not really rested
It could upset my thinking
Which is no good at all
I'll get a fresh start tomorrow
And it's not due till Wednesday
So, I'll have all of Tuesday unless
Something should happen...



Why does this always happen...
I should be outside playing
Getting fresh air and sunshine
I work best under pressure,
And there'll be lots of pressure if I
Wait till tomorrow
I should start writing now
But if I start writing now
When I'm not really rested
It could upset my thinking
Which is no good at all

Now the other kind - procrastination without a deadline. One of the main problems is we have a hard time making the future real in the present:

 **A second kind, *Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator*, Tim Urban, TED Talk**

- *Everything I've talked about today, the examples I've given, they all have deadlines. When there's deadlines, the effects of procrastination are contained to the short term because the Panic Monster gets involved. But there's a second kind of procrastination that happens in situations when there is no deadline. So, if you want to have a career, you want to be a self-starter - something in the arts, something entrepreneurial - there's no deadlines on those things at first, because nothing's happening at first, not until you've gone out and done the hard work to get the momentum, to get things going. There are also all kinds of important things outside of your career that don't involve any deadlines, like seeing your family or exercising and taking care of your health, working on your relationship or getting out of a relationship that isn't working.*

When I was preparing for this program, I never really gave it much thought to divide tasks between those with and without deadlines. Those without deadlines are the ones that lead to dread, resentment and bitterness because you do not receive that last bit of adrenaline right before the deadline. Without a specific deadline to motivate us and if there is a long delay until fulfilment, we have a difficult time making such a future seem "real" in the present.

A great example of this is telling a 19-year-old to start saving for retirement. Or an example of a family member of mine who suspected something medically was wrong but delayed going to the doctor for two years, just enough time for the cancer to spread to a point where treatment was impractical, and she ended up dying.

It is this second kind of procrastination, where the future reward is vague and distant, that is ultimately what the Christian faces and what we must be most on guard against.



The context of our theme text (which we will reveal each segment) that shows us the importance of our long-term mission:

2 Peter 1:1-3: (NASB) ¹Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: ²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; ³seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.



 **Long-term regret, *Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator*, Tim Urban, TED Talk**

- *And it's this long-term kind of procrastination that's much less visible and much less talked about than the funnier, short-term deadline-based kind. It's usually suffered quietly and privately. And it can be the source of a huge amount of long-term unhappiness and regrets. And I thought, that's why these people are emailing, and that's why they're in such a bad place. It's not that they're cramming for some project. It is that long-term procrastination has made them feel like a spectator, at times, in their own lives. The frustration is not that they couldn't achieve their dreams; it's that they weren't even able to start chasing them.*

We end up watching life go by. Months, years and decades go by and we are no farther than we were before.

Revelation 2:10: (NASB) *Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

Our goal as a Christian is at the end of our life we are rewarded with immortality and the *crown of life*.

There is no room for procrastination in the walk of a Christian.

PROCRASTINATION
TERMINATION:

*Go and reconcile
with an offended
brother...*



Matthew 5:23-24: (NASB) ²³*Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.*

Sometimes it is harder to do it God's way, which is always the right way, than to ignore a problem which can weigh on your mind for a lifetime. *But, was it really harder doing it God's way?*



We all procrastinate! What might predict the likelihood of putting something off until later?

Someone very wise once said, "By acknowledging we have a problem, we have already embarked on the journey to solving it." By admitting we procrastinate, we open the door to understanding its effect on us and we can position ourselves to find out why and work on a solution.

Many people have devoted their life's work to figuring out why humans procrastinate, and we all do it at some point. Dr. Piers Steel wrote a book called *The Procrastination Equation* that appealed to me because it allows for variables under our control.

This is based on a formula:



Your motivation increases if you have higher expectancy and value.
Your motivation decreases if you have more impulsiveness and greater delay.
We will go over this in detail, but the point is, we can more or less control some of these.

(Source: *The Procrastination Equation* by Dr. Piers Steel, PhD.)

Four Main Predictors of Procrastination:

1. Self-confidence/expectancy: Do you believe you can succeed at doing the task? If you believe you can or believe you cannot, you are right. If you believe you cannot, your motivation goes down and you will probably have less success. This is the chance of you getting the reward for doing something or suffering a consequence for not doing something.

Hebrews 10:34-36: (NASB) ³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. ³⁵Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Paul focuses the Hebrew Christians on the bigness of their future - not the insignificance of their loss.

We are more likely to succeed and less likely to procrastinate if we have confidence. We will have that strength because God is with us. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31.

Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. The Apostle Paul is saying, "Do not slow down or procrastinate."



2. Value or the excitement of the task. Think about things you are putting off - they are probably not too exciting. An example is doing our taxes. We know we **SHOULD** be doing it, but we don't really want to. We equate boring with unimportant. The more unpleasant or difficult a task is, the less likely we will do it.

Our strategy should be to allocate our worst tasks when we have the most energy. If we can increase the excitement of the task and increase our confidence in it, then we are in control and less likely to procrastinate.

Luke 14:16-20: (NASB) ¹⁶But he said to him, A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; ¹⁷and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, Come; for everything is ready now. ¹⁸But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused. ¹⁹Another one said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused. ²⁰Another one said, I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.

Because the call to discipleship is not tangible, it tends to be devalued when compared to other things.

The true call of Christianity is sacrifice. Sacrificing is not fun. Sacrificing is making choices that are more pleasing to the Lord than what we prefer. We should always make the choice that is best for our long-term goals.



Trish: I was thinking about the parable in [Matthew 25](#) where the man was going on a journey and gave everyone talents. One person buried it in the ground. I was wondering; was that the epitome of procrastination? It was easier to bury it because it took no effort. Was it out of fear? Is that an example of procrastinating with your Christian talents?

He protected what he was given, but he did not do what he was supposed to do. Things of great value that are tangible to us mean much more than something not tangible. We will develop that as we go through points 3 and 4.

3. The personality trait of impulsiveness: It means you are spontaneous, but that you have tremendous difficulty focusing on the future. This is our tendency to get distracted and not stay focused. The future is worth far less than the present, so if you are impulsive you really only feel motivation just before deadlines.



Have you ever seen the Disney movie, *Up*, with the old man who ties balloons to his house and travels away? His dog companion is constantly distracted by squirrels. Here at CQ, we have a **SHINY SQUIRREL** alert when some new project seems more exciting to work on than whatever our immediate task is.

Acts 26:27-29: (NASB) ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do. ²⁸Agrippa replied to Paul, In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian. ²⁹And Paul said, I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains.

King Agrippa is drawn to what Paul said, but he does not pursue it. He put it off at great personal loss.



How often do we have an opportunity to have the call of Christ come our way? Why follow through now when we can put it off for later and then forget about it?

4. Delay: We are motivated less when the task's completion or reward is further away.

We cannot always change the timeline, but we can set up certain milestones to force a deadline. There is a psychological term called TEMPORAL DISCOUNTING, also called DELAY or TIME DISCOUNTING. It is the tendency of people to discount rewards because they are so distant in time that they cease to be valuable to you today.

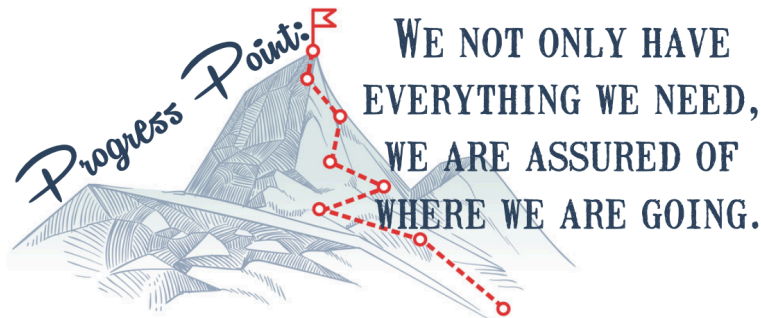
Remember this theory - your motivation increases if you have higher expectancy and value. Your motivation decreases if you have more impulsiveness (SHINY SQUIRRELS) and greater delay.

Rick, you have many deadlines when it comes to "Christian Questions." Some tasks do not have a specific deadline, so, what do you do? Can you give an example of this?



I make a deadline. If I have a sermon to prepare that is due eight months from now, I want the basic idea of it put together within the next six weeks. The following six weeks I want to know the next phase. I create deadlines that nobody cares about but me. It helps me to pace myself.

2 Peter 1:4: (NASB) *For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*



"The Procrastination Song About Nothing," (Excerpt) The Caitie Diaries

I'm really wasting time and not coming up with any lyrics
And yet the ones I've sung so far, they flow pretty well
If I say so myself
It's the procrastination
Song about nothing
And now I'm five verses into a song about nothing
Really, it's nothing
(This song is about nothing)
And yet you're still watching
But thanks for watching
Even if you're just procrastinating
Something you should be doing



Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the week. — Anonymous



**PROCRASTINATION
TERMINATION:**

**Deal with anger
right away.**

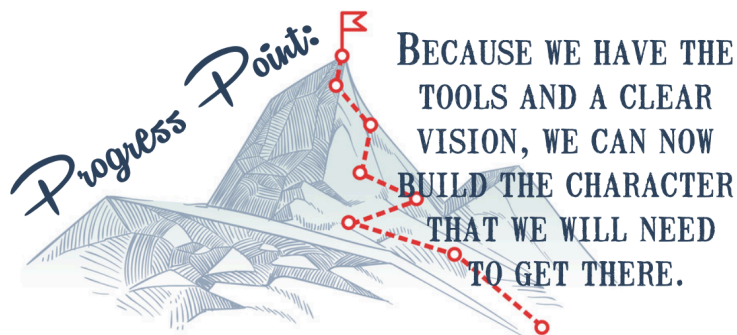
Ephesians 4:26-27: (NASB) ²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

**It is not likely that we can completely eliminate procrastination.
What can we do to be better?**

Putting things off for the sake of not doing them is a big problem, and as with all big problems it is rare that it can be completely solved. This is the state of so many areas of our imperfect lives, therefore we have to accept progress as a solution. To make progress, we need to take specific steps.

If you always do the easy thing, life will be hard. If you always do the hard thing, life will be easy. — Unknown

2 Peter 1:5-7: (NASB) ⁵Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.



One of the best Procrastination Busters out there is making good habits. Rick, your responsibilities with CQ require you to stay on a pretty strict weekly schedule in order to produce a podcast once a week for the last 20+ years. Give us a peek behind the curtain - what do you do?



It comes down to having specific habits. It is realizing certain things must be done by certain points in the week. Podcasts are on Monday night. There are many others who need the finished notes for the podcast, so they can do their preparatory work in advance. I try to finish by noon on Thursday to give the



many others the time they need to do their jobs. With my work schedule, I need to carve out time to get through research, study, prayer and writing to complete the outline. I need to get started with no excuse. There are times when I am tired but being tired is not an excuse. I realize I am accountable to others.

Most people's motivation kicks in right before the deadline, but what if there is no deadline or you want to avoid the stress of coming up against the deadline? Here are three strategies.



Make it challenging but smaller - cut the project into smaller, manageable pieces, but not too small or else we get bored and procrastinate.



Step one, *How to Stop Procrastinating*, watchwellcast.com

- *And this brings us to our Wellcast three-step method for stopping procrastination. Okay, are you ready? Step One: Eat an elephant. Hey, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Look, what I'm saying is you need time to digest or you're going to make yourself sick. Reward yourself for getting through parts of the project rather than waiting to reward yourself after the whole thing's over. Okay, procrastinator, think about that one project that you really need to get done. But calm down. Instead of letting it overwhelm you, organize that project into small bite-sized manageable segments. Think about what needs to get done and write down what you're going to be doing to tackle this project hour by hour and make it specific. By breaking down this giant project into smaller tasks, this elephant will become a lot less daunting.*

I break down the segments of our outline into pieces. On Tuesday I need to have two segments done by the end of the day. By noon on Wednesday I need to have audio clips located. Because I run my own business, I can manage my time to do this. I break it down into little pieces because it is too big.

Proverbs 3:27-28: (NASB) ²⁷*Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.* ²⁸*Do not say to your neighbor, Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it, when you have it with you.*

Handling an issue when it is just one thing is SO much easier than handling a pile of issues.

Make the goal specific -create concrete plans. I have a goal to learn all about the Apostle Paul. I want to help with the research for a podcast because we have never done a three-part series on the Apostle Paul. Specificity helps our goals. So instead of just saying, "I want to learn about the Apostle Paul," I will say, "I am going to wake up every Thursday, take my laptop into the room without the TV. I will have my references I want to use ready the night before and I am going to turn my phone off. I will write a little of this outline on Apostle Paul for you and maybe someday we will use it for a podcast."



James 5:16: (NASB) *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*



Short term is better than long-term - make a series of immediate goals that get you to the finish line. Get quick wins on the project and increase your expectancy that you will get it done. Avoidance goals do not work as well - "I'm not going to eat dessert." "I'm not going to watch TV." You want to tell yourself, "I am going to eat more salads," or "I am going out for a walk." A replacement behavior is more effective.



Step two, How to Stop Procrastinating, watchwellcast.com

- *Step two: Pick out the itsy-bitsy goblins instead of going for the whole dragon. The hardest part about starting any project is always starting the project. A good way to get around this is to start a project off with the tasks you like the best. Listen, when you do something that you like, your brain releases dopamine, which makes you happy. Maybe it's decorating the cover of a report or writing a snappy intro into an otherwise incredibly boring paper.*

Philippians 3:12-14: (NASB) ¹²*Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.* ¹³*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,* ¹⁴*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Simple equation - know what you should do - do what you should do!)*



Reduce your impulsive instincts. Eliminate an environment of temptation and distraction. Can you get temptations - those shiny squirrels - further away from you or make them less obvious? Make the distractions less enjoyable - leave your phone in another room or here's a crazy idea - pretend it's 2006 just before the iPhone came out and just shut it off. Go to the library for one hour of study time. Stop checking email so much. We are vulnerable to impulsive

actions. If we do not have our gym bag in the car but go home first, we might check our mail, answer the phone, have a snack, turn on the tv, and will not actually go.



Step three, How to Stop Procrastinating, watchwellcast.com

- *Step Three: Ignore the siren's song. Seriously, this step is straight out of Homer's epic poem The Odyssey. In the Odyssey, our protagonist Ulysses is trying to get home. Unfortunately, this requires maneuvering through a strait of water where sailors are often lured onto the rocks by creatures called sirens. Instead of giving up, Ulysses instructs his crew to tie him to the mast of his ship and for all of them to plug their ears. No matter how much he yells and screams to head towards the beautiful sirens, the sailors must keep on track. We're not saying that you need to actually tie yourself up to anything, but you should plan to clear any distractions that will hamper your ability to procrastinate later. For example, if you're a sucker for Facebook or online video games, have your parents or your roommates change the Internet password to keep you on track for studying. The less temptations you give in to or have the ability to give in to the better you'll be at acing that exam.*

Sacrifice - spending our time. Priorities - Do the most important thing first:
James 4:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.* ¹⁵*Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.*

Be humbly dedicated to growing by making good habits. Examples might be a predictable workout routine or a dedicated study time each week.



PROCRASTINATION TERMINATION:

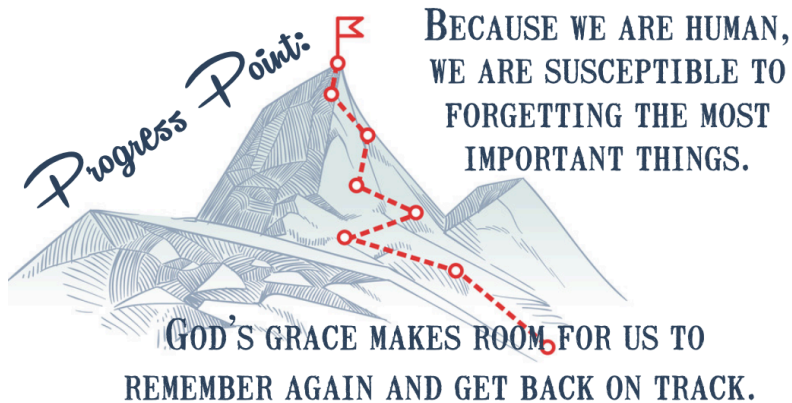
*Be instant and
dedicated in prayer.*

Colossians 4:2: (NASB) *Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.*

**While avoiding procrastination we also say, "Be patient."
Isn't patience just a fancy word for procrastination?**

We need to take some time on this because as we shall see, patience and procrastination are two very different things, though they may look the same. Understanding and applying the differences can be one of the most important keys to our faithful following of Jesus.

2 Peter 1:8-9: (NASB) ⁸*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ⁹*For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.*



There's nothing to match curling up with a good book when there's a repair job to be done around the house. — Joe Ryan



Improving our character and therefore avoiding procrastination requires introspection:

2 Corinthians 13:5: (NASB) *Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?*

Examine yourselves - this introspection is important because it leads us back to our expectancy, value, impulsiveness and delay. It tells us where our shiny squirrels will be, and how we think in the short term and long term.



When researching for this podcast, I got to thinking how procrastination is viewed upon so negatively but yet "patience is a virtue." What is the difference?

- All procrastination is delay, but not all delay is procrastination.
- Patience: Deliberate, thoughtful delay of action
Procrastination: Lack of self-regulatory ability

(Source: refreshleadership.com, *Patience and Procrastination* by Jim Stovall, March 5, 2015)
Patience is a significant element of success, and procrastination is a significant element of failure. To an outside observer, patience and procrastination can look the same. The difference between patience and procrastination can be determined by whether you're waiting on something or something is waiting on you.

Procrastination:

Ecclesiastes 11:4: (NASB) *He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap.*

Patience:

Hebrews 12:1: (KJV) *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

Here is the contrast. In the Ecclesiastes text, he is watching the wind and conditions are not perfect to sow, the work that is supposed to be done.

In the Hebrews text: *lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us* - God understands we are sinful, that we have health problems, that we get distracted by shiny squirrels. People will disappoint us. We will be betrayed. Set that aside and run with patience - little steps at a time - and we will get to the end of that race.

If you drive by a farm during the springtime, and there appears to be no activity underway, it may be because the farmer has already planted and is patiently waiting for the next phase of his activity; or it could mean the farmer is procrastinating and avoiding the task of planting which could endanger or ruin his crop.

Here we are looking at a field with no activity. To the untrained eye, we could not tell the difference if the farmer has already done his work and is legitimately waiting, or if he is illegitimately waiting because he has not done what he should have. We need to be careful about judging someone in their abilities or lack of abilities as we perceive them.



Patience versus procrastination:

Proverbs 12:24: (NASB) *The hand of the diligent will rule, but the slack hand will be put to forced labor.*

Patience is a calculated look forward and realizing to progress you need to go slowly. Procrastination is a calculated look forward saying, "I am going to find a way not to." Patience is powerful, but procrastination takes away our motivation.

Let me give you an example. Rick, one of your daughters is a nurse, right? When she woke up one morning and said, "I want to be a nurse," that goal was not accomplished that day or the first week or even the first or second year. She had to stop and come up with a plan. "Here is today. Here is the day I am a nurse." There is a long distance in time between the two.



She had to go to school, fund that schooling, make plans to adjust her life to be there at a certain time and take tests. She had to plan for it and then work her plan. If she just gave up and thought, "Well, that's so far off. It will take me so long. I don't have the money or the time," she would have never gotten there. She had the patience to be able to do something without instant gratification.



My daughter is now an APRN, an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. She got her degree and went into nursing. While she was in the field supporting herself, she decided she wanted to be an APRN. It is a much bigger step that took a long time. But she chipped away at it and got it done. It is amazing how we can look back and see how the efforts along the way got us to the end result. Looking back over it there is a sense of accomplishment. Looking forward while we are in the middle of it, there is a sense of "I will never get there." This is the difference between being patient and being a procrastinator.

And that is where we cannot be as Christians - sitting in the middle saying, "It is too hard.... I will never make it..."

Jesus never procrastinated. When something needed to be done, he always stepped up and stepped out. If we are following in his footsteps, we must try to do the same.

I meet many aspiring entrepreneurs at speaking engagements, movie premieres, and book signings. When I inquire about their current project or next opportunity, they will often use platitudes such as, "I'm waiting for my ship to come in," or "I'm waiting to get all my ducks in a row." In reality, they never sent a ship out, and they've been waiting so long, their pier collapsed; and not only are their ducks not in a row, but they flew off or died of old age a long time ago.



Patience NOT Procrastination:

Ephesians 5:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So then do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is.

A lot of Christians I meet ask me the same question: "How do you do what you do every week?" The answer is always the same - one day at a time. One hour at a time. If I look at the big thing, it is too big, scary, overwhelming and heavy. I work on just what I am supposed to accomplish for each day. I do not worry about getting my ducks in a row, but only what is today's task. This is one of the "secrets" of being able to keep up with the demand. God's grace is sufficient for right now. He will give me grace for later when I need it later.

Patience involves celebrating the task you have done while waiting for the seed you have planted to grow. Procrastination involves avoiding what you know needs to be done which makes a mockery of your passion, your goals, and your destiny.



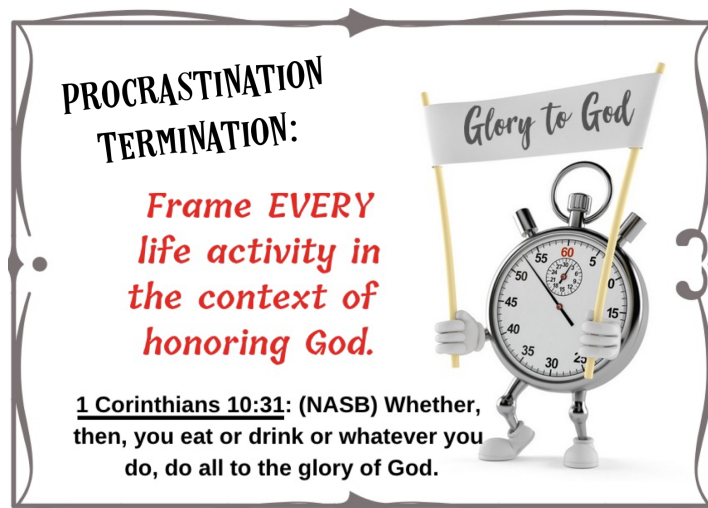
Ephesians 5:16 - making the most of your time - in the King James Version, it says *redeeming the time*.

Redeeming the time means you do not look at things in chunks of decades or a lifetime. We instead ask, "What can I do with my minutes?" One of the things we did at Christian Questions to help everyone redeem the time was create short videos called *Moments that Matter*. For our listeners who want to meditate on something

positive in their spare minutes, they can go to ChristianQuestions.com/youtube.

What am I deciding to do right now? Do the most important thing at any given moment. Sometimes that most important thing is not to be at work but to spend time with family. Sometimes it is study and meditation.

Waiting patiently might allow us to make better decisions. 1 Kings 19:12 talks about *the still small voice of God*. We need to prayerfully consider our steps and not jump into something that might not be right for us just because we do not want to procrastinate. Patience allows us time to weigh our pros and cons. We cannot wait forever, but we need to balance our natural proclivity for impulsiveness.





**Patience is in and procrastination is out.
How do we now successfully pull this all together?**

Up to this point, we have discussed some things that may predict when and why we will procrastinate. We have learned that success against putting things off is in our step-by-step journey. We now also know that patience and procrastination are opposites. Now we can get to our Christian bottom line on the matter.

A majority of life's errors are caused by forgetting what one is really trying to do. — Warren Buffett, 1965 BPL Partnership Letter (Buffett Partnership Limited, the company he formed when he was 25 years old)

Our bottom line: **Opportunities for service and spreading the gospel message**

The time is NOW:

2 Corinthians 6:2: (NASB) *Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.*

The opportunities are NOW:

2 Peter 1:10-11: (NASB) ¹⁰*Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.*



Be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you - the King James Version says to make your calling and election sure. This New American Standard Version says we are called but have to be chosen. God has a plan that we absolutely fit into, but we can't just stare at the clouds and say, "Rain is coming; I can't plant my field." God will supply everything we need to be faithful, but we have to take those steps.

It is about our fulfilling that which we promised. As a Christian, we cannot fulfill that if we put it off and procrastinate. Growth is required.



Becca is one of our CQ volunteers (we are all volunteers) who has an amazing ability to get things done. She is in charge of Christian Questions' social media accounts, and also produces all of our videos. We just started a new animated CQ Kids series. You can find that at ChristianQuestions.com/youtube. Becca handles a LOT and never misses a deadline.



Becca, *The Challenge of Pre-crastination*

- *One of the downsides of being a "pre-crastinator" is that I like to be efficient. I like to make decisions quickly, make a plan, get things done and checked off my list. Sometimes what happens is, I've quickly finished a task, filed it away, and in an effort to get it done quickly and efficiently, I think I can be too easily satisfied with the first or easiest solution instead of something a little more well thought out. For example, when my now-husband proposed to me we got married about four months later because we figured - what are we waiting for? So, I found the fastest and easiest solutions immediately, and everything for the wedding was squared away. Now, it was only a wedding, not life or death, but I probably would have changed a lot of things had I had the time to think them over a little more. So, sometimes it is a good idea to have a little more time before rushing into a decision so that you've properly weighed out the options.*



Getting things done TOO fast is the opposite side of what most of us struggle with. We have to be able to slow down and find the middle ground that gives praise and honor to God.

There is no better way to fight off procrastination than making the journey with true joy.

Nehemiah rallied people to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem to protect the city. For more on the story of Nehemiah, please see November 27, 2017, and December 4, 2017, CQ Episodes #997 and #998: "How Do You Change Your World?" (Parts I and II).

The people had lost interest in God, but after they worked together on this massive construction project, they realized how far off track they had gone. They were sorrowful.



Nehemiah encouraged them:

Nehemiah 8:10: (NASB) *Then he said to them, Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*

The experts who study why humans procrastinate bring in this concept of joy. We want to CHOOSE a perception of the situation that allows us to approach it in a way where it does not bring dread and resentment. We tend to procrastinate more on unpleasant things. Whenever there is something we think is necessary to be done, we want to ask, "Can I bring any amount of joy into the doing of it?"

If we absolutely cannot enjoy it, ask, "Will I enjoy having it done?" "Is there some reward for having it done - more free time?" "Will it help someone else?"

Colossians 3:23-24: (NIV) ²³*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

As working for the Lord - even if you dig ditches for a living and that is your foreseeable future for the next 30 years, dig those ditches as if it is being done for the Lord and find joy in the work.

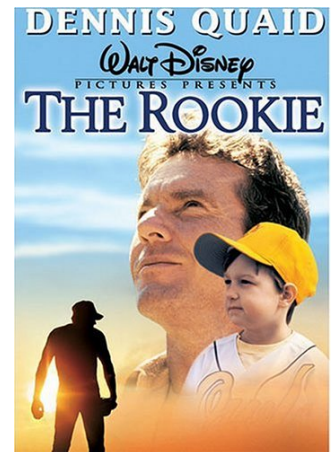
If we have an unpleasant task, break it down so it is not so overwhelming. Do it for 30 minutes and then take a pleasant break with a reward and then go back to it. We then have a measure of control and the task is not as big as it once was.

This brings a new perspective into the doing of things. How we interpret something has a huge impact on how we experience it.



Sometimes if I am overwhelmed and discouraged, I think of the movie, *The Rookie*, about a guy who was a high school teacher and baseball coach. His team talked him into trying out for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. He makes the minor league team but is getting tired of it and is ready to quit. He was going to turn in his uniform and walks past kids playing baseball. He gets a spark in his eye and says to the star of the minor league team, "You know what we get to do today, Brooks? We get to play baseball."

The movie is based on the true story of Jim Morris, who had a brief, but famous, Major League Baseball career in 1999-2000.



I think of this line all the time. When I get tired and discouraged, I think, "Wait a minute. I get to preach the gospel! I get to talk to the whole world! What do I have to be tired for? This is what I get to do." It brings the joy back, and the joy overrides the difficulty.

Procrastination is not only about what we do, but about who we are becoming. If we are supposed to become Christlike, we do not want to procrastinate.



Always remember, we are worthy because Jesus made us that way:

Philippians 4:12-13: (NASB) *¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

The Apostle Paul's life was thoroughly focused on doing the things Jesus would have him to do above anything else.

Proverbs 24:16: (NASB) *For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity.*

Sometimes people are unable to move forward because they are afraid they cannot do it perfectly. I was speaking with someone at church this Sunday who said he has anxiety attacks. I asked him why, when he knows the Lord has everything under control. The very hairs on his head are numbered - what does he have to be anxious about? And this young man said, "I am afraid I will fail. It is hard for me to move forward."

God is not asking us to be perfect. He is asking us to get back up. Do not stay down. *A righteous man falls seven times...and gets back up.*

(Source: Psychology Today) **Perfectionism and "Active" Procrastination: Tips for Perfectionists:**

- Let your desire to impress others go. Your performance is not the only place we derive our sense of self-worth.
- Understand the difference between excellence and perfection.
- Don't wait for conditions to be perfect to get started.
- Instead of focusing on and fearing "failure" around the outcome, focus instead on the process...the journey.



Hopefully, we have given some helpful, practical tips on increasing our self-confidence/expectancy and value of the task and decreasing those "shiny squirrels" - our impulsiveness and bringing that long delay closer to us - specifically when it comes to our desire to be more like Jesus and our common goal of being pleasing to our Heavenly Father for the ultimate reward according to **Revelation 2:10**. That is our goal, and we can get there!



Do the most important thing that is in front of me right now that brings honor and glory to God, one small step at a time.

*So, what can I do now about procrastination later?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on November 12, 2018:

Ep. #1047: "Why Did the Tongues of Fire
Touch the Apostles?"

Bonus Material



Estera says: [Proverbs 24:33-34](#). It is interesting rendered in the Contemporary English Version: "Sleep a little. Doze a little. Fold your hands and twiddle your thumbs. Suddenly poverty hits you and everything is gone!"

Anger is the only thing to put off til tomorrow. — Slovakian proverb

Funny story about trying to beat procrastination:

Trying to beat procrastination can sometimes create another monster of its own. (True Story!)

Long ago, in an effort to beat procrastination, I decided that the moment I thought of something I had to do it instead of putting it off until later. Now



that worked great when I was younger, however, now I find myself being a bit crazed as I struggle with A.A.A.D.D. BUT IT IS NOT PROCRASTINATION :)

THIS STORY SAYS IT ALL - author unknown

Recently, I was diagnosed with A.A.A.D.D. Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder. This is how it manifests: I decided to wash my car. As I start toward the garage, I notice that there is mail on the hall table. I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car. I lay my car keys down on the table, put the junk mail in the trash can under the table, and notice that the trash can is full.

So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the trash first. But then I think, since I'm going to be near the mailbox when I take out the trash anyway, I may as well pay the bills first. I take my checkbook off the table and see that there is only one check left. My extra checks are in my desk in the study, so I go to my desk where I find the bottle of Coke that I had been drinking.

I'm going to look for my checks, but first I need to push the Coke aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. I see that the Coke is getting warm, and I decide I should put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold. As I head toward the kitchen with the Coke, a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye--they need to be watered. I set the Coke down on the counter, and I discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning.

I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly I spot the TV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table. I realize that tonight when we go to watch TV, we will be looking for the remote, but nobody will remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the den where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers. I splash some water on the flowers, but most of it spills on the floor. So, I set the remote back down on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: the car isn't washed, the bills aren't paid, there is a warm bottle of Coke sitting on the counter, the flowers aren't watered, there is still only one check in my checkbook, I can't find the remote, I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys.

Then when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day long, and I'm really tired. I realize this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I'll check my e-mail.

Several Scriptures that warn against putting things off and being unprepared:

Matthew 25:1-13: (NASB) ¹Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ⁵Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him. ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said



to the prudent, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. ⁹But the prudent answered, No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves. ¹⁰And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other virgins also came, saying, Lord, lord, open up for us. ¹²But he answered, Truly I say to you, I do not know you. ¹³Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Proverbs 13:4: (ESV) *The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.*

Ephesians 5:15-17: (ESV) *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

Proverbs 20:4: (ESV) *The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.*

Proverbs 27:1: (ESV) *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.*

Luke 9:59-62: (ESV) *To another he said, Follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home. Jesus said to him, No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.*

James 4:17: (NASB) *Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

Philippians 4:13: (ESV) *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

Ecclesiastes 9:10: (ESV) *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.*

Proverbs 10:5: (ESV) *He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.*

He had a Year to do it in!

A Poem with a Moral.

He had a year to do it in!
 So brushed the thought away:
 A chap with half his energy
 Might do it in a day.
 A year! 'Twas too ridiculous,
 As every one should find;
 However, he would get it done
 And have it off his mind.

But not to-day. A few months hence
 Would suit him better still:
 Meanwhile, a far less irksome job
 Might occupy his skill.
 He would not let the matter pass
 Entirely from him. No;
 And doubtless he might take it up
 In, say, a month or so.

He had six months to do it in!
 For six long months had flown:
 Well, why should that alarm a chap
 With vigour like his own?
 The job, when once embarked upon,

Would soon be rattled through;
 However, he would think of it,
 In, say, a week or two.

He had three months to do it in!
 "Oh, bother!" was his cry:
 "The thing hangs on me like a weight,
 Each day that passes by.
 Let's see: three months? Oh, that's enough;
 But just to clear the doubt,
 I'll make arrangements for a start
 Before the month is out."

He had one week to do it in!
 And care was in his glance:
 "It's hard," he cried "that flight of time
 Won't give a chap a chance."
 He still delayed; the swift week passed,
 As weeks will ever run,
 And, though a year was given him,
 The task is still undone.

JOHN LEA.

