

20 Days of Trouble

Topic #4 - Procrastination

Textbook Def:

The act or habit of putting off or delaying, especially something requiring immediate attention.*

Real-Life Look:

The stack of mail is only a few days old. There can't be anything *that* time sensitive in there, so I'll just give it a few more days...or a week...or two!

I haven't been feeling too great lately. I probably should go see my doctor but I really don't have the time to squeeze in a two hour appointment. I'll probably just end up delaying the call until I (a) feel better and don't need to be seen or (b) end up feeling much worse and have no choice.

I've got to talk to my hubby about some upcoming events but I've put off the conversation. Again. I'm certain he's going to feel we're over-booked and insist we scale back on our commitments. Why do I know this? Because we've had this conversation many times before. And of course he'll be right, and I'll have to cave and compromise. Honestly, compromising isn't all that bad, and it always works out in the end, but I seriously hate having to pick and choose. I just want to do everything! So I drag my feet. A lot. And put off the talk.

I need to call the insurance company and discuss the error on the Explanation of Benefits I just received but I hate that it takes forever to speak to a live person, and then even longer to battle with them over the issue. I absolutely DREAD calling, so I'll just stare at the note on my desk to call them awhile longer until I have no choice at all but to pick up the darn phone.

If I just look at the laundry, maybe it will wash itself? If I just look at the treadmill, maybe it will run itself? If I just look at the leak on the car, maybe it will just repair itself? Yeah...and then again...maybe not!

Sword of the Spirit:

“Sluggards do not plow in season; so at harvest time they look but find nothing.”

Proverbs 20:4

“Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” Ephesians 5:15-17

“If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.”

James 4:17

Breaking It Down:

Is there anything you tend to put off? Studying for a test? Running an errand?

Scheduling a household item for repair? Starting a new diet?

I don’t care who you are, chances are there are things you’d rather avoid doing. The difference rests in the fact that some of us procrastinate more often than others.

What causes us to pause?

- An unsavory task
- A difficult undertaking
- A boring chore
- An awkward conversation
- A time-consuming project

It’s not so hard to understand why someone might procrastinate. Unsavory, difficult, boring, awkward, or time-consuming tasks don’t sound like much of a party to me! One must often be disciplined, motivated, or forced by deadline to tackle undertakings characterized by such lackluster appeal.

My advice for pushing through? Consider the outcome.

EVERY.SINGLE.TIME I complete a task that I have procrastinated over, I am overjoyed with accomplishment. More often than not, I chastise myself for having waited so long to do something that ended up being relatively painless.

Even when not so trouble-free, there is a highly motivational sense of satisfaction which comes from completing a task or wrapping up a project.

On a simple scale, I've wanted to pick up a couple of decorative metal stars to put up in my bathroom. I found out the store doesn't keep them in stock, so they must be ordered, and ordering them in-store is less expensive than ordering online.

I've thought about ordering these stars for almost a year now. I've even been in the store that carries them but refused to take the time to have a salesperson order for me. Doesn't this just sound altogether ridiculous?

Since we are selling our home, I'm feeling 'forced' to complete some minor decorating tasks to attain the full benefit of staging my home. Finally, a few days ago, I popped into the store, ordered the stars, and they were delivered yesterday. The stars were extremely inexpensive and the process took a total of ten minutes. TEN MINUTES.

If I procrastinated on something so benign and simple, can you imagine how much easier it is to put off more daunting tasks? Unfortunately, altogether way too easy!

The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble

While procrastinating may come easy, it certainly isn't beneficial.

It strikes me as ironic that we often procrastinate because we perceive a lack of time, however, the end result of procrastination leads to more wasted time. Sure, I finally got my stars ordered, but only after I wasted almost a year without the pleasure of enjoying their beautiful final touch in my bathroom. And now I'm moving. When I think of it in those terms, it's just really so annoying.

How much time do you waste worrying about the test you didn't study for or lamenting over the phone call you have yet to make. What harm might you avoid by scheduling that critical appointment?

Decluttering procrastination will reduce inefficiency, guilt, and failure, and at the same time will promote character-building and integrity. It leaves the door wide open for improvement and growth.

Do yourself a huge favor and ditch procrastination for good. And please, don't wait to do it!

*dictionary.reference.com

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