

HOW LONG WILL I PUT IT OFF?

INTRODUCTION

As human beings, we are natural procrastinators. I have seen in my own life, as well as the lives of many people that I know, a natural ability to put off for tomorrow what can easily be done today.

Here's an example, its tax season, how many people will wait to complete their tax return until the final deadline week. We can find many such examples.

Here are some one-liners about procrastination:

- Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow.
- If you wait until the last minute, it only takes a minute!
- The award committee wanted to recognise the best procrastinators with awards but they are still to waiting for the entries.

Sadly, when it comes to our spiritual lives, we find a lot of procrastination. Even in the Church! This can lead to us missing the mark for a large part of our lives, or maybe even completely. It can result in us never reaching the Christian maturity that we should reach in our lives. The source of spiritual procrastination is incorrect priorities!

MESSAGE

A VIEW ON ETERNITY

When we put off spiritual things, it is an indication we don't understand our place in eternity! This leads to incorrect priorities in our lives.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Challenge: What area of that rope have you been focusing on? What spiritual things have you been putting off until later?

- ***Crucifixion of self?***
- ***Giving up ungodly relationships?***
- ***Giving up habits formed before we were Christians?***
- ***Spending more time with God?***
- ***Involvement in Christian works?***
- ***Dealing with hurt and unforgiveness?***

WE NEED TO REALISE THAT WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we put off spiritual things, it is an indication we don't understand our place in eternity, and we don't have the right priorities, but it's also an indication that we are undermining the Holy Spirit's presence and leading in our lives.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NKJV) Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

What does it mean to be the temple of the Holy Spirit?

- It means that the precious Holy Spirit lives in us.
- It means that our bodies are not our own, to do what we please with.
- It means that any time I am in a spiritually compromised position, I have the Holy Spirit with me – Others may not see, but He sees everything!
- It means that my body and my spirit need to be focused on God and my priority must be to glorify Him!

I have had people apologise to me about some slip of behavior that happened while I was with them. But I'm not the one who matters! It's the Lord who matters. Are we that spiritually naive that we are more concerned about what a man thinks than about what God thinks?

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV) And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Challenge:

- ***Where have we been or what have we said and done that we would NEVER do if Jesus were standing with us? We have the Holy Spirit is in us all the time, surely the same must apply!***
- ***What are we still doing that we should be ashamed of?***

HAVE WE PUT OFF CRUCIFICTION OF SELF?

In **Matthew 16:24**, Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

William Barclay, in commenting on this verse, said:

- "To deny oneself means in every moment of life to say no to self, and to say yes to God.
- To deny oneself means once, finally and for all to dethrone self and to enthrone God.
- To deny oneself means to obliterate self as the dominant principle of life, and to make God the ruling principle, more, the ruling passion, of life.

We need to submit our self and our will, to the will of God and make our priority that which is important to Him. We must not be conformed to the world and its thinking but rather be transformed by the renewal of our minds, making our bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).

The spiritual growth and maturity of the child of God is seen as we become more and more like Christ. This is accomplished by becoming dead to self and alive to Christ.

The apostle Paul lived in this manner. In **Galatians 2:20** he said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Romans 6:11(NKJV) Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Challenge: Are we dead to sin, or are we still running after the things of the flesh? Our behaviour will show us...what is it that we are doing? We can even ask the Lord to show us where we get it wrong.

Psalm 139:23-24 (NKJV) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

HAVE WE PUT OFF UNGODLY RELATIONSHIPS?

Too often we enter wrong relationships in love, in business and in entertainment. God warns us about this!

2 Corinthians 6:14-16a (NKJV) Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial (the devil)? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.

- We don't read about Jesus having a friendly relationship with the devil.
- Idol's in God's temple would not be fitting!

So how do we think we, as God's temple will fare if we have idolatrous relationships?

The word "temple" here comes from the Greek, "*naos*" which referred to the Holy of Holies and not to the general temple area.

Hebrews tells us that we come boldly before the throne of grace, but we can't come in there dragging our old idols, or our old, ungodly friends, we come alone, having been cleansed in the blood of Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:17 (NKJV) Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

Challenge:

What ungodly relationships are there in our lives that need to be broken? Who is pulling us down spiritually? Who are we sinning with? It's time to end those relationships and get rid of all items that are linked to that relationship!

ARE WE PUTTING OFF TREATING OUR BODIES AS A TEMPLE?

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NKJV) Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

This scripture refers to the body of believers – the church, but the church is made up of people who are also the temple. Here we find a warning that anyone who destroys the temple are in danger of being destroyed by God.

1 Corinthians 6:19 says: "and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Challenge

Have we put off slandering and running down the church , or do we still allow ourselves to do it, effectively destroying God's temple?

What about not looking after our physical bodies?

- ***Are we still treating our bodies as our own, to do as we please with them?***
- ***Do we have habits that control us and cause damage to our bodies? Too much alcohol, smoking, overeating, lack of exercise etc?***
- ***How much longer are we prepared to continue abusing our bodies?***

Romans 12:1 says we must present our body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. It goes on to say that this is our reasonable act of worship!

CONCLUSION

God wants first place in every area of our lives. How long will we put it off? How long will we only partially surrender? How long will it be until we pick up our cross, crucify our flesh and follow Jesus wholly and completely?

- We need to change our view on eternity.
- We need to realise that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- Today is the day to crucify our flesh and die to self.
- Today is the day to cut off ungodly relationships.
- Today is the day to treat our body as a temple and stop doing the things that destroy it!

Let us stop procrastinating about this then, it's time to start living holy lives in body, mind and spirit.

We have the Holy Spirit to help us. Today is the day to choose to go forward differently. We are called to grow and thrive. Let us do so, empowered by the Spirit of God. We can do all things through Christ Jesus, who strengthens us.