

## God's Heart on Procrastination

### Bible: God's Heart Regarding Diligence

- God's heart is that we work diligently, because diligence produces progress. (1 Timothy 4:15)
- God's heart is that we be diligent to fulfill the promises we make to Him. (Ecclesiastes 5:4 NLT)
- God's heart is that we diligently encourage one another to do loving acts and good works for others. (Hebrews 10:24 NLT)
- God's heart is that we diligently do the works of God while we can. (John 9:4)
- God's heart is that we be diligent in finishing the work God gives us to do. (John 17:4)

### Proverbs: The Negligent vs. the Diligent

- The negligent are never filled but the diligent are fully filled. (Proverbs 13:4)
- The negligent have a blocked way but the diligent travel the highway. (Proverbs 15:19)
- The negligent focus on fantasies but the diligent focus on work. (Proverbs 12:11)
- The negligent experience poverty but the diligent experience profit. (Proverbs 14:23)
- The negligent are filled with poverty but the diligent are filled with food. (Proverbs 28:19)

### Epistles: The Directive to Be Diligent

- Diligently work to share with others. (Ephesians 4:28)
- Diligently work for the Lord, not others. (Colossians 3:23–24)
- Diligently work in order to not be a burden to others. (1 Thessalonians 2:9)
- Diligently work with your hands. (1 Thessalonians 4:11)
- Diligently work or you won't eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

## Checklist for Possible Procrastinators

- Do you delay starting projects?
- Do you collect materials for projects but struggle to move forward?
- Do you hinder the efforts of others by delaying your part?
- Do you deliberately work slowly or inefficiently?
- Do you resent suggestions on how to be more productive?
- Do you avoid competition and other situations where you might not succeed?
- Do you act indecisively and force others to make decisions?
- Do you shirk responsibility by focusing on the faults of others?
- Do you dodge making or keeping commitments?
- Do you become irritable when asked to do something unpleasant?
- Do you find yourself consistently late for appointments?
- Do you neglect obligations by supposedly "forgetting" them?
- Do you fail to return phone calls?
- Do you postpone sending correspondence until it is too late?
- Do you live in a state of disorganization?
- Do you become addicted to time-wasting activities (for example, TV, shopping, computer games, social media)?
- Do you feel "spiritually bankrupt," yet reject the Bible's riches?
- Do you desperately need direction, yet fail to pray for God's guidance?
- Do you resist God's correction by rejecting His conviction?

## The Procrastinator's Excuses

- "I'm not ready to begin right now."
- "I'll work better if I finish this other stuff first."
- "I must wait until I'm truly inspired."
- "I'll do a better job when I feel up to the task."

- “It’s too late in the week to start.”
- “I need a larger block of time.”
- “I don’t have enough information yet.”
- “If I wait, I’ll do a first-class job!”
- “I’ve already done some of it. I’ll finish it later.”
- “I still have time.”
- “I’ve really been working hard. I deserve a break.”
- “I can always stay up all night and finish it then.”

*“There is a way that appears to be right,  
but in the end it leads to death.”*

(Proverbs 14:12)

## Key Verses to Memorize

### For the Procrastinator

*“Be very careful, then, how you live—  
not as unwise but as wise,  
making the most of every opportunity.”*

(Ephesians 5:15–16)

### For the Motivator

*“Let us consider how we may spur [motivate]  
one another on toward love and good deeds.”*

(Hebrews 10:24)

## Key Passages to Read

### For the Procrastinator

Proverbs 24:30–34

### For the Motivator

John 13:1–16:11

## 10 Steps to Preventing the Decay of Delay

1. **Acknowledge** that procrastination smothers all sense of motivation. (Proverbs 21:25)
2. **Tell** God that you are tired of fighting the clock. Pray for wisdom and help in using the time He has given you. (Ecclesiastes 8:6)
3. **Keep** a record at all times, tracking everything you need to do and checking off each task with the exact day and time you complete it. (Ecclesiastes 3:17)
4. **Refuse** to “major on the minors” but keep the “main thing” the “main thing” by prioritizing each day the five most important tasks to be done. Then do them in that order. (Proverbs 28:19 NASB)

5. **Estimate** the time needed to complete each project—be realistic. Then add additional time for unexpected interruptions, reviews, and delays. (Luke 14:28–29)
6. **Resist** the temptation to feel guilty if an unforeseen situation arises making it impossible for you to complete all your tasks in one day. Continue to persevere the next day. (Hebrews 10:35–36)
7. **Consider** the impact of your negative self-talk when you get emotionally stuck. Change your thoughts and internal dialogue to reflect God’s truth about you and to please God. (Psalm 19:14)
8. **Ask** a friend or someone wise to help you if you struggle with getting started. (Proverbs 12:15)
9. **Yield** your life to Christ, giving Him total control. (Galatians 2:20)
10. **Claim** God’s promise to provide everything you need through your dependence on Christ. (2 Peter 1:3–4)

## How to Be the Motivator for a Procrastinator

- **Pray** for the procrastinator. (1 Samuel 12:23)
- **Propose** an accountability plan. (Proverbs 27:17)
- **Note** the unmet needs. Sometimes procrastination is a result of trying to fulfill unmet needs. (Psalm 57:2 ESV)
- **Encourage** the use of a daily calendar. (Proverbs 15:32)
- **Properly** order your priorities. (Proverbs 13:19)
- **Group** similar goals. Make separate lists for your calls, correspondence, errands, and chores. Then set aside at least one hour of each day on your calendar to do the most important tasks on each list. (Ecclesiastes 3:17)
- **Limit** the number of options. Fewer choices mean faster decisions, and fewer choices also mean less second guessing. (Proverbs 4:25, 27)
- **Compliment** small accomplishments. (Proverbs 25:11 NKJV)
- **Use** the sandwich method to confront failure (the bread of praise, the meat of the matter, and the bread of encouragement). (Proverbs 15:23)
- **Establish** and maintain boundaries. (Ecclesiastes 5:5)
- **Set** flexible, alterable arrangements. (Romans 14:19)
- **Acknowledge** your own mistakes. (2 Corinthians 11:29–30)
- **Avoid** being manipulated into accepting another’s responsibility. (Galatians 6:5)
- **Present** the ultimate purpose. God’s purpose for every Christian is to be conformed to the character of Christ! (Romans 8:29)

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”*  
(Ecclesiastes 4:9–10)

## Questions and Answers

***“Is there a difference between procrastination and laziness?”***

Many people assume that procrastinators are always lazy; however, laziness is just one cause of procrastination. If you are lazy, you are negligent in handling your responsibilities because of choosing not to do what you need to do.

On the other hand, you may be highly productive and in no way lazy, but still procrastinate by simply failing to start a task on time or not accurately predicting how long it will take. This procrastinator desires to work and yet delays, whereas the lazy procrastinator lacks desire and refuses to work.

*“The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.”*  
(Proverbs 15:19)

***“Is it ever right to procrastinate intentionally and postpone working on a task?”***

No, it’s never right to procrastinate, but to postpone a task can be prudent. These are two different issues. Procrastination and postponement are not the same. You may have legitimate reasons for postponing a task.

For rational reasons, you need to postpone or even not do a task when ...

- It isn’t your highest priority.
- It will keep you from a previous commitment.
- It will compromise your health.
- It appears urgent, but it isn’t important.
- It is important, but it is not your task to complete.
- It is you who should do it, but beginning it now would be premature.

Be aware that doing a task could be right, but the timing could be wrong. Proverbs 19:2 says ... *“Desire without knowledge is not good—how much more will hasty feet miss the way!”*

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