

“Do Not Procrastinate the Day of Your Repentance”
CRE Women’s Retreat
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The following information was presented at the women’s retreat at Camp Wilderness on Saturday, October 6, 2007. Obviously not all of what was said is included in this work, but hopefully the work is “enough” for the reader to view the overall picture the instructor had in mind. May God bless you as you consider the day in which we live.

“And now my brethren, I wish from the inmost part of my heart, yea, with great anxiety, even unto pain, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance” (Alma 10:27).

“And now as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore I beseech of you, that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; For after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness, wherein there can be no labor performed. Ye can not say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye can not say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world. For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance, even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his” (Alma 16:229-233).

“But behold, your days of probation are past: ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation, until it is everlastingly too late, and your destruction is made sure; Yea, for ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head. O ye people of the land, that ye would hear my words. And I pray that the anger of the Lord be turned away from you, and that ye would repent and be saved” (Helaman 5:51-53).

“Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits...” (Exodus 22:29).

Procrastination stands in opposition to the principle of first fruits.

“I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments...” (Psalms 119:57-64).

From the foregoing scriptures we see that the Lord is concerned about not only our response, but the timeliness of it.

“For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalms 119:89).

In Luke 14:26-34 Jesus tells us to “settle” this in our hearts—that we need to forsake all and follow Him.

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (I Peter 5:10).

The quality of being settled (grounded—firm—unmovable) is generally obtained after our sufferings have purged us of the things of lesser value. This is when we see His perspective and relinquish our rights and views on what should happen, when it should happen and how it should happen.

We need to be settled on certain issues. There are many more.

- **God knows best:** Sometimes we convince ourselves that our ways are better.
- **God has already won the war:** We may be fighting in a prolonged battle right now, but He has won the war. The scripture says Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This issue has already been settled in eternity.
- **God's ways are higher than our ways:** The illustration of the copier: A copier counter always finishes before the last copy spits out. It begins to count from the moment it draws the paper from the tray. We may look at the counter and say, "It is complete." Then wait several more seconds while another five copies come out. We need to recognize that sometimes God says something, and we can't get in the way. It is not our job to open up the copier and help the paper along. It is enough for us to stand in faith and wait until He has completed the job. It is tempting to take what is on the exit tray and leave, but we are not getting all God had in store for us. Our impatience shows our lack of trust and reliance upon Him.
- **We give up the right to be offended:** This is one of the most glaring errors in our people. We need to recognize that to take offense is generally the greater sin. We also need to recognize that many times when we are offended it is because there is sin within us. This needs to be repented of, not covered over with more anger (which is a codependent trait). When we came into covenant with Christ, we gave up our identity for a new one in Him. We need to turn over our right to be offended to Him.
- **We will be persecuted for His name's sake:** The persecution we have faced is nothing compared to the early Christian church or even the early Saints. Some may argue that this is because we are not living the way we should and the defining line between the church and secular society is not clear enough. Settle this in your minds—when the church decides to play the real role of the chaste bride we will be persecuted. The devil, manifested through the lives of people he has influence over, will lash out in hatred and vitriol against the Spirit of God within you.
- **We will be tempted and tried:** We are all tempted. However, we need to realize that God desires to "try" us as well. The only way for Him to accomplish His purpose of seeing His reflection within us is to turn up the heat and allow the dross to come to the top so it can be removed. The "trying" process is a Godly process and needs to be embraced, not scorned or run from.

Procrastination

1. to defer action; delay
2. to put off till another day or time; defer; delay
3. to put off doing something, especially out of *habitual carelessness or laziness*.
4. to postpone or delay *needlessly*
5. *postpone doing what one should be doing*

By delaying action on things we should do—repenting of the sins that separate us from our Father—we say one of the following four things:

- I know better.
- It's not important enough.
- I'm afraid of it.
- I don't like it.

Let's examine each one a little further and look for the root cause.

- **I know better.**
I act like God; my decisions are better than His. PRIDE
- **It's not important enough.**
My judgment is better than God's. PRIDE
- **I'm afraid of it.**
I fear man instead of God and His laws. Misplaced faith/trust in self.
- **I don't like it.**
My heart's desires are not God's desires. This means my heart and the attitudes reflected from my heart are enmeshed in sin.

The effects of sin are upon us in so many ways we can't begin to comprehend the depth into which sin has distorted humanity. In the world of addictions there is a term used that applies to all humanity at some level. It is codependency.

Here are a couple of definitions.

Codependency—A kind of addiction, a relationship addiction

A set of maladaptive, compulsive behaviors learned by family members in order to survive in a family which is experiencing great emotional pain and stress.

Individually we are all codependent at some level. We all have an addictive relationship with ourselves. Now the true meaning was designed for relationships outside of self, but since we know, according to Paul, that we "war" within ourselves, we can see that the spirit fights the flesh. In a sense, we deal daily with two opposing views—the devil's and God's. Because sin has covered ALL of humanity, the devil's view rules in most of our actions, attitudes, etc. We all have established a love affair with our self.

Collectively, doesn't the second definition describe the Restoration fairly well? We have established behaviors to keep each other at arm's length because of lack of trust and love. Are we not experiencing great emotional pain and stress? We have forsaken God's laws in regards to reconciliation and making amends with our brothers, and instead we have adopted the "fight" or "flight" mentality.

We are not in a well-adjusted relationship with God. The result of sin has skewed our perspective; it has warped our hearts desires; it has grown its tentacles of death around the roots of our thoughts. Our attitudes, our emotions, our expectations—ALL need to be cleansed with the power of the Holy Ghost in our lives.

Are we fair-weather Saints?

Would we change our lives if we knew sudden destruction was coming upon us? Would we do things differently if we knew one of our family members would be gone tomorrow? Regardless of what is coming, our calling remains the same. He has called us to perfection (Matthew 5:50). We cannot base

our decisions to change or not change based on what “might” happen. This is where our faith needs to be “settled” in certain things.

How to achieve true repentance.

Repentance is granted from God—it is a gift (Acts 11:18).

Jesus preached repentance two different ways:

- 1) He did not mince words with the people who knew better. He was up front, bold, even confrontational (Matthew 3:33).
- 2) He told parables about the kingdom of God/heaven. In so doing, He let the people recognize that their own lives didn't match up to what He was describing. This would motivate them to change. He used this method with people who didn't know any better or people who were honestly trying and searching (Romans 2:1-4, Matthew 13).

Generally two causes motivate us to repent/change.

- 1) Fear
- 2) Love

Repentance based on fear will endure but for a season.

Repentance based on love has the opportunity to last forever because love lasts forever.

What foundation will we base our repentance on?

How do we find—access—discover God's love for us?

Read His word.

- Holy writ is filled with examples of His love to us.
- By the power of His word worlds were framed. If we examine our lives and realize the need of His power to change, create anew, then we need to be reading the testimony of Him—His word.

Acknowledge His hand in all things, good and bad.

This keeps us humble and continually recognizes our station/place before the Almighty.

Attend worship experiences.

We need each other. God did not give all the gifts of the Spirit to anyone here. We need to worship collectively so that we might benefit from the gifts of the Spirit He placed within the church to help us. **DO NOT MISS WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER SERVICE!** This is the one service that just by its format can allow us to be blessed by a multitude of people and the gifts of the spirit that God has given to them.

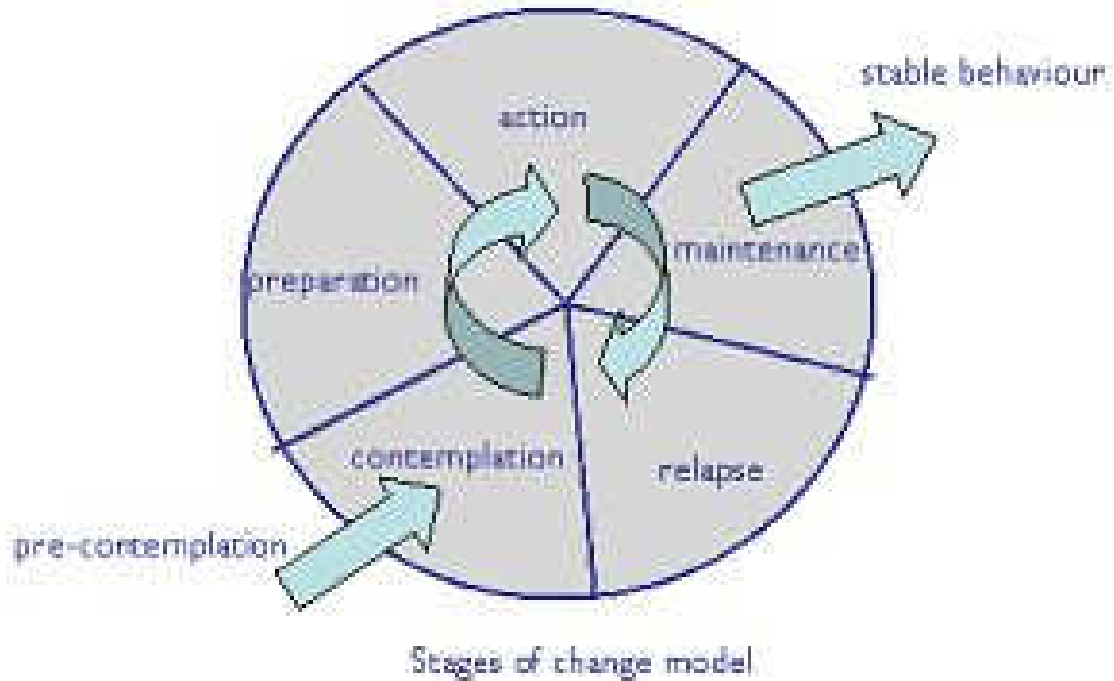
Examine our weaknesses.

God promises to take the weak things of the world and make them strong. Our weaknesses are only problems if we DON'T humble ourselves (Ether 5:27-28).

Pray for God's love (Moroni 7:53).

This should go without saying, yet the scripture says, “Ye have not because ye ask not...” (James 4:2).

Stages of Change (mainly used for addictions, etc.).



Stages of Change Are:

- Pre-contemplation (not yet acknowledging that a problem behavior needs to be changed)
- Contemplation (acknowledging there is a problem, but not yet ready or sure of wanting to make a change)
- Preparation/Determination (getting ready to change)
- Action/Willpower (changing behavior)
- Maintenance (maintaining the behavior change) and
- Relapse (returning to older behaviors and abandoning the new changes)

The key to “maintenance” is to replace that which we have “repented” of with something that bears good fruit. If you have the habit of gossiping, each time you “catch” yourself saying those things, immediately turn it into a “blessing fest” or a time of “praise” for people. It may be hard, but it can be done. God desires for us to come closer to Him. He has invested ALL the powers of heaven to assist us. Replacement is exemplified in Matthew 12:38-9.

In conclusion, procrastination is in opposition to God’s divine plan. It is a lesser response based upon either misplaced faith or pride. We need to overcome the codependent tendencies we have and step out in faith and allow the Lord to cleanse our mind, our attitudes, our expectations, our emotions, our habits, etc. If you do not have the faith to do this, then you are directed to pray for the desire (Alma 16:151). True repentance can succeed based upon fear. Most of the time, however, it only endures for a season, and a relapse occurs. For repentance to “endure,” we need a solid foundation—love. God’s love endures forever. We need to access His love more in our lives. As we draw closer to His love, we will desire to purge our lives of the things that separate us from Him. His love will motivate us to change. His grace (power and ability to do God’s will—Hebrews 12:28 and 4:16) allows us to change.

I found the following online and thought it represented the sins of omission very well. Sometimes we sin by what we do. Other times, it is what we DON'T do that is counted as a sin. This is just a good illustration to show us how far sin has crept into our lives.

Misdeeds and Missed Deeds

It isn't the thing you do;
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you a bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun.

The tender word forgotten,
The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent,
Are your haunting ghosts tonight.

The stone you might have lifted
Out of a brother's way,
The bit of heart some counsel
You were harried too much to say.

The loving touch of the hand,
The gentle winsome tone,
That you had no time or tho't for
With troubles enough of your own.

The little acts of kindness
So easily out of mind;
Those chances to be helpful
Which everyone may find.

No, it's not the things you do,
It's the thing you leave undone
Which gives you the bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun.

- *Margaret Sangster*

See chapter ten, "Trusting God with the *What Ifs*," in *Calm My Anxious Heart* by Linda Dillow (1998).