

A Little Story and a Big Lesson

By Andy Robison

All right, I'm going to let everyone in on one of my blunders in life, because it so well illustrates a biblical point. My car registration needed to be renewed by October 1. So, I took my paperwork to the courthouse in mid-September and got the registration and decal. Good move, I thought. I'm on top of things. Making many stops in town that day, I piled the decal and card in with the other stuff on the passenger side front seat, and it stayed there for a while. For the next two weeks, I kept seeing that decal there and saying to myself, "Ah, I'll just leave it there so I can remember to do it later." The front seat of my car is a pretty good repository for all different kinds of stacks from day to day -- mail, books, sermons and brotherhood periodicals, etc. Those stacks get changed about daily as I shuttle stuff back and forth from home to the office.

When Oct. 1 came, I drove around all day without the proper decal, because I'd forgotten to put it on. In the evening, remembering, I thought I'd take the five minutes necessary to do it. Get a wet paper towel and a dry one, clean off the spot on the license plate, and stick the thing on. Trouble was, it wasn't there in my front seat any more. It wasn't in the back seat either -- or under the seats, or under the mats, or in any of the newly discovered crevices in that little vehicle. Apparently, it had attached itself to one of the stacks. And that stack, inevitably, had made it to the trash -- which had been picked up that morning.

Hopeful I was wrong about the trash assumption; I went straight to the office to check other recently transported stacks. And it wasn't there. I called someone who might have had one of the stacks of mail. Not there, either. The next day, I looked up the number for the Department of Motor Vehicles. No problem, they said. I'd just have to fill out a replacement form. So, I went to the DMV and did that. Now, the problem there was that when they checked their computer, there was no record that I'd renewed my registration because the courthouse doesn't turn in the renewals taken there until the end of the month. So, they couldn't help me until I went across town to the courthouse and got a receipt printed from where I had, indeed, paid for it. So, I did that, and went directly back to the DMV. There, a nice lady wrote me out a temporary registration and gave me a [new] decal. The very next thing I did was to go to the public rest room there, get a wet paper towel and a dry one, and put that decal on my car before I left their parking lot. Matter solved.

So, is there a point to all this rambling? Yes, and I suppose you see it coming. Had I put the little decal on in the five minutes it would have taken as soon as I got home that day I had bought it, I would have saved myself about two hours running in all, and a night of worry to boot. The point is not about my idiocy or my seeking of sympathy for such a minor problem. It is that the old enemy *procrastination* can prove costly, on many different levels.

Israel of Ezekiel's day was a procrastinator in penitence. Having been warned repeatedly about consequences of disobedience, they not only persisted in their ungodly behavior, but began to mock the warnings. Ezekiel 12:21-28 addresses the problem that so common was such flippant dismissal of the prophecies that it became literally "proverbial" or a proverb in Israel. The proverb was: "The days are prolonged, and every vision fails" (v. 21). God set that proverb to rest. He proclaimed that his warnings would find their fulfillment in the days of those postponing souls (v. 25).

Jesus, in preparing people for the inevitability of his second coming and impending judgment, told parables that demeaned the deeds of the dawdling and showed the natural consequences of disaster that came upon them (Matthew 24:48-51; 25:1-13). Very straightforwardly, the Proverb

writer warned, "Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1).

The most unsettling of all biblical teaching regarding procrastination is probably the unmentioned-upon shelving of the opportunity to obey the Gospel that was Felix's: "Go away for now;" he told the apostle Paul, "when I have a convenient time I will call for you" (Acts 24:25). Perhaps the reason this is so unsettling is that we see it repeated in the lives of friends, family and co-workers on a daily basis. "I'll wait for a better time to obey the Gospel" is the spoken or unspoken excuse many give in response to the saving message.

Great care should be taken not to make this mistake. My failure to complete five minutes of prompt action cost me two hours of errand running. That's nothing. Some people's failure to get right with God will cost them for timeless eternity. That's something. Indeed, that is *everything*.

Upon confessed faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins. Live faithfully. Begin promptly. These will be actions that you will be glad you did.