



## Procrastination and Time...

# The Double Edge Sword

Written by His Grace Bishop Youssef

ΠΕΡΙΩΤ ΕΠΤΑΙΗΟΥΤ ΝΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΑΒΒΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗ

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

*“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”  
(Psalm 90:12)*

**D**id you know that the time lost due to procrastination can never be regained? Have you ever heard a fellow high school or college youth without goals for their future, frustratingly say “I do not know what to study in college.” Or “I do not know what I want to do with the rest of my life.” Or “I do not know what I am looking for within a marriage?”

We should live resourcefully with goals and objectives for major decisions within our lives. Wisdom in setting goals and decision making can only come with careful thought. Often quoted are St Paul’s instructions to the Ephesians, **“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, and redeeming the time because the days are evil.” (5:15-16)**

The first step in determining goals is to constantly practice self-examination as to our spiritual lives and then our productive use of so called “spare” time. Our relationship with God helps to assist in determining goals set and the use of spare time. If God is present in our daily lives and we are following His commandments then we will certainly



St. Clement of Alexandria

incorporate Christian goals into our future.

Research to gain knowledge must follow self-examination in setting goals for oneself. St Clement of Alexandria (c.195) said, *“To the spiritual man, knowledge is the principal thing. As a consequence, he applies himself to the subjects that provide training for knowledge. He takes from each branch of study its contributions to the truth. So he studies the proportions of harmonies in music. In arithmetic, he notes the increasing and decreasing of numbers and their relations to one another ... Studying*

*geometry, which is abstract logic, he comprehends a continuous distance and an unchanging essence that is different from these bodies. Again, through astronomy, he is mentally raised from the earth; he is elevated along with the Heavens.”*

Spare time utilized in front of constant TV programming, endless emails on the computer, or attending too many social events does not allow for quality time set aside for contemplating goals and objectives for one’s life. This misuse of spare time will not allow you to discover your God given abilities, gifts, and talents. With the careless waste of time life becomes shorter, **“Man is like a breath;**



***his days are like a fleeting shadow.” (Psalm 144:4)***

One must continue in researching college majors until satisfactory goals are attained or questions answered as to what one is seeking in marriage. We are told, ***“The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.” (Proverbs 21:5)*** Once the goals are realized you must press toward them. ***“Make level the paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; keep your foot from evil.” (Proverbs 4:26, 27)***

If we do not use time wisely for our benefit and live in continuous procrastination, it will be used for our detriment and thus time is referred to as the Double edged sword of life. Many lost opportunities can be attributed to poor use of time. The Holy Book of Proverbs 18:9 says, ***“He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.”***

Just as goals for education, goals in seeking a marriage partner are often not seriously examined but often left unidentified. Tertullian (c. 205) speaks to the seriousness of marriage and its need for goals between two believers. ***“It is of one hope, one desire, one discipline, and one of the same services. Both are brethren; both are fellow servants. There is no difference of spirit or flesh. Rather, they are truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, the spirit is one, too. Together they pray; together they prostrate themselves. They perform their fasts together, mutually teaching, mutually exhorting, and mutually sustaining. They are both equally in the House of God; equally in straits, in persecutions, in refreshments. Neither has to hide from the other; neither shuns the other; neither is troublesome to the other.”***

Time used to the fullest advantage positively encourages productivity and work. All that you learn of marriage should be incorporated into what you are seeking from a marriage partner for the rest of your life to make marriage as compatible and productive relationship as possible. All that you learn during your college years will contribute to your future work either directly or indirectly.

The Holy Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes teaches us, ***“There is a time for every purpose and for every work.” (3:17)***

In the Holy Gospel of St John we are taught, ***“I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.” (John 9:24)*** This specifically tells us God sanctified industry and work. The future was taken seriously and time spent purposefully. God Himself worked without ceasing, ***“My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” (John 5:17)***

The early Church Fathers placed great value upon education and its contributions to the Holy Scriptures and placed many expected outcomes or goals upon the learning itself.

***“Greetings in God, my most excellent sir and venerable son, Gregory, from Origen...Your natural talents might make of you a finished Roman lawyer or a Greek philosopher...But I am anxious that you should devote all the strength of your natural talents to Christianity for your end. To this end, I wish to ask you to extract from the philosophy of the Greeks what may serve as a course of study or a preparation for Christianity. And from geometry and astronomy, take what will serve to explain the sacred Scriptures. Origen (c. 240)***



The person who plans his objectives and goals in life and realizes the means to achieve them within acceptable time limits will know the satisfaction of fulfillment and accomplishment within his life. It has often been said that some will succeed because they are destined to, but most succeed because they are determined to. *“And having done all, to stand. Stand therefore...”* (Ephesians 6:13-14)

Time is more valuable than great wealth. It can never be replaced. Let us all pray to the Lord to grant us wisdom to use our time well.

*“Pray about everything; tell God your needs and don’t forget to thank Him for your answers. If you do this you will experience God’s peace in life.”* (Philippians 4:6) ✚

## Hail to the Martyrs

Χερε νωον ἁμαρτυρο

“Who through faith:  
Stopped the mouths of lions,  
quenched the violence of fire,  
others had trial of mocking, scourging,  
yes, and of chains and imprisonment.  
They were stoned, sawn in two,  
tempted, and slain with the sword.  
They wandered about in sheepskins and  
goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and  
tormented. They wandered in deserts and  
mountains, in dens and caves of the earth,  
of whom the world was not worthy.”  
(Hebrews 11:33-38)