

## The Pitfall of Negligence

“All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing.”

Edmund Burke

Today I want us to look into the pitfall of negligence.

It isn't a hole with a sharp drop-off.

It has long walls that slowly slope downward; barely noticeable, a slight pitch, until you reach bottom.

It's like the erosion of a riverbank that eventually causes the building to fall.

It's like the classic 'frog in a beaker' science experiment in which a frog is placed in a beaker full of cold water. Then a small flame is placed beneath the beaker and the temperature slowly rises. The frog is unaware of the temperature changes until it's too late. So it is with the pitfall of negligence: we are unaware that we have been in a trap until we are caught.

Negligence is knowing what's right and almost doing it.

It's easy to identify when we've been negligent –

- When something breaks down due to no maintenance.
- When you're so busy with life or projects and have run out of energy, time, and still have must-do things to finish.
- When the squeaky wheel is so loud that you can't hear yourself think, let alone do the important things.

Don't allow the immediate to crowd out the important.

Have we become activity addicts?

One man declared,

“Much of our activity these days is nothing more than a cheap anesthetic to deaden the pain of an empty life.”

There are a lot of activity addicts who'd love to stop running...  
if they only knew how.

Solomon wrote,  
 “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction  
 And do not forsake your mothers teaching;  
 Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head  
 And ornaments about your neck.” (Pr. 1:8-9).

“My son, if you will **receive my words**  
 And **treasure** my commandments within you,  
**Make your ear attentive** to wisdom,  
**Incline your heart** to understanding;  
 For if you **cry** for discernment,  
**Lift your voice** for understanding;  
 If you **seek** her as silver  
 And **search** for her as for hidden treasures;  
**Then** you will discern the fear of the Lord  
 And discover the knowledge of God.  
 For the Lord gives wisdom;  
 From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;  
 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;  
 He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,  
 Guarding the paths of justice,  
 And He preserves the way of His godly ones...” (Pr. 2:1-8).

If...Then... Conditional Phrases.

--blessings that we receive if we meet the conditions.

I remember a ten-question quiz that was handed out in school. It began with the first instruction: “Read through the entire exam before starting.”

Most of the students quickly went on to complete the rest of the exam, knowing that we would only have about ten minutes. When we got to the last problem we read,  
*“Ignore all the previous questions and sit quietly until the end of the quiz.”*

The positive opposite of negligence is attentiveness, or paying attention.

**Attentiveness is**

...giving a “hearing heart” to the people or projects that need our attention.

**The opposite** is being distracted or negligent.

Our priority must be to pay attention – to listened with all our hearts to the Lord.

Hebrew words used for “pay attention”

**Azan** – “to give ear” -- “to expand, to broaden our the ear.” (hearing horn)

**Shama** – attentiveness to God – “to hear intelligently.”

**Qashab** – attentiveness of a son – “to prick up the ears, i.e. hearken”

Gk. Ekkremamai – *to hang upon the lips of a speaker*, i.e. to listen closely

It describes the attentiveness of the crowds who listened to Jesus teach.

Do we pay attention? ...especially to the details of life?

How Important is attentiveness?

I read a small poster,

My wife says I never listen!

...At least that's what I think she said.

Before God brought the Children of Israel into the Promised Land He said,

Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. (Deut. 4:9)

*“What you have seen and heard, pass on to the next generation.”*

“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall **teach them diligently** to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up...

Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, then watch yourself, that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Deut. 6:6-7, 10-12).

God urged Israel to **diligently teach** their children the commands of the Lord.

He also warned them of the danger of prosperity- **forgetting the lord**.

After being in the land for a few years God's warnings came about.

"The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel... All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel." (Judges 2:7, 10).

God told Israel to instruct their children, explaining the works and commands of God. He warned them of the dangers prosperity could bring, distracting them from their calling to pass on the faith to their children and neglect to raise up the next generation in the fear and instruction of the Lord.

"Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals, and they forsook the Lord the God of their fathers, who had brought them out the land of Egypt and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger."  
(Judges 2:11-12).

**How did Israel move from a place of favor and blessing...  
to such a degrading state of idolatry?**

Tozer answers,

"The untended garden will soon be overrun with weeds; the heart that fails to cultivate truth and root out error will shortly be a theological wilderness."

Our answer: fill up the emptiness with Christ, who is the fullness of all things.

**The First Psalm gives a priority message,**

How blessed is the man

who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,

Nor stand in the path of sinners,

Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

But his delight is in the law of the Lord,

And in His law He meditates day and night. (Ps. 1:1-2)

**Blessed** – ashrey – "O the blessednesses" (pl),

Two-fold blessing for what you don't do and then for what you do.

Vs. 1. Don't do this...

Vs. 2. Do this...

- **Don't follow bad advice - *the Counsel of the wicked***  
– Don't listen and follow the advise of the wicked.  
**Walk** – live out wicked advise (hang around)
- **Don't Participate in sinful activities - *the Path of sinners***  
**Stand**- stubborn stand "*column*"- (Participation in their sin)
- **Don't have the perspective of *sinful* - *Seat of scoffers***  
**Sit** – to sit in the seat, to teach, to act the instructor or teacher  
(Promote evil by word and deed)

**Contrast:**

Vs. 1 A blessed man does not identify with evil thinking, actions, or perspective.

Vs. 2 What a blessed man does.

<sup>2</sup>**But** his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law He meditates day and night

**Delight** – the delight of his heart, pleasure, to treasure, a loving delight that is undistracted by other delights. It is a light that shines bright in the darkness.

To delight in good, we must reject/renounce evil.

**Law of the Lord** – The word of God – All Scripture is inspired and is profitable...

... My Word ... which goes forth from My mouth  
...will not return to Me empty,  
Without accomplishing what I desire,  
And succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. (Is. 55:11)

Demonstrates delight by meditation on the Law of the Lord

**Meditation:** Ruminare – “to chew the cud”

He makes Me lie down in green pastures...

**Day and night** – Is it possible to meditate on the Word of God all the time?  
If we take in God’s Word so that it is in us (i.e. memorization),  
then it will be available to us at all times.

It takes determination to exercise your mind and heart to become “world class”.

**Olympics poster:**

“Repetition, Passion, and discipline make an amazing athlete.”

**Outcome: Success** - And in whatever he does, he prospers

If you **seek** her as silver  
And **search** for her as for hidden treasures;  
**Then** you will discern the fear of the Lord  
And discover the knowledge of God. Pr. 2:

**Chapter of contrast:**

**He will be like a tree**  
firmly planted by streams of water,  
Which yields its fruit in its season  
And its leaf does not wither;  
And in whatever he does, he prospers. (Ps. 1:3)

**But the wicked,**  
But **they are like the chaff** which the wind drives away. (v. 4)

If we are willing to build God’s priority into our lives,  
then we will experience the potential of God’s plan through us.