

I Shouldn't Have Waited

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I did something I was proud of a few days ago, but it caused me to have feelings of regret. I have been running regularly at the Fitness Center as part of my Regular workout routine. When I got on the treadmill to run, I felt particularly good and quickly increased the speed to a little over seven miles per hour. Since the Navy requires only that I run a half mile semiannually as part of my physical fitness test, I usually try to gauge how fast I run for that half of my run, then continue on for a full three miles.

On this occasion, I had a particularly good time for the entire three miles, but especially for the first half. In fact, when I got back to my office, I checked my old folders that contain my physical fitness records and discovered that the last time I ran that fast, I was thirty-four years old. Since I am now forty-seven, I thought that was a pretty good achievement. Further investigation revealed that I had only run that fast once since I had come on active duty. When I was in Chaplain School in 1984, I ran a 7:21 mile for three miles, but that was the last time I ever ran that fast.

If I had such a good score, why would I have feelings of regret? It is because I wish that I had not waited so long to get serious about getting myself into shape. I saw one of my Chapel family members, Don Dally, at the Fitness Center and told him that I wish I had not waited so long. He told me that is true, but I need to remember that it really is never too later to start. He's right. At least I began and have been consistent in my efforts. I have missed a few times now and then and have splurged on my diet on occasion, but at least I have worked at it for over a year now.

Unfortunately, too many people procrastinate the same way with regard to their spiritual health. We always assume that we will have time to pay attention to that later on or we find things that we think are more important to do right now. The problem is, later on never seems to come and we get to the point that we think to ourselves, "Well, if I haven't done anything up until this point, there is no use in starting now." But Don's advice to me is just as valid. The only time it is too late is when we die. God is happy whenever we begin to put our spiritual life in order.

If there is any regret over waiting until later in life is that which we feel because once we make our spiritual life a priority, it allows us to see what is truly important in life. Money and possessions are all of a fleeting nature, but spiritual matters continue for eternity. We look back on our lives and feel regret over many lost opportunities, or over the impact we could have made on lives that we chose to pass up.

But there is also the danger that if we put it off, we may miss out on the opportunity altogether. We do not know when we will die. Life is too uncertain for us to risk something so important. But the hardest part is beginning. Don't miss another day. Don't procrastinate another moment. The good part is that we can do it right now, wherever we are. We just need to pause a moment to talk to God.

Make your spiritual health a priority. Don't wait until it is too late. You may really regret it.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in church on Sunday.