

*Practically applying the character quality of*

# diligence

vs. Slothfulness

*"Investing my time and energy to complete each task assigned to me."*

**By: Stephen Leckenby**

"I don't have time to get everything done." If you are like me, you have made this statement on countless occasions, either to yourself or out loud to others. However, you may find, as I have, that the issue is not the amount of time we have, but rather how we are investing it. Then again, this struggle does put you and me in good company.

You may have heard the story about Charles Schwab and his struggle with work overload. He was referred to a time management/organizational consultant to help with this problem. The first thing the consultant asked Schwab to do was to simply make a list of everything that needed to be accomplished. This done, Schwab called the consultant back. The next assignment was to prioritize the list but to complete only the first item. This was accomplished fairly quickly. The consultant then asked Schwab to complete item number two on his list and call when he was done. These instructions were repeated for every item until the list was completed. Schwab was looking at a clean desk and still wondering what "great truth" of time management and organization the consultant was going to reveal. When he called the consultant to ask for the next step in the process, the man simply said, "Send me a check."

Did Charles Schwab recognize the "great truth" in this exercise? Can you and I? I'm sure you've probably made

many to-do lists in your life. You have probably worked to prioritize these lists so the most important projects are completed in a timely manner. I happen to have one on my desk right now. Is there a certain power in having such a list? I would venture to say that, for Mr. Schwab, the list was not the point. Sure, it is always more efficient to be organized, but what good does a nice list do for you if the items aren't completed? The key to this daily exercise of "getting it all done" is simple diligence.

done to the best of our ability (thoroughness), and getting it done while maintaining important relationships, especially the ones at home (sensitivity). As we choose to recognize that this concept of diligence in not rocket science, it eliminates our excuses for not demonstrating it on a consistent basis.

On a side note, the Character First bulletin on Diligence is very enlightening. It delves into the life of Thomas Edison going far beyond many of the common stories and exploring the moment-by-moment demonstrations of diligence that permeated his life from his childhood to his death. If you are not already receiving these bulletins on a monthly basis, contact our office to find out how you can begin a subscription to this valuable resource.

Incidentally, Charles Schwab was so grateful to the time management/organizational consultant that he sat down and wrote the man a check for \$25,000. Good character is more valuable than we may ever realize.

### Commitment to Diligence

- I will finish my projects.
- I will follow instructions.
- I will concentrate on my work.
- I will do a job right.
- I will not be lazy.

I think we can sometimes complicate our application of good character. We somehow separate character from day-to-day activities. Diligence is a great example of a quality that can be applied very clearly to each task at hand. It is more than just doing the job. It's getting it done in a timely manner (punctuality), getting it

### How DILIGENT are you?

- Do you complete an assigned task quickly and enthusiastically, or do you reluctantly fit it into your schedule?
- Do you plan ahead on a job to do it the quickest and most efficient way?
- Do you go the extra mile, working wholeheartedly to complete each job?
- Do you use every minute of company time to make your employer successful?