

THE IMPORTANT VS. THE URGENT

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'Writer's Corner'

I haven't been writing as much lately. Between my own visit to the man with the knife and stay in the hospital and the trials facing the brown eyed girl, it has been difficult to focus on telling the stories I love so much. It is funny what will distract us and keep us from being in tune with the things that really need our attention.



When I worked, I referred to that as the "tyranny of the urgent." That is noting that the urgent will tend to take precedence over the important, the former eating up the time we have to allocate and keeping the important from ever being addressed.

I remember a story a preacher friend of mine liked to tell of when he was a student at Lipscomb University working for a Nashville publishing company selling Bibles. It seems he and his partner (they always traveled in pairs) were working their way through a neighborhood on a sunny but cold March day when they encountered a little ditty dog that soon began to follow them as they walked purposefully down the sidewalk. When they turned and went up the front walk to a pleasant looking white bungalow, the little bitty dog turned and followed them up the walk. Well, my friend thought to himself, the little bitty dog must belong at this house.

They rang the bell and a quizzical looking June Cleaver type housewife swung open the door and the little bitty dog trotted inside.

"Yep, just as I thought," my friend said to himself, "the little bitty dog does live here."

Well, the little bitty dog did not live there, but a brown and white Jack Russell with an attitude did live there. Immediately, the Jack Russell attacked the invader dog and the two dogs raised quite a ruckus in the foyer of the nice lady's house. Soon the nice lady joined the fight using the broom on both dogs and my friend managed to avoid the growling, snarling dogs and get the door opened long enough for both the visiting team dog and the home team dog to be broomed outside. Finally the dust settled, everyone scraped up the pieces of their broken dignity, and my friend, in what he called, "the most inspired moment of his life," turned to June Cleaver and said, "Good morning Madam, my name is Randy, and my partner and I are from Jehovah's Witnesses."

When I asked him if he sold June a Bible, he snorted, "Do you know how impossibly hard it is to sell Bibles door to door with a dog fight going on in the foyer?"

That's the way it is in life, we are kept from doing what we had planned because of a dog-fight in the foyer. We don't accomplish what we intended to with our families

because of a dogfight in the foyer. We don't do the work as a church, accomplish the growth, or help the needy as we intended, because of a dogfight in the foyer. We don't hit our sales targets, accomplish the improvements we planned, or make the changes we so badly needed, in our business, because of a dogfight in the foyer.

I suppose one of the hardest lessons to learn is sorting the important from the urgent and deciding how to allocate the appropriate time to each. Jesus tried to teach this lesson to Martha when she decided to tattle on her sister Mary. If I were to paraphrase him, he said, "Martha, you are consumed with the urgent, but Mary has gotten her arms around and her fingernails under the important."

Let's hope we learn how to apply these lessons in our families, our businesses, and our churches. Have a blessed day.

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*Read more about Robert Rogers Chaffin in the Chaffin files and read more Writer's corner stories at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>