

## Scott's Thoughts -- Important vs Urgent

Written by Scott Evans

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"Lord, help me to focus on the important things today and not the urgent things."

I hear and read cute little saying all over Facebook and Twitter and just about everywhere else every day. They often bring a wistful smile or chuckle and I do enjoy reading them. However, that little saying above was not something I read but something that I heard Dr. David Jeremiah say recently while listening to his television program. I must say that this short little statement hit me like a ton of bricks!

First, let's take a look at the definitions of important and urgent. Important is defined as *"of great significance or value; likely to have a profound effect on success, survival, or well-being."* The word urgent is defined as *"a state or situation requiring immediate action or attention."*

After I looked up those words, I proceeded to really think about my life and I decided to make a list. On one side of the paper, I listed the important things in my life that day; things like my relationship with Christ, reading God's Word and praying, my family, my friends, etc. On the other side of the paper, I listed the urgent things of the day; things like going to work, paying a bill that was due, making a doctor's appointment, cleaning the house, etc.

My day transpired as most do and at the end of my day, I took this exercise just a little bit further. I took the list that I had made earlier back out and then attempted to figure out how much time I spent on the urgent things of the days versus the important things of the day. It turned out that I spent about three times as much time on the urgent things as I did the important things! I realized quickly that this is not a good thing!

That evening, God directed to me this scripture verse; *"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."* That verse found in Romans 15:4 seemed to drive home the point that I had to make some changes and spend more time in God's Word. After all, it is through God's Word that Christ speaks to us and helps us to better focus on the important instead of the urgent. The scriptures give us comfort and patience and in them we find hope! This all sounds very important to me!

Since that day, I have begun each day praying that prayer that opened this article. I have also done my part in making an effort, and even lifestyle changes, to concentrate on the important more than the urgent. Now, I am very much of a realist! We cannot ignore the urgent things of the day! You must go to work and make a living. You need to take care of your needs. You need to do the cooking and cleaning in your house. Yes, life is full of commitments and, of course, we need to keep them!

However, I have learned a few other things since attempting to live by that statement. If you make a conscience effort to put the important things first, and ask God for help, many of the urgent things on your list will fall into place! I have also learned how important many things we take for granted are. First of all, sleep! I have changed my sleep habits, which were poor at

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best, and I have been sticking to the amount of time I allow for sleep. Second, eating! Now, my life is quite conducive to eating at all kinds of strange times and eating whatever I can find on the run. However, I find that if I stick to normal, and healthier, eating habits, I feel much better and therefore am able to better stick to the schedule of the rest of my day!

The most important thing that I have learned, is to start each day with prayer! Prior to changing my schedule, the urgent things would often “force” me to jump out of bed and get right into my day. However, I now allow just a few extra minutes to talk with God and ask Him to direct my paths that day and help me to focus on things I should be focused on. I have also scheduled time in my day for daily devotions (instead of fitting them in when/if I had time) and other activities.

Now, all of this is great on paper and many days; the days go exactly as planned. However, there are days when my day goes nothing as planned. I have learned in these circumstances that God is still directing my day and it will go as He planned. On these days, I try to stay close to God in prayer and it seems that He always makes a way and gives me that time I need to focus on the important things of the day.

So, I challenge you at this Christmas Season to change your daily schedule! Try focusing on the important things and not on the urgent things. Allow God to control your day and continuously talk to Him through prayer throughout the day. If you need to, change your habits and I can promise you, from personal experience, that your life will change and you will find your days running smoother than you ever imagined!