

“Distracted or Discipled?”

(1) Getting Started	(3) Digging Deeper
<p>Prayer Requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take prayer requests and spend time as a group in prayer, either at the beginning or end of the meeting. <p>Getting To Know You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you relate to most? Mary or Martha? And why? 	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader: have someone read out loud • Excerpt from “The Tyranny of the Urgent” (attached) <p>Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this article relate to what we just read in Luke? • What are your thoughts on it?
(2) Read Scripture	(4) Application
<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 10:28-32 <p>Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it so significant that Mary is described as “sitting” at Jesus’ feet and “listening”? How does this validate women in Jesus’ plan for the Kingdom of God? • What words are used to describe Martha? Why do these characteristics so often go together? • How does Jesus respond to each sister? • What does this tell us about what Jesus’ greatest desire is for each of His followers? 	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the greatest distractions in your life that keep you from spending time with Jesus? • What are some ways you can re-prioritize your life so that you can focus on what is “important” instead of what feels so “urgent”? • How can this group help you do that? <p>Close in prayer for each other.</p>

Tyranny Of The Urgent

Is there really enough time to do all that God requires of you?

By Charles E . Hummel

Have you ever wished for a thirty-hour day? Surely this extra time would relieve the tremendous pressure under which we live. Our lives leave a trail of unfinished tasks. Unanswered letters, unvisited friends, unwritten articles, and unread books haunt quiet moments when we stop to evaluate. We desperately need relief.

But would a thirty-hour day really solve the problem? Wouldn't we soon be just as frustrated as we are now with our twenty-four allotment? A mother's work is never finished, and neither is that of any student, teacher, minister, or anyone else we know. Nor will the passage of time help us catch up. Children grow in number and age to require more of our time. Greater experience in profession and church brings more exacting assignments. So we find ourselves working more and enjoying it less.

JUMBLED PRIORITIES

When we stop to evaluate, we realize that our dilemma goes deeper than shortage of time; it is basically the problem of priorities. Hard work does not hurt us. We all know what it is to go full speed for long hours, totally involved in an important task. The resulting weariness is matched by a sense of achievement and joy. Not hard work, but doubt and misgiving produce anxiety as we review a month or year and become oppressed by the pile of unfinished tasks. We sense uneasily that we may have failed to do the important. The winds of other people's demands have driven us onto a reef of frustration. We confess, quite apart from our sins, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

Several years ago, an experienced cotton mill manager said to me, "Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important." He didn't realize how hard his maxim hit. It often returns to haunt and rebuke me by raising the critical problem of priorities.

We live in constant tension between the urgent and the important. The problem is that the important task seldom must be done today or even this week. Extra hours of prayer and Bible study, a visit with that non-Christian friend, careful study of an important book: these projects can wait. But the urgent tasks call for instant action-endless demands pressure every hour and day.

A man's home is no longer his castle; it is no longer a place away from urgent tasks because the telephone breaches the walls with imperious demands. The momentary appeal of these tasks seems irresistible and important, and they devour our energy. But in the light of time's perspective their deceptive prominence fades; with a sense of loss we recall the important task pushed aside. We realize we've become slaves to the tyranny of the urgent.

DEPENDENCE MAKES YOU FREE

Freedom from the tyranny of the urgent is found in the example and promise of our Lord. At the end of a vigorous debate with the Pharisees in Jerusalem, Jesus said to those who believed in Him: "If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:31-36).

Many of us have experienced Christ's deliverance from the penalty of sin. Are we letting Him free us from the tyranny of the urgent? He points the way: "If you continue in My Word. " This is the way to freedom. Through prayerful meditation on God's Word we gain His perspective.

P.T. Forsyth once said, "The worst sin is prayerlessness." We usually think of murder, adultery, or theft as among the worst. But the root of all sin is self-sufficiency--independence from God. When we fail to wait prayerfully for God's guidance and strength we are saying, with our actions if not our lips, that we do not need Him. How much of our service is characterized by "going it alone"?

The opposite of such independence is prayer in which we acknowledge our need of God's instruction and supply. Concerning a dependent relationship with God, Donald Baillie says: "Jesus lived His life in complete dependence upon God, as we all ought to live our lives. But such dependence does not destroy human personality. Man is never so truly and fully personal as when he is living in complete dependence upon God. This is how personality comes into its own. This is humanity at its most personal." Prayerful waiting on God is indispensable to effective service. Like the timeout in a football game, it enables us to catch our breath and fix new strategy. As we wait for directions, the Lord frees us from the tyranny of the urgent. He shows us the truth about Himself, ourselves, and our tasks. He impresses on our minds the assignments He wants us to undertake. The need itself is not the call; the call must come from the God who knows our limitations. "The LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103: 13-14). It is not God who loads us until we bend or crack with an ulcer, nervous breakdown, heart attack, or stroke. These come from our inner compulsions coupled with the pressure of circumstances.

Excerpt taken from from *Tyranny Of The Urgent* by Charles Hummel.

Copyright 1967 by Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship of the USA.

Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400,

Downers Grove, IL 60515.