# *“BALANCING LIFE”*

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ow complex, even chaotic, does life seem to you in our instant-everything, always-on, Internet world? If the pace is overwhelming at times, how do you regain balance?

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A client told executive coach Bobb Biehl, “Every day for three years I’ve been asking myself the same question.” “*Same* question *every* day,” said Bobb. “What’s the question?”

“It’s this: ‘**What’s important?’** I ask myself every day.” Later I’ll tell you the answer he’s been getting.

Everything we do fits in seven “drawers” in “life’s dresser.” Beside each one write a phrase on “What’s important” to you. Let me know when you’ve filled all your drawers.

* 1. Personal growth
  2. Professional
  3. Physical
  4. Family/Marriage
  5. Financial
  6. Social
  7. Spiritual

**QUESTION:** Who’d like to read us his answers?

# *“Heads, it’s Urgent. Tails, it’s Important.”*

Someone said, “There are too many things that I *have* to get done that some of the things that I know I *should* get done remain *undone*.” In his classic, 32-page, 1967 booklet, *The Tyranny of the Urgent*, Charles Hummel says we’re likely to fritter away precious years of life if we, on our own, determine the wisest use of our time. But if we put our trust in Christ, making His priorities ours, we can be sure we’re doing what *God* wants. And that’s truly “what’s *important*,” but not always what seems to be so *urgent*.

No different than today, Jesus’ stint on earth was a 24/7 fast break. He had a dickens of a time getting His “doofus dozen” to see who He was and why He’d come. Then there were groupies, freeloaders and true believers who clung from town to town, mesmerized by *what* and *how* He taught.

And those testy, legalistic, extremist Pharisees and the snooty, know-it-all, ruling class Sadducees. Both factions interrogated Jesus in public with hair-splitting, Crossfire questions, trying to paint the Messiah as a big fraud. When that was foiled, they conspired to hang Him for blasphemy and treason.

We’re in ancient Israel. Christ is about 30, kicking off His three-year earth-career. Freaky John the Baptist is telling anyone who’ll listen – you know the type – “Hey, Messiah’s coming.” Some say, “Yeah, sure, our prophets have been bangin’ that drum for 1,000 years.” Others buy into John’s “Repent of your sins and be baptized to be saved.” **Let’s pick it up as John’s about to baptize his hero:**

“9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’

12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’ 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.

19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, 24 ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are–the Holy One of God!’

25 ‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ 26 The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What’s this? A new teaching–and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.’ 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 30 Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. 31 So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

32 That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33 The whole town gathered at the door, 34 and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: ‘Everyone is looking for you!’

38 Jesus replied, ‘Let us go somewhere else–to the nearby villages–so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.’ 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

40 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’

41 Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

43 Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: 44 ‘See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.’ 45 Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.” (Mark 1:9-45; NIV)

**QUESTION:** How do *you* respond when everybody’s pounding you with demands? How did Jesus respond?

**QUESTION:** When Jesus told the anglers, “Come with me,” do you think they felt pressured to do so? What about their careers? Would *you* have said “yes” to Him?

**Let’s hear Jesus reveal how He stuck to what’s important, undeterred by what might seem so urgent:**

“14 With the Feast already half over Jesus showed up in the Temple, teaching. 15 The Jews were impressed, but puzzled: ‘How does he know so much without being schooled?’ 16 Jesus said, ‘I didn't make this up. What I teach comes from the One who sent me. 17 Anyone who wants to do his will can test this teaching and know whether it's from God or whether I'm making it up. 18 A person making things up tries to make himself look good. But someone trying to honor the one who sent him sticks to the facts and doesn't tamper with reality.’ (John 7:14-18, The Message)

**QUESTION:** Quite the challenge Jesus whips out. He says, “I’m not makin’ this stuff up; check it out; try this life I’m teaching, and see if it’s from God or not.” Why do you s’pose more folks don’t take Him up on that challenge today?

**Let’s read about the next gauntlet Jesus tosses down:**

“So Jesus tried again. ‘When you raise up the Son of Man, then you will know who I am--that I'm not making this up, but speaking only what the Father taught me.’” (John 8:28, The Message)

**QUESTION:** How would your day look if your conversation were seasoned by God’s wisdom as found in the Bible?

**Let’s see how Jesus handles some hecklers:**

“36 Why do you yell, ‘Blasphemer! Blasphemer!' at the unique One the Father consecrated and sent into the world, just because I said, ‘I am the Son of God'? 37 If I don't do the things my Father does, well and good; don't believe me. 38 But if I am doing them, put aside for a moment what you hear me say about myself and just take the evidence of the actions that are right before your eyes. Then perhaps things will come together for you, and you'll see that not only are we doing the same thing, we are the same--Father and Son. He is in me; I am in him. (John 10:36-38, The Message)

**QUESTION:** What evidence do you see today that leads you to believe Jesus is or isn’t who He claimed to be?

**Let’s overhear Jesus’ heart-to-heart with His men:**

“But so the world might know how thoroughly I love the Father, I am carrying out my Father's instructions right down to the last detail.” (John 14:31, The Message)

“I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.” (John 15:15, The Message)

**QUESTION:** What impact do you think it would’ve made on you to tour with Jesus for three years?

**Here’s how Paul sums it up to Christ’s followers in Rome:**

“1 Take your everyday, ordinary life--your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life--and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. 2 Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” (Romans 12:1-2, The Message)

**QUESTION:** “What will you take from Jesus’ and Paul’s words?”

# *“What’s Important?”*

The way Hummel figured, “The momentary appeal of [urgent] tasks seems irresistible and important … We realize we’ve become slaves to the tyranny of the urgent.” Remember the fellow who asked himself daily for three years, “What’s important?” His answer was always …… “Less and less!”

There’s *nothing* more important than placing our trust in Jesus who took to the cross *all* of your sins and mine, as our Substitute. Would He have left heaven to come to earth and be spit on and crucified if there were any other way to rescue us for Himself? If you’re not absolutely sure that you belong to Him, forget all the urgent loose ends you need to tie up, and close this deal today. It’s **“What’s Important!”**

His Deal

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