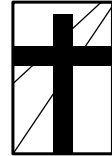


Pastor's Pen



The Chaplain's Chapter



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Yes, we have the start of a new look this month. The Pastor's Pen is morphing into The Chaplain's Chapter. And, I am staying with the "devotional" style everyone seems to like. So, here is a little more on "FOCUS".

Amber's Example

When our Great Dane Amber comes into the house, she immediately goes to the room where my wife's office is and lays on her own bed on the floor. She curls up and is asleep in minutes, after I greet her, pet her, let her kiss me and she lifts her mighty right paw up to me to let me know she loves me and wants to be close. Amber gets it! Her priorities are family and security. Basically, just loving and being loved. She would spend every moment of every day in the house with us, if we let her.

What are you focusing on? Most people would automatically answer "family and friends". But, aren't these the same people who work longer hours than they need to? Do they shut out their family when their favorite TV show is on? Do they not hear someone talking to them when their face is in the computer? When reading the paper or a book, is their answer to their small child reflexively "Later, honey. In a little while". "Daddy" or "Mommy's busy right now". Take a look at your check register, or the last many transactions on your on-line banking page. There's an old saying about what you can tell about a person's priorities by where his/her money goes.

Here's another one. No one on their deathbed winds up wishing they had spent more time at work. Doesn't Jesus just want to love us and for us to love him? Isn't it possible, prudent and pragmatic for us to gain the same focus in our lives that is inherent in the animals we have dominion over? Isn't that what He meant when he said "*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*"? Of course, that doesn't just mean our family and friends; as Christians, that means all mankind. But, for now, the theme is FOCUS. So, let's learn this lesson of Amber's Example first.

My fervent prayer is that you ask God to show you how your priorities need to be realigned, and to give you the strength to do it. Please join with me, and everyone who reads this in taking just a moment to pray:

"Dear Lord, your greatest commandment was that we learn to love as you and love one another. You gave us this commandment not as servants, but as friends. Bless us with the hearts and heads to do your will. Bless our friends and families as we strive to focus on our relationship as believers with your Word, the Holy Spirit, and each other. Amen." (See John 15)

- *Alex*