

How to Handle Life's Interruptions

If we made a list of movies that are universal favorites, I'm sure *Heidi* would make the list.

[crickets]

You know, *Heidi*, the much-loved, much-watched TV version from 1968?

[crickets]

I just assumed everyone loved this movie, since so many people watched it when it premiered. Even rough-and-tumble, couch-potato, let's-watch-football-all-day manly men watched it.

On November 17, 1968 the Oakland Raiders and the New York Jets were both playing a strong game. They were both top-rated teams, and the game proved it. However, the game ran long, and at the top of the hour, NBC replaced the game with the made-for-TV movie *Heidi*—even though there were only 65 seconds left in the game!

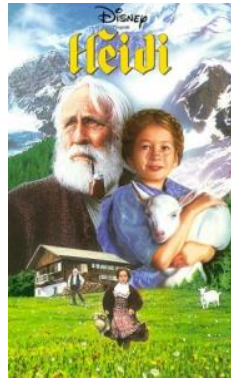
NBC expected high ratings for the children's movie, but what they received instead were high rantings from football fans.

What makes the decision even worse was those 65 seconds were the best moments in the game. The Raiders scored two touchdowns within nine seconds. A record number of people missed a great event because a decision was made to stick to the schedule.

Schedules are important. I'm rather married to my to-do list and calendar. But sometimes I've got to set aside my schedule for something unplanned. And more important.

Life.

As the cartoonist Allen Saunders said, "*Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans.*" So, I've developed a new approach to those interruptions. Instead of fussing that some unplanned



event is interrupting my life and ministry, I see those interruptions *as* my life and ministry.

- People call me while I'm working because they want to talk. Or need to talk. (*Funny, but my deadlines are still always met.*)
- My wife wants to go for a drive on the Saturday I planned to work in my shop. (*Looking back, I don't remember what I was building, but I remember the drive with my wife.*)
- An acquaintance calls and asks for help moving everything out of the house he grew up in. (*And now that acquaintance is a friend.*)
- My son wants to build some furniture for his house. I set aside my own project, because I've learned to value the time spent with my son.

Jesus had the same approach about interruptions. Even as He was on His way to raise a young girl back to life—a pretty important task in my opinion—He let a woman interrupt His schedule (Mark 5:21-43). His ministry was full of these interruptions.



"Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk — not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).

James reminded us that we can make plans, but we really don't know what the day will bring (Jas. 4:13-14). We can plan, but God may well be in the unplanned events—those interruptions—that pull us away from what we thought we'd be doing. I have days where I fly through my schedule. And then I have other days full of unexpected tasks and interruptions—and those are just as important.

I'd hate to miss a great life moment because it was not on my to-do list.

And watching *Heidi* is not on my to-do list.