

BIG ROCKS

One day a professor was hired to provide training in efficient time management to a group of heads of major businesses. He had just one hour for the subject. He told them, "We are going to do an experiment." From beneath a table, the professor brought an enormous pot that would hold several gallons, which he gently placed in front of him. Then he held up a dozen rocks, each about the size of a tennis ball, and gently placed them one by one into the big pot. When the pot was filled to the brim and it was impossible to add another rock, he looked at his students and asked them, "Is the pot full?" They all answered, "Yes." He responded, "Really?" Then he brought from under the table a container filled with gravel. He meticulously poured this gravel onto the big rocks and gently stirred the pot. The bits of gravel filtered between the rocks down to the bottom of the pot. The professor repeated his question: "Is the pot full?" This time the brilliant students were beginning to understand his scheme. One of them answered: "Probably not!" "Right!" the professor replied. Again he bent down and this time brought some sand from under the table. He poured it into the pot. The sand settled into the spaces between the rocks and the gravel. Once again he asked: "Is the pot full?" This time in unison the group answered: "No!"

"Right!" the professor replied. As the students expected, he took the pitcher of water that was on the table and filled the pot to the very brim. Then the professor said: "What important truth does this experiment demonstrate for us?" The boldest student, who was no slouch, answered: "It demonstrates that even when we think our agenda is completely full, we can always add more meetings and more things to do if we really want to." "No," the professor replied, "That is not it! The important truth that this experiment demonstrates for us is the following: if you do not put the big rocks into the pot first, you will never be able to make them all fit later."

Then the professor asked them, "What are the big rocks in your life? Your health, family, friends, your dreams, your professional career? What you need to remember is the importance of putting the big rocks into your life first; otherwise you run the risk of failing to do so. If we give priority to junk - the gravel, the sand, - we fill our life with futility and we no longer have time to devote to the important things."

Is prayer one of the big rocks in your life, or does it take a back seat to unimportant things?

How about seeking Holiness?

Are our Conference meetings filled with gravel or the big-rock subjects that need to be discussed?

What does your Conference consider its big rocks? In our annual and strategic plans, are the most important concerns included first, or is the plan just a big container of everything large and small, more or less important to the life of the Society and its mission?

