



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

## The Junk Man Cometh

Every year about this time I start throwing things away. Somehow I have a way of accumulating a lot of things in my writing studio which at one time had great meaning — but now are worthless. Finally, in a move which is closer to panic than deliberation, I start throwing things away.

This year it started with the small things. The floor of my studio around my typewriter desk is littered with books, papers and tapes. I have to put things on the floor because my desk is piled high with books, papers and tapes. Books I can put on the shelves, one day to take down and read again. But it is the rest of the things which consume my time — and my space.

I ran a time estimate recently and found I was spending more than half my day answering letters — most of them written to tell people I could not do what they were asking me to do. Then there are the cassette tapes, hundreds of them, which have arrived across the year from well-meaning people who want me to

listen to them in my spare time. I don't even have time to listen to my wife — much less hundreds of 90 minute cassette tapes.

So, I spent day before yesterday — all day and late into the night — throwing things away — including a lot of things which have gone unanswered and unlistened to.

A much wiser man than me once said that in order to do the things God is telling you to do, you have to lay down a lot of things He hasn't told you to do.

After I finished with my floor and my desk top, I started to work with my desk drawer. A favorite set of Esterbrook pens — 27 years old — which I have not used in 15 years. Now so clogged with dried ink they will never write. Worn out batteries. A rusty razor blade. Dried up rubber bands. Bent thumb tacks. Broken pencils. Screws, mysterious keys and rubber stamps with ancient addresses on them. It is amazing what collects in a desk drawer.

The last thing to go was a blue tassel that has hung all these years from the front edge of a bookshelf

over my desk. It was the tassel that came off my high school graduation cap — Vero Beach High School, class of '50. I lingered over that for a few moments. It had sentimental value. It brought back memories of old friends and happy times. But today's memories are even happier. Why hang on to a gravestone, or a tassel. So I fingered it fondly, then gently dropped it in the trashcan with the rest of the things which have cluttered my life for these last months — and years.

With this done I think it will be easier to get on to the bigger things that demand my attention. Like selling the boat. Getting rid of the motorcycle which has sat in the garage for a year without running. And resigning a job at a publishing company that makes more demands than it pays dividends.

The idea of coming down to the end of the year, discarding the unimportant, and entering the home stretch without the encumbrances of clutter and trash is exciting. I can hardly wait until 1979 gets here — so I can start saving junk again.

*See I lost word*