

## **“Keeping Jesus First” Luke 10:38-42**

**In the Gospel of Luke, there is an account that shows how busyness and stress gets in the way of what matters most!**

**I preface this story with a warning:** Mary and Martha are often contrasted as though each believer must make a choice.

**It’s evident that the Lord wants each of us to imitate Mary in our worship and Martha in our service. Blessed are the balanced!**

**Thought Of Our Passage:** “Keeping Jesus First Is A Balance Between The Going And Doing And The Sitting And The Listening.”

**1. Verse 38 – Decision**

**2. Verse 39 – Devotion**

**3. Verse 40 – Distraction**

**4. Verses 41-42 – Distinction**

**1. Verse 38 – Decision:**

Luke 10:38 – “Now” – note the Context of this story: Luke 10 – A Jewish religious leader was discussing the two great commands of Scripture: That we are to love God with all our heart, mind and soul and that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus used the story of “The Good Samaritan” to illustrate how we should love our neighbor.

“Now” – Jesus uses this account of Martha and Mary, to illustrate how we should love God; Keeping Jesus First.

“as they were traveling along,” – This section of Luke 9:51-19:27 is dealing with encounters on the road to Jerusalem.

“He entered a village;” – Luke does not identify the town but John 11:1; 12:1 lets us know that it is Bethany.

Bethany is a little town east of the Mount of Olives.

“The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah” By Edershiem – he notes that, based on John 7:14 and other passages in John’s gospel, Jesus arrived during “The Feast of Tabernacles.”

“and a woman named Martha” – From what we can glean from this passage and in John 11-12, Martha lived with her sister Mary and their brother Lazarus.

“Martha welcomed Him into her home.” – This is to be noted. It appears that Martha is a widow, for she is the head of the household (“her home”).

## **2. Verse 39 – Devotion:**

Luke 10:39 – “She had a sister called Mary,” – Mary is seen 3X in the Gospel records, and on each occasion, Mary is in the same place: at the feet of Jesus.

1. Mary sat at His feet and listened to His Word, Luke 10:39.
2. Mary fell at His feet and shared her sorrow, John 11:32.
3. Mary came to His feet and poured out her worship, John 12:3.

“who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.” – Mary is listening intently to the Word!

“seated at the Lord's feet,” – The phrase “sitting right in front and close to Jesus’ feet.” Mary wanted to be as close to Jesus as possible.

James 4:8-10

## **3. Verse 40 – Distraction:**

Luke 10:40 – “But Martha was distracted” – This word “distracted” means “to be pulled apart, to be pulled away or dragged away, to be torn in different directions.”

“with all her preparations;” – The details begin to tear us up!

The implication is that Martha wanted to hear Jesus herself, she wanted to be seated at his feet too, but she was pulled away by the sense of her “duties.”

Fretting about the meal has robbed Martha of the joy of her service to the Lord.

## **Loss Of Focus Produced 4 Dangerous Attitudes In Martha:**

- 1. Loss Of Focus Caused Martha To Resort To Self-Pity:** "said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone?'"

What We Do With Jesus is far more important than what We Do For Jesus!

Again, it is not an either/or situation; it is a matter of balance.

It was the attitude that she was doing it with that became the problem. Martha's problem was one of balance, between the going and doing and the sitting and listening.

- 2. Loss Of Focus Causes Martha To Become Angry At Others:** "and she came up to Him," – We need to note what this phrase means – "stepping up to, or bursting in or upon Jesus. It is an explosive act as is the speech of Martha."

Someone who we do not feel is pulling his or her weight and who has let us down.

John 15:5 – "For without Me you can do nothing."

- 3. Loss Of Focus Causes Martha To Find Fault With Others:** "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

Finally she says "Then tell her (What's Her Face! Not by name) to help me."

- 4. Loss Of Focus Causes Martha To Question God's Care:** "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone?"

We often think we know better than God. Martha's thinking of "care" was Mary helping her!

## **4. Verses 41-42 – Distinction:**

Luke 10:41 – "But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha," – Jesus, by saying Martha's name 2X, was a term of endearment; Jesus is tender to her.

“you are worried” – to “be anxious, to be divided, distracted, to take thought,” Matthew 6:25.

“and bothered” – “to be crowded, to be disturbed, like a storm at sea”

“about so many things;” – Literally, Jesus seems to say to Martha that only one dish was really necessary for the meal instead of the “many” about which she was so anxious.

### **Loss of Focus Can Be Eliminated by Remembering Why We Are Doing What We Are Doing!**

**Martha’s problem was not that she had too much work to do, but that she allowed her work to distract her and pull her apart.**

Luke 10:42 – “but only one thing is necessary,” – The best dish on the table, fellowship with Jesus. This is the spiritual application of the metaphor of the dishes on the table.

**Martha’s problem was trying to impose her value system on Mary.**

“for Mary has chosen” – notice that “there is a choice to be made.”

“the good part,” – Portion; The key is to have the right priorities: Jesus Christ first.

“which shall not be taken away from her.” – This is that which will last! The Word cannot be taken away!

According to John 12:1-2, Martha must have learned her lesson.

### **Application:**

1. Sitting Without Serving Is Powerless. Serving Without Sitting Is Directionless. Serving After Sitting Produces Power And Balance.
2. Martha And Mary Do Not Teach Us That One Served And The Other Did Not, But One Served Out Of Duty And The Other Out Of Devotion.
3. Loss Of Focus Can Be Eliminated If We Will Remember Why We Are Doing What We Are Doing. If Serving Christ Makes Us Difficult To Live With, Then Something Is Terribly Wrong With Our Service.
4. Martha’s Problem Was Not That She Had Too Much Work To Do, But That She Allowed Her Work To Distract Her And Pull Her Apart. She Was Trying To Serve Two Masters.