

Keeping first things first...It was the Apostle John who observed,

NLT John 21:25 *Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.*

Every gospel writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had to pick and choose from many incidents and sayings in Jesus' life, and decide just what to include and what to exclude. Luke is no exception. So when Luke decides to include six or seven sentences about a couple of sisters named Mary and Martha, we need to ask: Why? What point is Luke trying to pass on to his readers? As we examine this passage, let's keep this in mind before us: What occupies your mind occupies your time

The Gospel story begins with Jesus and about eighty of his disciples who had made their way through Samaria.. heading to his three dear friends Lazarus, Mary and Martha home in Bethany. He would occasionally stay with the siblings when He was in Judea, to take a needed break from their preaching, seeking shelter and rest from their travel in what proved to be an unfriendly territory.

- Bethany was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives on the road linking Jerusalem to Jericho.
- It was just over a mile and a half from Jerusalem, or about a half hour's walk. It would have been a very convenient place for Jesus and His fellow Galileans to stay when visiting Jerusalem for a feast day or on some other occasion.

NLT LK 10:38 *As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.*

The Players...**MARTHA**... **Martha opened her home to him...**

- **Martha's invitation indicates her openness to Jesus and open to spiritual things. And wants to honor Jesus by inviting him to her home. Martha's name in Hebrew, incidentally, means "lady" or "mistress (of the house)."**

MARY...Now we meet Mary, named after Moses' famous sister Miriam. While Martha is bustling about the house getting ready for dinner, Both Mary and Martha are disciples of Jesus.

- **The context shows us that Mary had been in the kitchen with Martha but left when Jesus started teaching.** She sits at Jesus' feet listening, a place of humility – the place of a disciple
- **I imagine Jesus seated in a place of honor, perhaps in the house's courtyard, surrounded by eager listeners -- his disciples, prominent members of the community, probably Lazarus, and Mary.**
- That Jesus would encourage her to listen to him as he taught in the house was, in itself, radical.
- Women were lightly regarded by the Judaism of the time. In fact Women were exempt from the study of the Torah. Many rabbis actively discouraged women from learning.
- **Jesus speaks, answers questions, tells parables, and teaches. All the time Mary sits and takes it in.**
- Like most sisters, these two women had conflicts which emerged because of their different personalities, roles, and simply the fact that they were siblings.
- Mary was younger than Martha and the older appears to be in charge. Yet it appears Mary had as many responsibilities as Martha but chose to set aside her tasks and sit at the Lord's feet....Martha was not having it!

⁴⁰ But Martha was *distracted* by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

The word translated "distracted" is Greek *perispao*, "1.'to be overburdened". You probably know exactly the kind of resentment and indignation Martha is feeling. The verb is in the imperfect tense, indicating a continued action in the past. Her distraction has been going on for some time...hospitality done right is a lot of work, she wanted the best for Jesus...probably a lot of herself worth came in serving and doing to well!

"The implication is that Martha wished to hear Jesus but was prevented from doing so by the pressure of providing hospitality.

- **I can see her trying to listen in on what he is saying...but she is distracted by the work...trying to focus on two things**
- **Anyone who wants to serve Jesus will battle between the business of serving him and actually spending time with him.**
- **In fact we battle with that with everyone we profess to love!**
- **Finally, Martha can stand it no longer. She comes to where Jesus is, and seems to interrupt the conversation he is having.**

And Martha is certainly a stressed out lady at this point in time....Her exasperation can be seen in the way she forms her question, " *Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me...?*"
I have talked to Jesus in prayer like that before>>>Don't you care?
Then I inform him of what he should be caring about

*****This is the deal, I am a lot like Martha and I would say most of us are...you see Martha wanted to sit at Jesus feet...too...if there was only not so much to do!**

- But she was angry she could not...she had to much to do...I get like that
- She was frustrated... that if she got the right help, if other people would just do what they she wants them too... her work would get done quicker so she could not sit at Jesus feet too... I to know that frustration
- She was Jealous of Mary that Mary would set aside duty to be with present with Jesus ...man how she do love to do that but she has work to do... ...I can relate to that..
- How many of us put getting work done as more important than being present with people we love who are present?

But for some of us I think something else is going on...and definitely with Martha...

Martha apparently thinks Jesus will totally get it and support her frustration, and respond appropriately by correcting her sister...

- The Lord does care, but not nearly as much about the problem as Martha sees it as He does about the real problem of which Martha is unaware.
- **The Lord is more concerned about Martha's state of mind and priorities than He is about being served a feast later on.. he apparently did not ask her to prepare a feast!!**

LK 10: 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things..."

- **She said this is the distraction keeping her from being with Jesus...**
- **But he corrects her and states ...she is worried about many things... this is not an isolated situation**

- This is just the one right now....but there is always something she is worried about which occupies her mind and takes up her time.
 - Jesus implies this is her way of life...worried about so many things...
 - You know What messes us up most in life about worry? The picture in our head of how it's supposed to be..
 - Worry is a mind distraction and a time killer. Many of the physical and mental ills of our present day are stress related. Why? Because SO MANY THINGS WORRY YOU..it robs us of being present! I miss now! While I live in the past or future
 - Not only is she worried but she is also angry/ upset about many things!! Worrying puts us on an emotional edge...because once again the picture we have in our heads about how it is supposed to be isn't!!!
 - She has a lot of expectations of people, and outcomes ...and there just not being met!!
 - And Jesus just does not seem to care!! ANd he should be caring a lot!!
- Maybe Martha doesn't know how to do relationships well...so she continues to put too much on herself so she is always busy...a martyr...yeah Martha the Martyr...
 - Maybe that is her way to feel worthy...Jesus look what I am doing...notice me...
 - Maybe she is uncomfortable just being with Jesus...she must be doing something for him... so work makes a convenient distraction...
 - Maybe she struggles with I am only worth while if I work...if I perform you will approve of me...I can relate to that...
 - That I always have to serve Jesus...that being with him alone...just him and me is way to personal... I get that...

➤ **Jesus just want us to rest in his presence...and we need to rest in the presence of each other.....**

Why? Because there is always something more to do...something else to occupy our mind and time...for what occupies your mind occupies your time...rest with me...and rest will be in you

MT 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

*******But is the one needed thing... teaches Jesus Martha...**

He tells her....⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Mary has chosen to sit at my feet and receive into her life my teaching...and what she receives will not be taken from her....circumstances wont take it, trouble wont shake it, for you belong to Christ...

NLT Col 3:² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

What does that rest look like? Well there are over 3500 promises in the Bible listen to some of what God has promised us in his word...you can rest in JESUS

NLT 2 Cor 1:20 *For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory. ²¹ It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, ²² and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.*

Every promise is a yes in Jesus... not maybe but yes...no matter what is going on ...God promises it will work out according to his will...

Let me give you some promises:

The humble He will exalt...The Proud he will humble 1 peter 5:5

To all that call on the name of the Lord he will save Rom 10:13

He came to find the lost ...He promised if we hear his voice today he will save us...

He promised if we confess our sin he will forgive and cleanse us

He has promised to the repentant he will restore them

He promised to show us a way to overcome temptations

He promised the sick he will comfort them and To the hurting he promised help

He promised the weary and heavy burdened that if you come to him he will give you rest... He has promised us a new beginning every today

He has promised To the compassionate he will show compassion

He has promised to the generous he will give back generously

He has promised to do immeasurably more then we ask or imagine

He has promised that he has overcome the world

He has promised to judge the wicked and reward the righteous

He has promised that being with him is our greatest reward

To those who believe they will never be shamed by him

He has promised that nothing is to hard for him

He has promised to not forget to forget my sins

He promised the devil cannot harm us... He has promised that the moment we leave this body...we will be in His presence

To those that love him, He has promised to bless our families for a thousand generations

He has promised to hear all our prayers...He has promised to answer all our prayers according to his will

He has promised What is sown will be reaped

He has promised the good work he starts he will finish
He has promised All things will work out for the good of his children
He has promised He will never leave nor forsake us
He has promised He is our strong fortress and protective shield
He has promised that His word is true...the bible
He has promised to discipline us as a good father disciplines his children.

He has promised us a crown of beauty for our ashes, a garment of praise for our despair and joy instead of mourning!

He has promised a place for each of us in his father's, And will come back and take us to be with him

He has promised that to be absent from the body is to be present with him. ...He has promised to wipe away every tear caused from our earthly life here and a future where sin and death no longer exist and there is joy unending

He has promised us a new heaven and a new earth,... and a future there where sin and death no longer exist and there is joy unending

So I say like Alfred E Newman...What me Worry? The promise he made to Mary that what she received by sitting with him... **a finite human being and an infinite God** that transaction would not be taken away....well these things will not be taken away from us!!

It is truly a thanksgiving week!! Slow down and find rest in his promises not in your labors! end

end

NLT Psalm 89:34 No, I will not break my covenant; I will not take back a single word I said. ³⁵ I have sworn an oath to David, and in my holiness I cannot lie: ³⁶ His dynasty will go on forever; his kingdom will endure as the sun. ³⁷ It will be as eternal as the moon, my faithful witness in the sky!

⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

- **Jesus looks for an open home ... -- a person so hungry for spiritual food that she would offer hospitality –**
- **He didn't fund a block of hotel rooms for his crusade team in each town on the itinerary (though that may be a model suited better to other cultures). Rather he taught and waited for an invitation just as he sent out the 72 disciples earlier**
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- **The Mishnah includes some pretty cynical thoughts about women: "May the words of the Torah be burned, they should not be handed over to women.**
- **Rabbi Eliezer (c. AD 90) said, "If a man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law it is as though he taught her promiscuity."**
- **Jesus speaks, answers questions, tells parables, and teaches. All the time Mary sits and takes it in.**

and for the child of God...that means his will will be found Good!!

Rom 12:1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.^[b] ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

^{1KI 19: 4} while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

- **here is a guy who destroyed four hundred false prophets for God!!... and apparently no one really cared, not even God ...it gained him no popularity... it actually did the opposite and put him on the Kings most wanted list**
- **I thought the outcome would be different**
- **completely disillusioned....i am in the desert... I have had enough...take me out**
- **and a little motive has shown thru...A little bit of pride revealed..."I'm no better than my ancestors" which translated means...I thought I was better!**
- **Forty days into his disillusionment...a lot of self talk has been taking place... he comes to this conclusion...**

^{1KI 19: 10} He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

- **I have been a good prophet... totally sold out for you...**
- **not like your people...who not only reject you they kill your prophets...**

- apparently you don't appreciate me, and they don't appreciate me, and no one helps me.... in fact they even are trying to kill me...
- I am the only one who works hard for you...I am all alone... what a waste of time and energy...all for nothing. Now that's a major funk!
- I am completely disillusioned...I have certainly not received the results I worked so hard for...

- Martha was being distracted from her soul's need to sit with Jesus by other things. The other things in this case are not bad things.
- Sometimes, even good things can fill up our lives to the point where we neglect our soul care.
- God has not blessed us with our families, friends, jobs, abilities and other gifts to give us an excuse to abandon sitting before Him.
- Without Him we can do nothing (JOHN 15:5).

- Jesus knows that neither Mary nor Martha can live by bread alone... It was now time to digest some spiritual bread and feed the soul.

MT 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

NLT Matthew 6:25-34 "That is why I tell you **not** to **worry** about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They **don't** plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more

valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ...

*AC 3: 21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to **restore** everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

He learned some couldn't and some could's..

- Peter learned he couldn't undo the promise of God

➤ **That is a huge way we love God.... Spending time sitting with him talking (prying to him...reading listening to him...and how we love each other sitting with those we love be still and know God...be still and know each other...**

➤ @@@@

*²⁹ Take my yoke (**love**) upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke(**love**) is easy and my burden (**faith**) is light."*

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The best followers of Jesus I know and I read about in the Bible are the ones who have struggled with their faith... But they are faithful.

They've had heartache, trouble and disappointment, and sometimes make horrible decisions...but they've stayed faithful through it all.

They know what it's like...

- **To begin as a failure... and fail along the journey**

- To follow all the rules for “success”, but not reach it
- To be told they’re not trying, when they’re working themselves numb
- To know doubt, but overcome it
- To be hurt, but forgive
- To make huge mistakes, but not give up...
- To fall down, but always, *Always*, ALWAYS get up

And because they’ve experienced all that, they can help others through their struggles.



Jesus just want us to rest in his presence...and we need to rest in the presence of eachother.....there is always something more to do...something else to do...rest with me...

MT 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke (love) upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke (love) is easy and my burden (faith) is light."

There's something very dear to my heart that I'd like to share with you -- you personally. Do you have some time right now?"

Song to sit by and be with Jesus... listen we get to bound up with life...

Consider the postage stamp: its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there.

This is what God has promised us in his word

2 Cor 2:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Every promise is a yes in Jesus... not maybe but yes...

Let me give you some promises:

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To the hurting he will help

He has promised us a new beginning even today

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He has promised to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine
 He has promised To the compassionate he will show compassion
 he has promised to the repentant he will restore them
 He promised the weary and heavy burdened that if you come to him he will give you rest
 He promised to show us a way out of temptation
 He promised if we confess our sin he will forgive and cleanse us
 To those who believe will never be ashamed
 He has promised that he has overcome the world
 He has promised that nothing is too hard for him
 He has promised to not forget to forget my sins
 He has promised that the moment we leave this body...we will be in His presence
 He promised the devil cannot harm us
 To those that love him, He has promised to bless our families for a thousand generations
 He has promised to hear all our prayers
 He has promised to answer all our prayers according to his will
 What is sown will be reaped
 What he starts he will finish
 All things will work for the good of his children
 He will never leave nor forsake us
 He is our shield
 He has promised that His word is true...the bible
 He is our great reward
 He will discipline
 He is preparing a place for us
 He will come and take us to be with him
 He has promised to wipe away every tear
 He has promised us a place where sin and death no longer exist
 He has promised us a joy unending
 He has promised us a new heaven and a new earth
 And a home of righteousness
 And he will restore all things

*AC 3: 21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to **restore** everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

He learned some couldn't and some could's..

- Peter learned he couldn't undo the promise of God
- He couldn't help the promise of God
- He couldn't hurry the promise of God

- He could not figure out how the promise would be fulfilled

He learned he could...

- He could believe the promise
- He could depend on the promise
- He could wait on the promise

Leave here today knowing that every promise God has made ...He will keep...Nothing will be left undone...

We have discovered that to walk in relationship with God one must exercise faith... Faith is the unshakeable belief that God will do everything He has promised to do even before there is visible evidence to that effect.

The basis of Faith is that God is Good...

It is a truth we would all do well to continually remind ourselves of.

Because that is the crux... the Reasonableness of Faith is that God is good... it is the Foundation of Faith,

RO 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

This verse is the universal verse for any child of God in any situation on earth. Every message for the save can end with this...because it is so comforting and the comfort comes from it being true.

Any faith you and I hold onto is based on the belief that God is good,

In any area of our lives where we doubt, fear or drag in obedience to God it is because we in our heart of hearts doubt his goodness.

Faith is the unshakeable belief that God will do everything He has promised to do even before there is visible evidence to that effect.

The ways of God are sometimes hidden at first, misunderstood and very often seem contradictory. But the scriptures read in their great sweep and in their progress of time reveal God as Love---A love more expansive and profoundly wiser than human souls can immediately recognize.

*PHP 4: 6 **Do not be anxious** about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

LUKE 11:1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." ^{LK 11:2} He said to them, "When you pray, say:

*" `Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.*

LK 11:3 Give us each day our daily bread.

*LK 11:4 Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation. ' "*

- I Believe Mary took off her apron and sat at Jesus feet...
- **It is Father's day** and we can take a few minutes to sit at our father feet...tell him about what is going on in our life...he cares and will feed our soul...

Moral and Meaning of Mary and Martha

If Jesus was in front of you, would your first thought be to make everything perfect or to stop and spend time with the Savior? What is your mind's attention on? What we give our mind's attention to, gets our heart's affection.

Mary prized the time with Jesus and gave her entire focus to his presence. When Martha complains to Jesus, he gently reminds her of what her focus should be on - building a relationship with Him. Yes, Martha showed wonderful hospitality welcoming Jesus and his disciples in, but she got lost in the distractions.

What is stealing your attention from Jesus today and letting bitterness sneak in? It's time to stop rushing and worrying like Martha and take a seat like Mary. We can set aside time each day to come before the Lord in prayer and reading His word. He offers us peace in the middle of chaos and worries. His grace is sufficient and His mercies are new every morning!

What Happens in the Story of Mary and Martha?

Mary and Martha appear multiple times in the Gospels. Their brother Lazarus gets risen from the dead, and according to the Gospel of John, it was Mary who anointed Jesus with expensive perfume.

However, the most famous story of Mary and Martha comes in [Luke 10](#), when Jesus and his disciples are traveling to Jerusalem and come to the sisters' home. While a meal is being prepared, Jesus starts teaching and Mary sits at his feet, listening ([Luke 10:39](#)). Martha is apparently also listening but distracted by the meal preparation and gets irritated that Mary isn't pitching in. Martha goes to Jesus and says, *"Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me"* ([Luke 10:40](#)).

Jesus' response was unexpected. Rather than tell Mary to help, Jesus says, *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her"* ([Luke 10:41-42](#)).

What Was Martha's Role in the Bible?

While it's easy for modern Western readers to see Martha as a "wet blanket," we need to recognize that Martha was doing what was expected of her. Ancient Roman or ancient Jewish societies generally didn't treat [women](#) well. Educational opportunities were limited, with few women receiving any kind of religious training or apprenticeship in any trade. Very few women had professional jobs – Lydia the purple cloth seller in [Acts 16](#) is a notable exception, and she lived in a wealthy Greek city, the kind of place that works by being cosmopolitan.

As a rule, women in Martha's world were expected to rely on their families or husbands to get by—which is why writers like [E. Randolph Richards](#) and [Tim Harlow](#) have noted the Samaritan woman at the well with five past husbands was not necessarily a harlot. In a world where disease killed many before their time, and men could easily divorce women for not producing children, [the Samaritan woman](#) may have just gone from one relationship to another because that was how she survived. Women were valued for being good wives, keeping the house, and having children. In that light, it's not surprising that Martha's first instinct at Jesus' visit was to make sure the dinner was taken care of. Being the good hostess, the good cook, the person behind the scenes who keeps everything going—these were what most people valued Martha for.

There are also indications in the story of Lazarus' resurrection that Martha was the more pragmatic of the two sisters. When Jesus arrives several days after Lazarus had died, Mary and Martha both tell Jesus that if he'd been there, Lazarus would not have died. When Jesus tells Martha that Lazarus will rise again, Martha replies, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection

on the last day" ([John 11:25](#)). Jesus follows up by asking if Martha believes he is the resurrection and the life, and she says she does believe. The fact that Martha initially seems to misunderstand Jesus, thinking he's telling her to take the long view of the situation, may suggest she was a pragmatist. Pragmatism is not a bad trait, but sometimes it can keep us from focusing on what's really important.

Pragmatism also seems to be part of Martha's attitude at Jesus' visit. The text says that she was "distracted" by making the dinner (the Message Bible's paraphrase puts it, "Martha was pulled away"). This wording seems to suggest that Mary and Martha were both invited to sit at Jesus' feet and learn from him, or at least that offer was open for both of them. Martha apparently took the pragmatic route to get the meal on the table and missed the fact that at that moment, practical matters could pause for something more important.

What Was Mary's Role in the Bible?

Like Martha, we don't learn too much about Mary's personality from the Gospels' accounts. What we do notice is that she clearly wanted to know God and wasn't afraid to show it when Jesus came.

As noted earlier, Mary and Martha lived in a society that didn't value teaching women or giving them much agency. Education for women would have often happened within the family—brothers teaching sisters things they'd learned from school, fathers passing on bits of religious teaching here and there. Therefore, the idea of a woman sitting at a rabbi's feet to hear his teaching would have seemed bizarre, possibly blasphemous. The fact that Mary dared to do that shows she hungered for godly teaching and wasn't afraid to hide it. The acceptable thing in her society would have been to serve guests and get the gist of Jesus' teaching from someone else later, perhaps asking Lazarus the next morning to sum up what Jesus said. Instead, Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear the truth directly from him.

Mary's anointing Jesus is another example of forthright behavior by someone who doesn't care what others think. The perfume is described as expensive and anointing someone's body is a deeply personal thing. Mary cared more about showing her devotion to God, even when it looked excessive and scandalous than she did about public opinion.

Why Does Jesus Rebuke Martha in the Story?

One of the first things we need to [recognize about this story](#) is that Mary and Martha are not simply "the hero" and "the villain." Martha's actions in and of themselves were about being hospitable and serving her guests—two things which when used rightly are good and God-honoring. [1 Peter 4:9–10](#) describes hospitality as a spiritual gift, and [Romans 12:6–8](#) describes service as a spiritual gift. So the problem with Martha's actions wasn't that she was doing

things that God doesn't value. The problem has to be something else, which we must tease from the context of the situation.

As pointed out earlier, the text says that Martha was distracted from listening to Jesus, which may suggest she'd been invited to sit at his feet but kept going off to focus on the meal instead. This would fit Jesus' point about Martha being upset by many things, not realizing which thing is the right one to focus on.

The idea that this is about priorities comes again when we notice that Martha asks Jesus whether it's "unfair" that Mary isn't doing any work. Fairness is about priorities, finding the right option at the moment. Martha is asking what is more important in that context: listening to Jesus or making sure he is well cared for as a guest. Jesus responds that the most important thing is to learn from him, the resurrection, and the light. There is a time and a place for everything ([Ecclesiastes 3:1-8](#)). At that moment, the most important thing was to listen and learn.

John 1: In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

² He existed in the beginning with God.

³ God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.

⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created,^[a]
and his life brought light to everyone.

¹⁴ So the Word became human^[a] and made his home among us.

Hebrews 4:12

For the **word** of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

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Questions for Reflection

The story of Mary and Martha is one we can return to study again and again in our walk of faith because the lesson is timeless. We all have aspects of Mary and Martha within us. As we read and study the passage, we can reflect on these questions:

- Do I have my priorities in order?

- Like Martha, am I worried or anxious about many things, or, like Mary, am I focused on listening to Jesus and spending time in his presence?
- Have I put devotion to Christ and his word first, or am I more concerned about doing good deeds?

Bible Story Summary

The story of Mary and Martha takes place in Luke 10:38-42 and John 12:2.

Mary and Martha were the sisters Lazarus, the man Jesus raised from the dead. The three siblings were also close friends of Jesus Christ. They lived in a town called Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem. One day while Jesus and his disciples stopped to visit in their home, a wonderful lesson unfolded.

Mary sat at the feet of Jesus listening intently to his words. Meanwhile, Martha was distracted, working frantically to prepare and serve the meal for her guests.

Frustrated, Martha scolded Jesus, asking him whether he cared that her sister had left her to fix the meal alone. She told Jesus to order Mary to help her with the preparations.

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42, NIV)



Jesus in the home of Martha. Martha is concerned that Mary sits and listens to their guest rather than serving. 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her' Luke x 38-42.

Illustration by William Hole 1846-1917. Culture Club / Getty Images

Life Lessons From Mary and Martha

For centuries people in the church have puzzled over the Mary and Martha story, knowing that someone has to do the work. The point of this passage, however, is about making Jesus and his word our first priority. Today we come to know Jesus better through prayer, church attendance, and Bible study.

If all 12 apostles and some of the women who supported Jesus' ministry were traveling with him, fixing the meal would have been a major job. Martha, like many hostesses, became anxious over impressing her guests.

Martha has been compared to the Apostle Peter: practical, impulsive, and short-tempered to the point of rebuking the Lord himself. Mary is more like the Apostle John: reflective, loving, and calm.

Even still, Martha was a remarkable woman and deserves considerable credit. It was quite rare in Jesus' day for a woman to manage her own affairs as the head of the household, and especially to invite a man into her home. Welcoming Jesus and his entourage into her house implied the fullest form of hospitality and involved substantial generosity.

Martha appears to be the eldest of the family, and head of the sibling household. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, both sisters played a prominent role in the story and their contrasting personalities are evident in this account as well. Although both were upset and disappointed that Jesus did not arrive before Lazarus died, Martha ran out to meet Jesus as soon as she learned he had entered Bethany, but Mary waited at home. John 11:32 tells us that when Mary did finally go to Jesus, she fell at his feet weeping.

Some of us tend to be more like Mary in our Christian walk, while others resemble Martha. It's likely we have qualities of both within us. We may be inclined at times to let our busy lives of service distract us from spending time with Jesus and listening to his word. It's significant to note, though, that Jesus gently admonished Martha for being "worried and upset," not for serving. Service is a good thing, but sitting at Jesus' feet is best. We must remember what is most important.

Good works should flow from a Christ-centered life; they do not produce a Christ-centered life. When we give Jesus the attention he deserves, he empowers us to serve others.

Key Verse

Luke 10:41–42

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details!

There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her." (NLT)

Immediately Luke takes us to Jesus disciples ...who ask him to teach them to pray

11 Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

2 Jesus said, "This is how you should pray:^[a]

"Father, may your name be kept holy.

May your Kingdom come soon.

3 Give us each day the food we need,^[b]

4 and forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

And don't let us yield to temptation.^[c]"

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

NLT Luke 10:38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. **39** Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. **40** But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

41 But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! **42** There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

[25-37] In response to a question from a Jewish legal expert about inheriting eternal life, Jesus illustrates the superiority of love over legalism through the story of the good Samaritan. The law of love proclaimed in the "Sermon on the Plain" ([Luke 6:27-36](#)) is exemplified by one whom the legal expert would have considered ritually impure (see [John 4:9](#)). Moreover, the identity of the "neighbor" requested by the legal expert ([Luke 10:29](#)) turns out to be a Samaritan, the enemy of the Jew (see the note on [Luke 9:52](#)).

¹¹ [25] Scholar of the law: an expert in the Mosaic law, and probably a member of the group elsewhere identified as the scribes ([Luke 5:21](#)).

¹² [31-32] Priest . . . Levite: those religious representatives of Judaism who would have been expected to be models of "neighbor" to the victim pass him by.

¹³ [38-42] The story of Martha and Mary further illustrates the importance of hearing the words of the teacher and the concern with women in Luke.

¹⁴ [39] Sat beside the Lord at his feet: it is remarkable for first-century Palestinian Judaism that a woman would assume the posture of a disciple at the master's feet (see also [Luke 8:35](#); [Acts 22:3](#)), and it reveals a characteristic attitude of Jesus toward women in this gospel (see [Luke 8:2-3](#)).

¹⁵ [42] There is need of only one thing: some ancient versions read, "there is need of few things"; another important, although probably inferior, reading found in some manuscripts is, "there is need of few things, or of one."