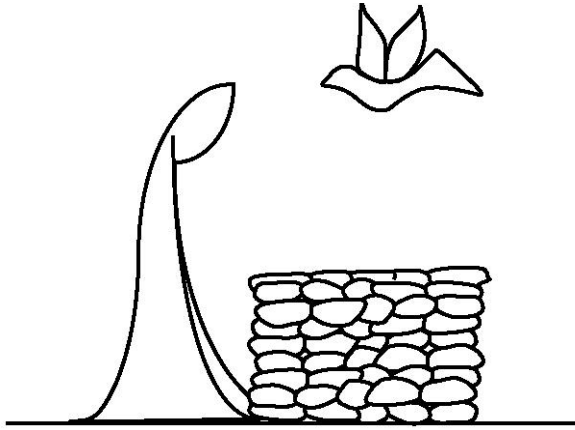


Distraction:

*How we allow the busyness of
life to keep us from a close
personal walk with Christ.*

by Kimberly Miller



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Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, 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 10:38-42)

Isn't it amazing how little we control the spending of our time? Most of us would never let anyone come in and freely spend the money in our bank accounts. If a person so much as even tried to withdraw funds from our accounts we would not only stop them, we would see to it they were punished for their actions. Yet, daily we allow people, sometimes even strangers, to spend our time. They rob of us of precious time that we would rather be spending doing the things that matter to us. Oftentimes it isn't just people that spend our time, but obligations, our sense of commitment, and our very own lack of discipline. Each of these things contribute to the loss of time that otherwise could be spent doing the things we love, enjoy and which move us closer to the Master. Why is it that we freely allow our time to be spent outside of our control? Perhaps, it is because we let our guard down and simply are not aware of our time robbers.

It is clear in Luke 10:38-40 that Martha had fallen into this trap as well. She had invited Jesus into her house for a visit and when He arrived she became so entangled in the details of entertaining Him that she neglected to spend time with Him. No doubt, Martha loved Jesus. This is evidenced by her invitation to have Him visit with her in her house. Yet, when He came she immediately became engrossed in working and doing instead of enjoying

her time with Him. Her sister Mary, on the other hand, parked herself at the feet of Jesus and fed upon His every word. She removed herself from the stronghold of the cares of this world and simply visited with the Saviour.

As we look closer at this picture Christ has painted for us, we can learn some very important lessons. First, Martha had a relationship with Christ. She knew Him intimately. She had invited Him to come to her house. Before we can possibly have a personal and meaningful relationship with Christ we must "*receive*" Him into our hearts.

Springing from her personal relationship with Christ, Martha wanted to spend time with Him. She loved Him. So, she naturally wanted to be around Him, to learn from Him, to fellowship with Him and to just be with Him. This passage of scripture speaks to the intimacy and personal nature of a relationship with Christ. He calls us His friend (John 15:14) and He has shown us the strength of His love for us by dying to pay our pardon for sin (John 15:13). Martha's intentions were good but her actions betrayed her real desires. I think it is at this point in Martha's visit with Christ that each and every one of us can relate. She loved Him yet, she couldn't find the time to sit at His feet. She knew He spoke the truth yet, she couldn't find the time to sit and listen to His Words. She knew in His presence was joy and

peace but, she couldn't calm herself long enough to bask in His presence. At first glance, you may want to criticize and judge Martha but I implore you to take a close look at your own life. Christ bids us come and fellowship with Him (Revelation 3:20) but we ignore this invitation. Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), yet we often go through each day without ever consulting Him. In Him is "joy unspeakable and glory" (I Peter 1:8) as well as "perfect peace" (Isaiah 26:3) still we do not seek to be in His presence. Why is this?

I believe a close examination of Luke 10:38-42 will give us insight into the answer to this question. We neglect our relationship with Christ, forsaking the blessings of that relationship because we become distracted. We allow people, things, and cares of this world to get in the way of our fellowship with Christ. We are easily distracted from spending time with Him.

The first thing that comes to my mind when I think of Mary's distractions was her sense of obligation. She had invited Jesus to come and visit with her. Instead of enjoying His visit, she busied herself and began to entangle herself with the details of the visit. She, no doubt, was preparing Him food, making Him comfortable and was being a good host. She immediately got busy doing and forgot to just "be" (Psalm 46:10). She became so busy serving the

Lord that she forgot about the Lord she was serving. She became distracted by her obligations. Her time was slowly eaten away with the "small" things leaving her with no time for the "big" things. There is an amazing truth revealed to us by Martha's busyness. Martha lost time with Jesus because she spent all her time doing other things. This clearly demonstrates that those things that we hold in highest priority are the things that get our attention. Martha was more concerned about caring for Jesus than she was about Him. What is drawing your attention away from Christ? What things are you placing above spending time with Him? Is it your family, your friends, your job, your obligations or your busyness? Of course, you must care for these things but none of them can be more important than your relationship with God and His Son, Jesus (Exodus 20:3).

The next thing that jumps out at me from the pages of His Word, as we further examine this passage, is His words to her, "*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things*" (Luke 10:41). This represents to me sin. Mary was troubled about many things and we are told in Romans 14:23 that anything that is not of faith is sin. We are further commanded to "be careful for nothing" (Philippians 4:6). Clearly Martha was not applying the truths of this scripture to her life. Unfortunately, the same could be said of many of us. Not only are we guilty

of worrying, but our life is riddled with unbelief and doubt. The enemy has infiltrated our mind, distracted our attention away from God and has deceived us into filling our lives with sin. Oftentimes, we are distracted from our personal and intimate relationship with Christ because we have placed so much sin in our lives. Sin destroys fellowship with Christ. But, praise be to God, we are equipped to stop the devil right in His tracks. I John 4:4 tells us that as children of God, "*Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world.*" James 4:7 reveals to us the perfect defense against the devil, "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" But, perhaps, one of the most reassuring pieces of this passage is found in Christ's gentle and loving words, "*Martha, Martha.*" It is here that He reveals how well He knows her. His gentle repetition of her name was soothing. He gets her attention and then speaks to her in a way that touches her soul. He explains to her the error of her ways but He does so in love. Each and every day the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts (John 14:26) and brings to our mind those things we need to remember. We are then lovingly sustained by the promise in I John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" Sin has no more dominion over you (Romans 6:14).

Finally, let's search through this passage a little deeper and learn from Mary. Mary was found at the

feet of Jesus, hanging on His every Word, fellowshiping with Him and loving Him. Mary did not let the obligations of this world have a stronghold on her. She did not let anything stand between her and her Saviour. Mary pursued God and sought after Him. She held her personal relationship with Christ in high esteem and she guarded it by tending to it. Christ was the center of Mary's world and therefore He had top priority in her life. There is no denying or mistaking that those things that are "bigger" in your life, those things you deem important, draw you toward them. Christ has commanded that we love Him above all (Exodus 20:3) and has told us that He is a "jealous God" (Exodus 20:5). Mary gave Christ His rightful place in her life. Are you? What are you drawn towards?

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