

The Cost of the Loss of Focus

August 1, 2010

Turn to Luke **10:38-42**. I'm going to share with you about the cost of the loss of focus. If you lose your focus in your marriage, you will pay a heavy price. If you lose your focus in any facet of your life, you will pay a heavy price.

Verse 38: "Now it happened as they went (Jesus and His entourage) that He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house."

Most scholars believe that Martha was a widow. We know her sister was Mary and Lazarus was her brother. Lazarus is not mentioned here, so more than likely Lazarus had his own home. So most scholars believe this is Martha's house, and Mary, her sister, is staying with her.

Verse 39: "And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word." Mary is mentioned three times in the scriptures, and every time she is mentioned, she is always at the feet of Jesus. Let me tell you something. You can be around the Word and never hear it.

Verse 40: "But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Jesus and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me.'"

Verse 41: "And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.'" I'm willing to say that there are a lot of people here and watching by the Internet who are troubled about many things.

Verse 42: "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." Life is full of choices, and people do what they want to do.

It is possible to serve the Lord out of habit rather than out of love. You can get into the rhythm of serving the Lord, and after a while do it out of habit rather than out of love. That happens when you lose your focus.

Today, we are talking about two sisters, and I'm going to make a statement I know is true.

Everybody is different. If you have a sister, you are different than she is and she is different than you are. We all have a personality, and God in His infinite wisdom made Martha and Mary different. Let's look at Martha first.

Martha is a super-servant. Thank God for Marthas. Her personality is such that she is driven by activity. That means she always has to be busy. When you are activity-oriented, you have to stay busy and, many times, overload yourself. A lot of people who are activity-oriented miss things. Sometimes important things go by them because they are so busy.

If you think Maranatha has a super-abundant supply of Marthas, you're crazy! We need people that will serve. You are not saved to sit. You are saved to serve.

Mary is a very discerning person. She has discernment. She picked up on what was important. Today, we not only see Mary at the feet of Jesus, but she is soaking up the Word. Do you know that the Word of God is alive and powerful, but some of you are already thinking about what you're going to do on Monday and Tuesday. Why don't you stay in this moment right now and let the living, powerful Word of God get inside of you.

Duty and devotion are both necessary, but there needs to be balance. Mary and Martha are both necessary, but if you're only a Martha, you're out of balance. If all you do is serve and never sit at the feet of Jesus, you're out of balance.

What Mary did broke all Jewish tradition. In Bible times, women were of non-importance. Rabbis would not teach a woman. They would not speak the Torah to a woman. They said it was a waste of time. So, Mary has left the kitchen and is sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to the Master Rabbi teach. She is soaking up the Word.

Martha is a worker. Mary is a worshipper. We need to be both. We need to imitate Martha's work, and we need to imitate Mary's worship. Make no mistake. **Jesus Christ wants us to be both!** He does not want us to be either/or. If you are a great worshipper but never work for God, you're out of balance. **We are to worship AND to serve the Lord!**

We have both Marys and Marthas in the house today, but we also have people who are sitting doing nothing. **Martha was caught up in her labor. Mary was caught up in her Lord.** What are YOU caught up in? Martha was busy serving. Mary was busy sitting, but she wasn't sitting doing nothing. She was sitting soaking up the Word. She heard the Word. Wouldn't it be awesome to know what Jesus was saying, but it just says, "and she heard His word."

Martha soon loses her focus. She loses sight of why she is doing what she is doing. Remember, she is the one that invited Jesus into the house. Some of you may think they knew Jesus was the Son of God. Martha and Mary both declare later in **John 11** who Jesus is, but I don't think they knew who He was at that moment.

They had heard about His miracles and were glad to have Him in their house, but He also had an entourage with Him. Have you ever invited 1 and 30 showed up? So if you're not careful, you will lose focus of why you're doing what you're doing. Martha lost her focus.

Hebrews 12:2 says that our faith has to be focused on Jesus. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." If you lose sight of where your faith is focused, you will lose sight of why you're doing what you're doing.

Let's look at the cost of the loss of focus. **(1) Loss of focus will cause you to resort to**

self-pity. Verse 40 says that Martha was distracted with much serving, and the word “distracted” means “to be pulled away or dragged away.” I feel like Martha also wanted to be at the feet of Jesus. I feel like that was where she desired to be. Jesus was physically in her house, His body was full of the Godhead, but Martha was distracted with much serving.

If you will read Verse 40, you will see that at one time Mary was in the kitchen helping Martha. She says, “my sister has left me to serve alone.” So Martha is left in the kitchen by herself, and she has resorted to self-pity. She started to feel unappreciated.

Let me tell you what causes self-pity. A **victim mentality** will always cause you to have a pity party. She has taken on too much work. She has overloaded herself. She is feeling unappreciated and frustrated. Fretting about the meal has robbed her of the joy of serving her Lord. **When you lose your focus, you will resort to self-pity.**

Martha’s problem was not her work. Thank God for workers. Thank God for super-servants. Thank God for people that will go out of their way to do a job, but now Martha’s **attitude** has changed. The work had to be done, but now her attitude is rotten. She lost focus of why she was doing what she was doing.

Listen, there is joy in serving the Lord. I wish some of you bench-setters would get in there and start working for God; and those of you who are serving, don’t lose your focus. You are doing it for Jesus!

(2) Loss of focus will cause you to become angry and resentful. The devil is the great distracter. He places distractions in front of us that scream for our attention, and we tend to **focus on the urgent rather than the essential.** We are drawn away by the urgent instead of focusing on the essential, what is most important.

The most important thing for Martha was not in the kitchen. The most important thing was in the living room, and His name was Jesus! I personally believe that if Martha would have come out of the kitchen, got down at the feet of Jesus, that when Jesus was finished, He and His disciples would have gotten up and everything would have been taken care of, but she became so distracted by what was urgent rather than focusing on what was most important.

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.” **Obeying the Holy Spirit** is the most important thing you will ever do, but we tend to focus on the urgent rather than the essential.

The harder Martha worked, the more worked up she became. As the moments go by, she is getting hotter and hotter. Martha is mad because she felt that Mary had let her down. When Martha comes out of the kitchen, she does not refer to Mary by her name. She calls her “my sister,” and Martha isn’t talking to Mary. She is talking to Jesus. Martha was angry at Mary, but she was lashing out at Jesus.

(3) Loss of focus will cause you to find fault with others. Martha now has a **critical**

spirit, and she starts **condemning** other people. She is condemning Mary for what she is doing and not doing, and you cannot please a critic. Mary is doing what she is supposed to be doing, but Martha wants it done her way. Martha is busy, but she no longer is blessed. She is a fault-finder. Her labor (her ministry) has now replaced her Lord.

Sometimes we work so hard for the Lord that we forget the Lord. This message doesn't mean anything to those of you who are doing nothing for the Lord, but if we who are working for the Lord are not careful, our labor will become the most important thing. We want stroked. Don't ever replace your Master with your ministry.

This church ranks third in importance to me. My Master and my Savior is number one, my wife is number two, and Maranatha is number three.

Martha has displaced her priorities. She bursts from the kitchen and explodes. "My sister has left me to serve alone." She goes up to Jesus and says, "Lord, do You not care?" **(4)** **Loss of focus will cause you to question God.** She is upset with everybody including God. She is accusing Jesus of not caring about her situation. Even His disciples woke Him up when they were in a storm and said, "Don't You care?"

Let me tell you something. Bad things happen to good people. Somewhere along your walk with Christ, you are going to find out that it rains on the just and it rains on the unjust. You can be one of the most important people in the Kingdom of God and still have some bad days. **The key is to not lose your focus.**

Don't get mad at God. Get mad at the devil! The devil tries to pull us from what God has called us to do and make us upset at why God hasn't worked it out yet. I'm going to hold onto, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those that are called according to His purpose."

Martha commands God to, "tell her to help me." I tremble around folk that command and demand that God do something. You don't throw your shopping list down on the altar and demand that God work things out by such a such a time. It is not going to happen! God is God all by Himself. We are blessed that God saved us.

Jesus tenderly speaks to Martha and says, "Martha, Martha, stop your worrying." Get your focus on one thing. You will never lose when you **keep your focus on Jesus**. Refocus today, and then get refueled. God never fills up a tank that is already full.

Some of you want an anointing. Why? You're not doing anything. Some of you want a feeling. I'm not talking about a feeling. I'm talking about a FILLING. Refocus on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Him. Then get refueled and refired.