

Distracted By Many Things

People are busy. Despite the invention of many technologies designed to make life simpler, people have not gotten less busy. Still, I doubt the problem is so much about the things going on in our lives as it is about our priorities and what we allow to take up our time. This can be seen in the story about Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. Here is a powerful story about how two people reacted to the opportunity of having Jesus in their home and the problem of busyness and distraction. For, while both (presumably) had the best of intentions, they made different choices. As a result, Jesus corrected one and commended the other. Therefore, let's learn some lessons from this story.

1) Earthly things can become distractions.

You can just imagine the sorts of things Martha was focused on whenever Jesus came to her house (Luke 10:38). Interestingly, Jesus never told her that any of the things she was doing were wrong. Instead, she allowed herself to become so caught up in those things that she missed the greater opportunity (v. 39)! Life can quickly get busy and cluttered where we find ourselves spending much of our time doing things that are not really all that important. Perhaps we realize certain obvious things as being sinful distractions and wastes of time (i.e. things God has directly forbidden, Galatians 5:19-21). Yet, there are many things that fill our schedules that are not direct violations of God's law. In fact, some of them are even things God wants us to accomplish (i.e. job, housework, yardwork, family time, etc.) or things that may not be wrong of themselves (i.e. hobbies, entertainment, recreation). While we must never be lazy about our earthly responsibilities (Proverbs 13:4; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Colossians 3:23-24), God does want us to learn the proper balance. This is what Martha lost in Luke 10. It is not that we should never do anything that concerns things on this earth, but

you must recognize anything that comes from those things will not last, while spiritual things will (Matthew 6:19-21)! Many times in life (as was true with Martha), we simply choose to focus on the wrong things that distract and steal our attention and time away from what really matters. For, what we focus on matters to God (Matthew 6:22-24, 25-34)!

2) Time must be taken to focus on Jesus.

Martha was distracted by her many tasks and was worried and upset over them (Luke 10:40-41), while Mary made the right choice by focusing on Jesus and her discipleship (v. 42). Like Mary, focusing on Jesus and discipleship will involve taking and making opportunities to learn from Jesus (v. 39). After all, He is the one who has all authority (Matthew 28:18), has the words that will judge us (John 12:48), and has the words that will set people free from sin (John 8:31-32). Therefore, you must make learning from Jesus a priority that is reflected in your life above other things. Then, discipleship also involves imitating Jesus throughout your life. So, as you learn Jesus's ways, you must determine to pattern your life in His footsteps (Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21-23). Therefore, you must prioritize imitating Jesus throughout all the various activities of your life – so that the physical things you do (i.e. working a job, spending time with family, etc.) are ways that you carry out your commitment to serving God, not distractions from it! And, your discipleship must continue to grow throughout your life (2 Peter 3:18; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:11-16). Therefore, you must make growing in your discipleship a priority in that you pursue learning from and imitating Jesus more and more each day! An essential part of this will also be to impact others for the cause of His kingdom, producing fruit in His service (John 15:1-8). So, you must always be looking for and taking advantage of opportunities to impact others for Jesus!

3) There are right and wrong choices. Jesus told Mary that she made the right choice (Luke 10:42). By implication, then, Martha made the wrong choice. Although there may not have been anything inherently wrong in the things Martha did, she allowed other things that were less important to come before what was most important in the moment. We must all learn to view ourselves as stewards/managers of the time and opportunities God gives us (Matthew 25:14-18; Ephesians 5:15-16). Every decision must be evaluated as to what is the best use of the time/opportunities at that moment and not put too much emphasis on the things of life that really don't matter! Yet, many get distracted by so many physical things (i.e. money, recreation, sports, etc.) they have little/no time left for what God truly desires from them (i.e. Bible study, worship, prayer, service, evangelism, hospitality, etc.). What you must learn to do, therefore, is to put Matthew 6:33 into practice and truly prioritize the kingdom of God in your life! Simply, you must view everything calling for your time and attention as a choice – and choose the most important things in each moment, while making absolutely certain that you make the appropriate amount of time and effort for the things God desires. In each situation, make the right choice. For, Jesus will evaluate how well you have done managing the time and opportunities He has entrusted to you, and your eternity will be on the line (Matthew 25:19-30)!

Many people are distracted by many earthly things – just like Martha. It's not that they always have bad intentions. It's just that they don't put first things first each day of their lives and in every opportunity that comes up. But, what about you? Are you distracted by your many tasks? If so, you should change today and start making the right choice to focus on Jesus.

Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?