

# GOD'S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

## Lesson Nine

### IN THE GOSPELS: Martha

#### Burden to Impart:

*All those who receive the Lord and His salvation need to firstly learn to listen to His Word and know His heart. Then they will be able to serve Him in a way that is proper and pleasing to Him.*

**Memory Verse:** "...Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; But one thing is necessary; for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).

#### Facts to Teach:

1. A dear family of Jesus' close friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, lived in a poor village outside of Jerusalem named Bethany. Once, Martha received the Lord as a guest into her home (Luke 10:38-42). She was very busy preparing things for the Lord and His disciples. Martha had a disposition to do things for the Lord; to serve and work hard. However, she needed to learn how to serve the Lord in a way that pleases Him; not in her own, natural way.
2. While Martha was so busy, her sister, Mary, was apparently doing nothing at all! Actually, she was paying attention to their guest. She was seated at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word.
3. To serve is good. But Martha was so busy that she was actually "distracted" from the Lord Himself. She began to reason and think negative thoughts like, "Why doesn't Mary stop being so lazy and help me? Can't she see how much there is to do? Why do I have to do everything? Why doesn't Jesus send her to help me? Doesn't He care about me?" She was getting angry and irritated. She felt she was doing everything good and right, and her sister, Mary, was all wrong. Even Jesus seemed to be wrong in Martha's eyes, for He seemed to not care about her need of help!
4. Finally, Martha could not hold in her disgust any longer. She did not complain to Mary, but to Jesus. She came over to Jesus, and "standing over Him," began to rebuke Him. After rebuking the Lord and expressing all of her opinions to Him (that He didn't care about her, etc.), she next proceeded to tell the Lord what He should do. He should "tell her (Mary) that she should do her part with me." How strong a person was Martha! How opinionated! How demanding! How right she thought she was! She invited the Lord in as a "guest," but now she was rebuking Him, insulting Him, and telling Him what to do! Though Martha loved the Lord, she did not know how to serve Him properly yet. She did not know how natural and fleshly she was.
5. The Lord gently corrected Martha in His answer. He pointed out to her that she was too anxious and busy. She had missed the most important thing in her service, to listen to the Lord's word so that she would know the Lord's heart and desire.

**SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: In the Gospels—Martha**

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-2

**AIM:** To see that as God’s called ones we need to firstly learn to listen to His word and know His heart, then we will be able to serve Him in a way that is proper and pleasing to Him.

**MEMORY VERSES:** Col. 3:23-24; Rom. 12:11

**CONTENT:** There was a dear family, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, who were close friends of the Lord Jesus. They lived in a village outside of Jerusalem named Bethany. Once, Martha received the Lord as a guest into her home (Luke 10:38-42). She was very busy preparing things for the Lord and His disciples. Martha had a disposition to be busy. She loved to serve the Lord. While Martha was so busy, her sister, Mary, was apparently doing nothing at all! Actually, she was paying full attention to their guest—the Lord Jesus. She was seated at His feet and was listening to His word.

Martha was busy serving the Lord, but she was actually distracted from the Lord Himself. She began to reason and think negative thoughts like, “Why doesn’t Mary come to help me? Can’t she see how much there is to do? It’s not fair for me to do all the work by myself. Why doesn’t Jesus send her to help me? Doesn’t He care about me?” She was anxious and troubled. In Martha’s eyes, even the Lord Jesus seemed to be wrong, because He seemed to not care about her need of help.

Finally, Martha could not hold in her disgust any longer. She did not complain to Mary, but to the Lord Jesus. She came over to the Lord, and began to rebuke Him. “Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone?” After rebuking the Lord and expressing all of her opinions to Him, she then proceeded to tell the Lord what He should do. She told the Lord to “tell her (Mary) then to do her part with me.” How strong a person was Martha! How opinionated! How demanding! How right she thought she was! She invited the Lord in as a guest, but now she was rebuking Him and telling Him what to do! Though Martha loved the Lord, she did not yet know how to serve Him properly.

The Lord gently corrected Martha in His answer. He pointed out to her that she was too anxious and busy. “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; But there is need of one thing, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” She had missed the most important thing in her service, to listen to the Lord’s word so that she would know the Lord’s heart and desire.

**APPLICATION:**

1. One of the most important services to the Lord is to listen to His Word. By listening we get to know the Lord and His heart. This is a service. We may not think so, but Mary was serving the Lord. She was sitting quietly at His feet and listening to His Word. By doing so, she was getting to know Him and His heart. She was getting to know what pleased Him and what He desired and preferred. By getting to know Him, Mary could then serve Him in a way that pleased Him.
2. Martha was busy serving but she was not listening to the Lord, so she did not know what was on the Lord’s heart and what really pleased Him. On one hand, it was very good that she had the heart to serve, but she was serving in her own way. Her way did not please the Lord; it was not what He wanted. For example, a cook may prepare her best dish for a guest. She

can spend a lot of time and effort to prepare and cook it. Her heart is good because she is giving what she thinks is her best. But it may happen that her guest does not like that particular dish! What she thought would please him does not please him. What she thought he would like he does not like. So a cook firstly must get to know something about her guest. What does **he** like? What does **he** think is the best? Once she finds out, she can cook something that he will like and that will please him. It is the same with our service to the Lord. We must listen to Him first to get to know Him and then we can serve Him in a way that He likes, in a way that pleases Him.

3. As we are listening and learning we should, at the same time, be serving. There was a need for Martha's practical service. If she had not been serving, what would her guests eat? Today, there is still a need for practical service. For example, the meeting hall needs to be clean for the meetings. We have no janitors, so how can everything be taken care of? What if no one did anything and you came back next week? The garbage would be full and maybe smelling. The bathrooms would be dirty and there would be no supplies—no toilet paper, no hand towels, and no soap. In your classroom, there might be dried, sticky juice on the table from last week's snack. How would you feel? Would you feel comfortable? Who takes care of all these practical needs?

Here are some practical services: We can start with our own class. We can help serve the snack, put away the crayons or markers, erase the blackboard, use a carpet sweeper for the floor, help stack the chairs, empty the garbage, etc.

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