

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 19 **Mary and Martha**

By

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[Luke 10:38-42](#) is a familiar passage, but it is only recorded in Luke.

38 Now it came to pass, as they went [Jesus and the guys, the disciples] that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 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.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, [you can put the emphasis wherever you want here] 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'

Before we begin I would like to read that also from a translation by Kenneth Weist, an expanded translation, a Greek scholar from Moody Institute in this century who translates it this way—and you will like some of this:

Now as they were going on their way, he himself entered a certain village and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him as a guest into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who also having seated herself beside the Lord's feet, was listening to his word. But Martha was going around in circles, over occupied with preparing the meal. And bursting in upon Jesus, she assumed a stance over him [I can just see her] and said, 'Lord is it not a concern to you that my sister has let me down to be preparing a meal alone? Speak to her therefore at once that she take hold and do her part with me.' And answering the Lord said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and excited about many things, but of few things there is need, for Mary chose out for herself the good portion which is of such a nature that it shall not hastily be snatched away from her.'

So that gives us a little bit more light onto the scene, with the women here, as we look at it. You may be familiar with the passage. As I studied this week and just looked over it, of course, it is always convicting for me because I find in my own life I can very easily become a "Martha." And we will talk about that further, but I find that my service for Christ definitely gets in the way of my communion with Jesus Christ. I find that I need help because I get so wrapped up in what I am doing that I start to run on my own energy. I get burned out and the next thing I know, I am barking at people and my wife is saying: "Why are you so crabby?" And I say [barking back at her], "I'm not crabby!"

It is at this point that I just have to ask: "If the fruit of the Spirit is love, where am I at Lord? I am just kind of running out of gas here. I am running on my own energy. Forgive me. I need to come back to You. When I first got saved, Jesus, it was just You and me. There wasn't all this other stuff and I was happy. And so, Lord, settle me down."

I think the things that we want to do for Jesus, whether it is going to Bible studies, or being part of a particular kind of ministry, or driving our kids to Christian school—there are many Christian things we do that are so tangible. We do not have to look for them, they are waiting for us when we wake up. They are on the phone, in the mail, standing in our face or chasing us down the hallway, and we are even facing them in traffic. You know our involvement in Christian things and Christian service is very tangible, and it is very easy to involve ourselves in it because it is right there every day. Whereas, the presence of Christ is often not as tangible as I wish that it was.

There are times when I am on my knees before the Lord and I am just wishing, “I wish Lord, that You were here so that I could lean on Your breast like John did. I just wish I could hear Your voice. Lord I just wish you were right here because I just feel like I need to cry on Your shoulder. I just wish You were present.” And I find, with that part of my relationship with Christ, I have to really settle myself there and quiet myself.

My life is neither quiet nor settled and I really have to seek that time to be alone with Him. But those are the times when I am renewed. It is there that the tears begin to flow; it is there that my batteries begin to get charged; it is there that life comes to me; it is there that I am reminded what my relationship with Jesus is really all about. And I can understand both Mary and Martha. I pray in my own life that I can serve like Martha, but that I can worship like Mary. And so we have the picture of these two women in Luke 10.

Now I also want to say that if you do not know Christ personally, we will address the whole issue of what God wants from us. And maybe it will help you understand a little bit about what we believe. But for the Christian, this passage is a great exhortation because in this picture of Mary and Martha, we are not choosing between good and evil, we know that. But we are making choices all day. The Christian life, the Christian experience is a series of choices and we must choose to do what the word says. It is choosing to be led by the Holy Spirit and yet within that we can choose sometimes between what is better and what is best.

Albert Benjamin Simpson, who began the Christian and Missionary Alliance, said that “Often the enemy of making the best choice is making the better choice.” In other words, as Christians the choices we are making in general are just better than many of the choices we made before we came to Christ; and they are better than many of the choices that are being made in the world. We are choosing good and noble things, but there are times in choosing something that actually is good that gets in the way of choosing what is best. Sometimes the best thing we can do is choose to sit at His feet and just be alone with Him, rather than choosing to do a good thing for Him. We have that exhortation here in [Luke 10](#) and I believe it is from the Lord’s heart. The message is that He would rather have “us” than what we can do for Him. I think that is clearly contained in this passage.

I want to look at Martha though because what happens so often is that I think somebody will say, “Well that person is a real Martha!” And that means look out for them because they will give you a heart attack if you hang around with them. And you know that is in a

real negative context. When you hear “look out for that person, that person is a real Martha,” I think that is because we have not looked closely enough at her character. She is actually quite a remarkable woman.

We are not sure where the friendship between Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, who was their brother, began. We know that Jesus went to their home there in Bethany. Evidently it was a place that He loves to go to and He finds time to relax and be with people that He cared about. It was a haven for Him, but we do not have a previous record of where this relationship really got off the ground. As we look at it, I think it is amazing.

Turn to John 11, which will throw some light on this relationship. And you know the story but there are some things that we are going to take note of in [John 11:1](#). “Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary.” Now that is interesting because back in our study in [Luke 10:38](#) it says that “Martha received Him into her house.” It looks like the town was Mary’s and the house was Martha’s. They were different personalities. Martha probably liked to cook and Mary liked to cook, but Mary didn’t like to clean up afterward. Martha just liked to be there the whole time. Mary seems to be very in-tune with other folks.

We all have our different characteristics, we all have different traits. God uses us that way because we are all individuals. Some people are very contemplative, they like to sit, to think, to read; and other people like to play sports. Some people love to work and Martha just has that industrious hospitality. She is just very mature and she likes to do what she is doing. But she can be a person who is driven. Mary, I imagine, could space out and could sit around and do just certain things. We are all different, some people love to go door-to-door witnessing and other people go up and knock on the door and pray that nobody is home. And these people are only going door to door witnessing because somebody has condemned them into doing it. They should be home praying for people that like to door-to-door witness—their gifts are different.

Here in [John 11:1](#), evidently it takes note that this was the town or the village of Mary and her sister Martha. “It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.” Now look at [John 11:3](#). “Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, ‘Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.’” Now that is *phileo*, the word “love” there, it means: “brotherly love, fondness, or friendship.” That is interesting because the women say, “Lord, Your buddy is sick, Lazarus—Laz, the guy you love to hang out with.” It was an interesting relationship there.

[John 11:4](#) says, “When Jesus heard that, he said, ‘This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.’” Look at [verse 5](#), this word “loved” is *agape*: “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.” This is before the miracle of raising Lazarus. It was quite a relationship they have.

Look down at [John 11:11](#). Jesus is speaking to the disciples. “These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, ‘Our friend [isn’t that interesting, our friend] Lazarus is

sleeping.” Thomas of course said, “Well that’s good, he is sick and he needs his rest. And then it says that Jesus has to say plainly, “He is dead.” Jesus had trouble getting through to the guys sometimes.

Look over in [verses 20-21](#), it says:

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, ‘Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.’

Now listen to this woman who we think is just a workaholic. Listen to what she says:

But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

So Jesus tries her out of course. He says,

Okay, your brother’s going to rise. You know whatever I ask I am going to get. This is what we will do, he is going to rise from the dead”

Martha says,

Oh, I know Lord, he is going to rise again in the last day in the resurrection.

Jesus said unto her, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. So you believe this Martha?’

Now listen to this answer. This is a remarkable answer.

She said unto him, ‘Yes, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.’ (cf. [John 11:21-27](#))

Now that is an amazing answer for a woman who we accuse of just being a workaholic. She went back to the house. And it is interesting in [verse 28](#), it says she told Mary: “The Master is calling for you.” And you want to take note, interestingly down in [verse 45](#) after the resurrection of Lazarus, it says: “Many of the Jews came to Mary.” She was evangelizing, evidently. “Many of the Jews which came to Mary [it doesn’t mention Martha there] had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him.”

So we have this household with these amazing women. I would say that we need to take note of this.

In [John 9](#), the Pharisees and Sadducees who were the religious leaders of the day, said: “Anybody who says that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah is excommunicated. We are

cutting them off from the temple, we are cutting them off from Judaism” (cf. [John 9:22](#)). Now here is Martha in Bethany two miles from the temple precincts and she says, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God that has come into the world” (cf. [John 11:27](#)). That is a remarkable statement! She is standing up in the face of everything and she is willing to be cut off from her own religion because of her commitment to Christ. That is quite a woman. Are you willing to be cut off from everything, even your own family because of your commitment to Jesus Christ?

Not only that, but for Jesus Christ from the time of His birth, there was no room for Him in the inn. That kind of set the whole stage for His life. He had seen a certain amount of popularity. His popularity is plummeting at this point. [John 6:66](#) tells us that many of His disciples are leaving Him now. He had the twelve but He had a bigger group, He had sent out seventy at one point, but here they are leaving Him. He is talking about going to Jerusalem and being crucified and they would have to eat His flesh and drink His blood, and they are freaked out. Everybody is just saying: “the heck with Him now.” And His disciples are leaving Him. It tells us in [John 5:18](#) that in Judea the religious leaders are planning how they can kill him.

It tells us when He was in the area of Gadera that the Gadarenes begged Him to leave the area (cf. [Luke 8:37](#)). They did not want Him there. It says on another trip when He was heading south through Samaria that the Samaritans would not receive Him. There is no place for Jesus at this time either. His popularity is dwindling; people are rejecting Him, and refusing Him.

A young man comes to Him in [Luke 9:57-58](#) and says, “Lord I will follow you anywhere.” Jesus says to him, “The foxes have their dens and the birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” In other words, “You want to follow Me? Let me tell you something. The foxes are in their environment, they are at home here. They have their dens here, this is where they live. The birds of the air are at home. They settle down, they have their nests. This is not My environment, I am not from this world. You want to follow Me? I am passing through; My only purpose for being here is to do the Father’s work and complete it. You may follow Me if you want to, but this is not My world and there is no place for Me in this world to rest.”

Now that is pretty remarkable because it says that “Martha received Him and welcomed Him into her home.” She was quite a woman as far as I am concerned. And she stood in the face of all kinds of criticism in order to welcome Jesus and His disciples into her house. She opened the doors, made a meal, and welcomed them. But it is interesting that she did all of that so she could accuse Him and neglect Him!

We may think that Jesus is welcome in our homes. I pray that He is. We have things hanging on our walls. We have the Bible by the toilet, a Bible in the glove compartment, a Bible in the living room and Christian posters and stuff on the walls, and Christian videos. But sometimes I think Jesus is waiting around in the living room for somebody to talk to Him. My house is like a beehive most of the time. Sometimes I am thinking:

“Well, He is welcome here, but nobody talks to Him. He must be sitting in the living room just feeling neglected like He was here in the Scriptures.”

So, I want us to take note of this because here, Martha invites Jesus in and gets so wrapped up in cooking that she comes out to accuse Him. Now Mary is different. The three times we heard about her in the Bible she is at the feet of Jesus. Here in [John 11](#) she is at the feet of Jesus listening. When Lazarus dies, she falls at the feet of Jesus weeping and in [John 12](#), [Matthew 26](#), and [Mark 14](#) she is there at the house of Simon and she is at the feet of Jesus pouring out the alabaster box of ointment, probably her life’s savings. And she is very perceptive; she did this for Jesus’ burial. She is the only woman in the Bible that Jesus establishes a memorial to. “Wherever this gospel is preached in all of the world, that which she has done shall be mentioned in memorial of her” (cf. [Matthew 26:13](#)).

And Mary knows that there is something better cooking in the living room than what is cooking in the kitchen. Something eternal is cooking in the living room. What is cooking in the kitchen is going to be gone tomorrow. So, evidently she helped, look what it says here in [verse 39](#), “And she had a sister called Mary, which also [see that word “also” here is important] she *also* sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (cf. [Luke 10:39](#)). What it does not mean is that Martha also sat there. That is not the context of the story. It means that Mary was working in the kitchen, but what she also did was leave the kitchen and sat at Jesus feet to hear his word. She also did that. So she is not a bum, Mary the space-case! She worked and she served, but she also knew it was important to sit at the feet of Christ.

Martha on the other hand, when we look at her, she is courageous, she is standing, she is willing to lose friends, and her reputation for her relationship with Jesus. There is not compromise, Jesus Christ is welcome in her home and he is not welcome anywhere at this particular point in his ministry. Martha is hospitable, she is industrious, she is diligent as she is bent on serving, and that is a good thing. She is mature but she is a work junky, she is driven and she is a work warrior. She is the kind of woman who, when she is in the flesh, could drive you out of your mind—and a man who is like this could do the same thing.

There are some indicators that you want to take note of in your own life, when you get to that point, and we can all get there. First of all, if you are accusing Jesus of slowing down the ministry, you need to go back and think about what you are saying. She goes out and says to Jesus, “Don’t you care?” And it says that she put her hands on her hips first and stood over him, the Lord of the universe, the Creator is in her living room. “Don’t you care?” And basically when we do that to God what we are saying is: “You do not realize that my plans are more important than yours. Don’t you understand what I am involved in and how badly I need your help? Why aren’t you...there you are sitting in the living room, talking about eternity, salvation, crucifixion, resurrection...I am cooking lamb, don’t you know what’s important here?”

And that is usually what we are doing—accusing God—when we are complaining that is what we are doing. We are saying: “I’ve got something going on here that does not seem

to be very important to you.” Usually when we are doing that, there is sometimes tremendous pain and then I understand that none of us respond well. But most of the time we need to slow down and ask: “What in the world am I thinking?”

Once you accuse God, it is easy to accuse other people. Notice then it is no longer “Mary,” it is “that sister of mine.” That is what she says to Jesus. She doesn’t bother to call her “Mary.” Martha says, “Lord, don’t you care that sister who left me?” Or it could be: “that husband of mine!” You know when I come home from work and my wife is saying “your son,” you know things are changing. I own him, she doesn’t own him anymore. He did something. Martha says, “That sister of mine...” Let me tell you something, if Jesus tells you to do something, you should do it. And you should do it as unto the Lord. And you should look to Jesus Christ for the reward for that service.

If you start grumbling and complaining—and let me tell you I have been in ministry for a long time—ministry is full of people, including me sometimes, that point their finger at other people who are complaining about those who are supposed to be ministering. Because when you are overwhelmed with ministering and serving, you are grouchy because you are overwhelmed. And you have already accused God, so you might as well accuse people too! But Martha is saying, “It is Mary’s fault. Here I am alone, I am doing...” Let me tell you something, Jesus did not come to Martha’s house because he heard that she made the best blintzes in Judea. Do you understand? Jesus is there because it is the one place where he can sit in the living room with people he loves that have some hold on who he is. They would welcome him into their home and the feast that he has there is with Lazarus and with Mary and with Martha, with the family. That is the feast that he is enjoying.

If Jesus was coming to your house in two days at five o’clock for dinner, what would you be doing today? Ladies, what would you be doing? Frantically cleaning and planning a gourmet meal? I bet that Jesus would just love to jump in the van with all the kids and drive through McDonalds. I bet the feast for Him would be just sitting and spending time with us. From my observation he would be holding the kids on his lap, laughing, talking, saying: “So many times I tried to tell you how much I loved you and you just....So I had to come on Tuesday afternoon to tell you.”

And lastly then Martha begins to try to manipulate the whole thing. Look, she is throwing a guilt trip on Jesus. It is bad enough that Satan condemns us, but here is Martha throwing the guilt trip on Jesus. “Don’t you care that my sister...what kind of a Lord are you? You are supposed to care about equity and justice and all things. You are supposed to be the Lord and there is my sister, she is sitting there loafing and you don’t even care!”

You have got to have guts to throw a guilt trip on the Master! You know what I mean? He came to deliver grace and forgiveness and life. She is throwing a guilt trip on him. Now I will tell you that this brings the story to the point where I appreciated it so much because I am so much like Martha in so many ways. I can get that way so many times. I appreciate the fact that Jesus responds with reproof. He does not rebuke her, He is not angry. There is a *pathos*, there is a real emotion to this, which is why it is written the way

it is—doubled up—“Martha, Martha.” Jesus does not say, “Did you read chapter 1 of Luke? Did you hear what happened to Zachariah when he shot his mouth off with an angel? He could not talk for nine months after that. And he was just talking to an angel.”

Jesus could have gotten one of the donkeys to stick his head in the window and say, “Martha do you know who you are talking to?” This would have been like Balaam’s ass saying, “He is the Creator of the universe!”

You know when Miriam criticized Moses, God smote her with leprosy. Here this woman, Martha, was standing with her hands on her hips bossing the Lord! And He just looks up and says, “Martha, Martha.” It is like saying, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that stonest the prophets and kills those that are sent unto thee. How many times would I have gathered thee under my wings like a hen gathers her chicks and you would not. And now your house is left unto you desolate and henceforth you shall see me no more until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’” (cf. [Luke 13:34-35](#)).

Or when Peter says, “Lord, although all the rest of these betray you...” Jesus said, “This night the prophecy is going to be fulfilled, I will strike down the shepherd, the sheep shall be scattered. You are all going to forsake me.” And Peter says, “Except me Lord, you can count on me. I know these guys are all going to run away, but I will be there.” And Jesus’ response is: “Simon, Simon. Satan has desired to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith doesn’t fail. And in the hour you are restored, strengthen your brethren” (cf. [Luke 22:31-32](#)).

It was on the road to Damascus, as Saul is breathing out threatenings and slaughterings against the church that he is knocked to the ground by this light that appears. And the voice that comes from the light says, “Saul, Saul. Why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goads” ([Acts 26:14](#)). It is amazing that Jesus did not just smoke them with a laser beam or something, you know? Instead he knocked him down and talked sense to him. And the thing that I appreciate about this is that there is so much here for us to learn.

You know, I am the pastor, I preach this stuff and I am supposed to live by it. But I get so caught up in the ministry sometimes that I find myself running out of gas. I realize that I am not spending the time with Jesus that I should. I get so caught up in things and Satan is just there to lay a guilt trip on me. The thing I love about the Lord is that the Lord doesn’t say, “Joey, Joey.” He doesn’t do that but I kind of hear this, “My son” thing. You know when one of my boys need to get in line, I call him “son.” And I hear that kind of a thing from the Lord: “Son come sit with me for a while, I want to talk to you.” It is never in anger. It is a reproof. And Martha will get there, we will see her in [John 12](#) at Simon’s house. Tradition, by the way, tells us back to the second century that Simon the leper was the father of Mary and Martha. And perhaps, if that is true, it was his cleansing of leprosy that started Jesus’ relationship with this family.

But it is in [John 12](#) in Simon’s house that we see Martha. It says she was serving and she is waiting on the tables, just working, whistling, singing and listening; and she is not

stressed out any more. There is no mention of her saying, “You know what to do Lord. Get Mary up off the floor with that ointment. She is making a whole lot of stink and I have to clean up the floor, I have to make dinner, and I have to do everything.” Now none of that is going on. And I love the fact that Jesus is so gentle to continually bring me along in my life, as I get off track and I get caught up with things. But he is faithful, as it says in the Song of Songs, to “Draw me in, we will run after thee” (cf. [Sgs 1:4](#)). He is always faithful to draw us back and to bring us back to focus, to bring us back on target again.

It is with great expression—Jesus says, “Martha, Martha, you are so careful and troubled.” “Careful” is our word from the Parable of the Sower. Remember we said that one of the things that chokes out the word of God in our lives is the cares of this life. That is the same word “careful” the *merimnao*. You feel like you are being pulled in a thousand directions. That is what the word means—to be pulled in different directions. People say, “I feel like I am being pulled in a thousand different directions.” Jesus says, “Martha, Martha. You are so careful and troubled [which is agitated].” We say, “crabby.” Martha you are all distracted and grouchy.

And you do find yourself getting like this, pulled in a thousand different directions, you are grouchy and then the Lord is saying: “Look there is one thing that is necessary.” One thing is needful and that one thing cannot be taken away and that is to be with Jesus. The thing that Mary did is she was with him. And the thing that will never be taken from us is being with him. Our homes can be taken, our careers can be taken, and our kids can be taken. Anything in life can be taken, our service can be taken, all of these things; but one thing that will never be taken away from a believer is to be with him. It is the reason he died.

God sat with man (Adam) in the cool of the day in the book of Genesis before the fall and fellowshiped with him. That was the heart of God. Ever since the fall, the purpose of God in redemption is to bring man back into fellowship with Himself. And the highest expression of love is devotion and fellowship, it is not service. The highest expression of love is not service. This is important because I think before we came to Christ—and if you do not know Christ, then maybe this is your perception of him—but we can perceive God as the great “Thou shalt not” who lives in the sky. And maybe you thought that God was this big guy up there who says, “Thou shalt not do this; thou shalt not do that; and I want you to do this and I want you to do that.” He is like the great, “you do, you don’t do” up there to us. That is all he was, the guy with all the rules. And we thought, “If I become a Christian I have to...what a drag!”

That is not at all what Christianity is about. The shame of this type of thinking is that Jesus died so that we could come back into fellowship with God, under his righteousness. And I think the shame of it is that when we come into the church—and most churches are not growing—and they get somebody new who walks in, they look at the new person and if he is under one hundred and ten years old they think: “Fresh blood! Sign him up— fifty years in Sunday school, seventy years as an usher. Quick, sign him up!” And I think that

the church gives us the impression that God is only interested in what you can give to him. He is financially in trouble. He wants you to give this much, or you need to get involved in this ministry. And the truth as seen through Scripture is that God wants you! He does not want what you can do for him. He is not up in heaven saying, “Thank God you got here and now we can organize the Kingdom!” Do you understand?

In the last two weeks in my house I painted two of our bedrooms and our dining room. And of course nothing can be the same color because you have molding and trim and so you have to cut everything in and be careful and paint from the top down so you don’t splatter. And of course my seven year old—the kids are off from school now for summer—the whole time he is just standing there days on end, standing there with a brush. “Can I help Dad? Hey Dad, can I help you? Can I help? Can I use this brush? Can I help you paint, Dad?” And I am thinking: “by myself I am going to knock this job out in four hours and with my son—two days!” When I am painting the fence in the yard they never want to help. So I finally say, “Okay you can help me.” And in ten minutes they are tired of it and they go somewhere else. But there in the house my son just repeatedly asked to help me. And we let our kids help to bless *them*. I did not have my son so he could help paint. I did not say to my wife, “We have five kids, we can paint the whole house in no time.” It makes me nervous when my seven-year-old helps, you understand? My joy is simply to be with him.

And I think sometimes when God looks down from heaven and sees me in the pulpit, he is nervous! I think he lets me help because it blesses me. Do you understand? And I forget that on His end the purpose of trading away His own Son was so that I could be with Him again in fellowship. What God really desires is me.

It tells us this in the book of [Revelation 21:2-3](#),

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [that is Jesus Christ] is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them.

I mean, as the eternal state is described, the first three things he is saying is that “they are going to be with me. I am going to be their God, I am going to be with them. My dwelling place is going to be with them.” His name is Emmanuel, “God with us.” The heart of God is that we would be with him and that he would be with us. And there is some joy that he places in just being with us.

My daughter Hannah is five years old. She is so crazy, she is just in perpetual motion. I look at her and think: “If we could only put a wire on that and run the electricity in the house with it and harness all that energy!” She makes me tired watching her, but there are times when she just settles down and for two sentences she will communicate in her version of English with us. She is five years old and I enjoy just listening to her and looking into her face as she tries to communicate. We had company the other night and

she came out with a jump rope. She said, “Do you want to see me jump? I have been *prataxsing*. I been *prataxsing*.” I just looked at her—*prataxsing*—who could say that but her? *Prataxsing*. But it is rare for her to stop and talk because she is so busy and I want to bless her with all the things I let her do. But I like to look at my kids, they have freckles. Josh is seven and I have found freckles in the last year that I had not taken note of before. Sometimes when they are sick they are still enough to look at or realize this or that; but most of the time when I try to get them to be still they are all over the place and I just want to see them.

Now don't you feel like we are that way with God sometimes? We want to be in the kitchen, we want to be doing this or that and God just wants to grab us. And we wrestle around like our kids do. Isn't it hard to believe that the greatest joy of His heart is to be with us? It is not what we do for Him, but it is that He wants to be with us. Sometimes I don't even want to be with me and I cannot get away from me. I know people who move to another state and they don't know that they are trying to get away from themselves and when they get there it is a bummer because they are still there!

We know how we are and we know the wrestling within us and all the busyness. And we know the tendency we have to just do things instead of bringing ourselves into God's presence. We know the hypocrisy, we know the lust, the anger, the different things we go through; and it is hard for us as we struggle with those things to really believe with all of our hearts that the Lord of the universe desires to sit with us. And you always have to remember that it is us in Christ. It is because of Jesus that we can sit with God. God sees us, not as we see ourselves, but in the righteousness of Christ. And He can see us right now as holy, though we see ourselves with all these things we wrestle with every day.

It tells us in 1 Corinthians that “He is the God who calls things that are naught as though they were” (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:28](#)). It just is a gentle reproof for me to read through these things and remind myself. And I hope He is not sitting at my home waiting to talk to somebody. He is certainly welcome at our house. I hope I remember to slow myself down enough to find Him and spend time with Him.

I hope, if you do not know Christ, that you will realize He does not want you to join a denomination; He does not want you to be a part of a religious system. I have children at home and I don't want them to be part of a religion, a “Daddy” religion. They are my children and we have a relationship. If you don't know this, what God wants is *you*. He has paid for you in the blood of His own Son and He loves you so much. He is more concerned about your life than you are concerned about it. Pray and ask Christ to forgive your sins and to give you new life and to bring you into the family of God. That is what He wants.