

# Distractions

Joe Slater

Though both sisters loved the Lord, Mary and Martha were remarkably different. *“Mary . . . sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving . . .”* (Luke 10:39, 40). Can’t you just see Martha scurrying about, preparing food and attending to all the other duties of a proper hostess, while Mary sits in rapt attention at Jesus’ feet, engrossed with His every word?

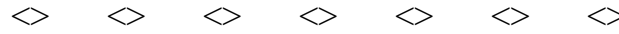
Luke’s word “distracted” means “drawn away.” Martha’s attention was drawn away from Jesus and His teaching by the many things she felt compelled to do. So absorbed was she with her serving that she became irked at Mary for not helping her, and even scolded Jesus for tolerating Mary’s behavior (v. 40).

Jesus gently replied, *“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things”* (v. 41). In his Word Studies in the New Testament, Marvin R. Vincent says that “worried” expresses Martha’s inner uneasiness, while “troubled” emphasizes the outer confusion and bustle which characterized her. Jesus continued: *“But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her”* (v. 42). The opposite of being distracted (worried and troubled), then, is to be calm and focused like Mary was.

In our fast-paced, impatient, hurry-up world, maintaining a clam focus on the Lord is difficult indeed! All sorts of things distract us. Many of them may be good things: employment, recreation, education, or civic concerns, just to name a few. Faithful Christians can and should be involved in these matters; but we must not allow any of them to distract us from the Lord! Not even the basic necessities of life are to become worrisome to us. *“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we*

*eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”* (Matthew 6:31, 33).

Let us resolve to maintain our focus on the Lord, letting nothing distract us!



## God Knows Our Needs

As Christians, we must believe that if we do not receive the very thing we prayed for, then it was best that we not have it. Therefore, we ought always to pray, “Not my will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

God knows best.

I once heard brother Gus Nichols comment on this point. He said, “We do not always know what is best for us. It may not even be best for us to have health or wealth. We may need to remain poor or ill, in order to remain humble and faithful. Even death may be best for us. I have no way of knowing that I would die faithful to the Lord if given twenty-five more years in which to live. If God sees best, I had rather die now and go to heaven than to live a thousand years, and die in sin and be lost eternally. Let us therefore pray and obey, then leave the results up to the will of God

“This will require great faith, but remember: Christians are called believers (1 Timothy 4:12). If we do not seem to have our prayers answered, let us believe that they were heard, and that withholding the answer was equal to the Lord’s speaking back to us and saying, ‘The thing you prayed for is not best for you;’ or, ‘You shall receive your request as soon as you are ready to receive it;’ or ‘I am sending you something better than what you requested.’”

Let us do our part, and leave the results to God. He will take care of us – whether we live or die.

--Bobby Key (Via *Old Paths*)

## Exceeding Minimum Requirements

After teaching two years in the L.A. area, I obtained a position on the central coast school district of 12,000. I was welcomed by the superintendent who immediately had me report to my new school's principal. Arriving on campus, I found the school's leader, not behind a desk, but on the playground.

He had on old work clothes, was covered in dirt and windblown dust (as opposed to my coat and tie), chopping weeds. After introductions, he asked if I was ready to go to work. I eagerly let him know I was all set to work, and he handed me a hoe! It was a lesson I've remembered for 63 years.

Too many are asking, "What is the least I can do and remain in God's good graces?" rather than taking opportunity to maximize their faith and enthusiasm. Merely "going by the book" was seen by the principal as a minimal action. He wanted more from me for the next eight years.

Jesus repeatedly defined our service, as in Luke 6:32-35, where He stated, "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? But love your enemies and do good, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great and you will be sons of the Most High."

Jesus greets us with His hand stretched out, holding a hoe, asking that in our following we serve Him. His "follow me" is "do as I do, and more as needed." Jesus, as a principal, does not want "by the numbers" followers. He leads by example; so must we.

And my share of those weeds? They were tackled relentlessly and with enthusiasm, side by side with the leader. May my worship, as is yours, be filled with an awe-inspired enthusiasm, always attempting what is asked for . . . and more.

--Gordon V. Herrmann (deceased; Santa Maria, CA)