

a matter of deliberate choice. How determined are we to please Him?

GROWING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

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Study 3

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

Scripture Portion: Luke 10:38-42

One thing is absolutely necessary if we are to live a healthy, happy and useful Christian life. Do you know what that one thing is? Mary and Martha were entertaining the Lord Jesus. Martha, a splendid hostess, busied herself with preparations for a meal for Jesus and His disciples. Mary, however, sat at His feet and listened to all the wonderful things He had to say. Martha said to herself, "What a privilege to prepare a meal for Him!" and Mary said, "What a privilege to sit at His feet!", and they were both right in thinking that, verse 39. But Martha felt that Mary was unreasonable in leaving her to serve up the meal, and she even questioned the Lord for allowing Mary to sit there while there was work to be done, verses 39-40. Then it was that Jesus spoke very tenderly to Martha, calling her by her name and saying, "You are careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is absolutely necessary, verse 41-42, and Mary had chosen that "one thing"! This, then, is the first requirement for every Christian: not service, not working, but sitting at the feet of the Lord Jesus and learning of Him, verse 39.

1. WHAT DOES THIS "ONE THING" IMPLY? WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO SIT AT THE FEET OF THE LORD JESUS AND HEAR HIS WORD?

(1) It implies RECEPTION.

In verse 38, we read that Martha received Jesus into her house, and Mary received Him also, verse 39. Before Mary could sit at the Saviour's feet she must have welcomed Him into her presence. To Sit at His feet and listen to His words implies that this reception has taken place. Have you really received the Lord Jesus into your heart

as definitely and as truly as Martha and Mary received Him into their house? Look up John 1:12.

(2) It implies DEVOTION.

The fact that Mary was sitting at the Saviour's feet indicates that she loved Him very much. She knew how much He loved her, and she loved Him because He first loved her, 1 John 4:19; she loved Him for His own sake, for His teaching and, above all, for what He was going to do for her upon Calvary's Cross, look up John 14:15; and Mary did love Him, and in order that she might keep His words she was listening to them and learning them.

(3) It implies SUBMISSION.

Mary did not stand, she sat, and this indicates that she was submissive to Him and recognized Him as her Lord. She subjected herself to His authority and to His truth and teaching. She sat in the place of humility, she took His yoke upon her and learned of Him, look up Matt, 11:29. She placed herself utterly and absolutely under His sway.

2. WHY IS THIS "ONE THING" SO ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY?

(1) It is absolutely necessary if we are to experience a well-balanced Christian life.

The two elements of a well-poised Christian life are sitting and serving, receiving and giving; but the sitting must always precede the serving. For an illustration of this look up John 10:9, "in and out"; "in" first, and then "out"; "in" for worship and "out" for witnessing. The Lord Jesus did not rebuke Martha for her active service, but He did show her that sitting at His feet was the first requirement of successful service.

(2) It is absolutely necessary for growth in grace.

Many Christians remain in a state of protracted infancy because they are neglecting fellowship with the Lord through His Word. They fail to sit at His feet and learn of Him, and therefore they do not grow into spiritual maturity, look up 2 Pet 3:18.

(3) It is absolutely necessary for clear guidance.

There is nothing the Lord longs to do more for us than to guide us in all the details of our daily lives, but very often we fail to hear His "still small voice", 1 Kings 19:12, because we are not living in close enough touch with Him. It is a sad thing when we are constantly making wrong decisions, look up Prov. 3:56 and James 1:5.

(4) It is absolutely necessary for overcoming self.

Martha was irritated and distracted, and she complained, verse 40. This could have been prevented if she had known how to get low at the Saviour's feet. One sure way of learning to overcome the self-life is by regularly sitting at His feet, look up Isa. 57:15 and 1 Pet 3:4.

(5) It is absolutely necessary to gain His commendation.

In verse 42, we are told that our Lord commended Mary for sitting at His feet and hearing His word. Nothing pleases Him more than when we go to His footstool and wait there in silent adoration and praise. He is pleased with our service, but most of all He is pleased with our humble submission, when we sit at His feet and learn of Him.

We shall only get this "one thing" by real determination and resolution. Notice that in verse 42 we are told that Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet. It was