

Help—There's A Mary In Here Somewhere!

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Does my title have your attention? If I told you I had a split personality, you'd be thinking *Sybil*! Well, I, like most of you, *do* have a split personality of sorts, and it's not necessarily a bad thing if we can balance the two. Don't call the paddy wagon just yet...I'll explain!

In the Bible, if you read about Jesus' friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, you find one particularly interesting visit. Jesus is seated, teaching, and Mary is at his feet, hanging on his every word. Martha's in the kitchen, preparing the meal, and growing increasingly impatient with her sister. Finally, she pleads with the Master to tell Mary to come and help. Jesus answers, "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*" (Luke 10:41)

Forgetting the gender issue for just a moment (guys, don't flip out on me, I'm not asking you to get in touch with your feminine side!), would you consider yourself a Mary or a Martha, or somewhere in between? I think I'm a Martha, with a Mary struggling to get out! When I was younger, I was more of a Mary, but as I get older and driven to "get things done," Martha seems to come out in my personality more often.

I'm sure that those of you in any type of ministry can especially relate. Though we truly love to be here doing what God has called us to do, sometimes we have to remind ourselves that during worship time, we're not "clocking in" for another shift! And I must confess, sometimes I find myself having to look inward to be sure that Mary hasn't moved out and left Martha all by herself...

We must take great care not to confuse our time *working for the Lord* with time *communing with Him*. If Martha doesn't take adequate time to enjoy her Master's presence, she becomes burned out and bitter, her labor in vain. She may even begin to feel that her works are earning her salvation, rather than grace. And if Mary doesn't own the responsibility of laboring in the harvest of souls for the kingdom, she becomes merely a hearer and not a doer, even if she has chosen the better part! One of our greatest acts of worship is, having spent time ourselves with Father God, *sharing the good news with others who have not yet experienced the joy of sitting at the Master's feet...*

Once I worked for a really great man, and I was (and still am) privileged to be friends with him and his family. His busy schedule kept him on the road, so we had many people come and go on our payroll who never even met him during their time with us. Even though they enjoyed the benefits of being a part of the company, they still didn't really know the man who signed their checks. I'd even heard a few remark over the years, "It's funny, I work for this guy, and everyone tells me how nice and good he is, but I wouldn't know his face if I saw him!"

It was during those times I felt grateful not only to know him as my employer, but to know him as my *friend*. My proximity to him and his family made me want to do an even better job because I had *relationship* with them, an appreciation of *who they were*, and not just an exchange of work for money.

So, as we struggle to achieve balance in our Christian walk, let's remember that there's both a need—and room for—the Mary's and the Martha's in God's kingdom. I issue this challenge to myself and to all of you, whether you're a Mary or a Martha or a bit of both: "Martha, come out of the kitchen awhile—your Master's after your *heart*, not just what's in your hand. And Mary, enjoy being blessed, but *don't forget to help clean up the mess!*"

—Lisa Crum