

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 448

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. For your convenience here is the story: **“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” (Lk. 10:38-42)**

We have mentioned before the true story of Charles Schwab, the man who was President of Bethlehem Steel Company many years ago. Schwab paid \$25,000 for eight words of advice. The advice was given in 1918 by Ivy Lee, who was a productivity consultant. The eight words were: “Do things in the order of their importance.” Implementing this advice improved the productivity of Bethlehem Steel by at least 50%. \$25,000 in 1918 would compute to over \$500,000 in today's currency.

Now let us apply this advice to the story of Mary and Martha. Martha opened her home to Jesus and his disciples and she was busy preparing a meal for this rather large group of people. Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to what he said. Martha, however, was “distracted” by all the preparations that had to be made. In your honest opinion, which was the most important – preparing the meal or sitting at the feet of Jesus?

David Haynes “assumed” that Martha was an excellent cook. He also “assumed” that she expected to be the center of attention when the disciples sat down to eat the delicious food she was preparing. “Then”, he surmised, “the never fail biscuits failed.” Nothing was going right in the kitchen. Her little world was facing a crisis and she not only blamed her sister for her problem, she also blamed Jesus. **“Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”**

Jesus responded **“Martha, Martha.”** The Scriptures record only two other times when Jesus used double names - “Simon, Simon” on the night before Calvary, and “Saul, Saul, on the road to Damascus. **“Martha, Martha” the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’”**

As you know, while many things need to be done true success in life true depends upon doing things in the order of their importance. We should give top priority to our relationship with Jesus as this cannot be taken away from you. Your Granny was an excellent cook. She not only fed our family of seven, but also those who lived with us like John, Helms, Randy Carlson, Mike Pratt, and Dean Holmquist. It was common for many years to also invite people home from church on Sundays to share her good cooking. Granny, as you know, is now in a wheel chair and hasn't fixed a meal for several years. The point is, the ability to cook can be taken away from you, but no one can take away your relationship with Jesus!

David Haynes said that his forte was basketball. When he was depressed he would shoot hoops to rebuild his self esteem and remind himself of something in which he excelled. As you know, however, your ability to play basketball can be taken away from you. No one, however, can take away your relationship with Jesus.

The word “distracted” is significant. “Distractions” are a common tactic in war. When the late Gary Reed served in Vietnam he was part of an elite group assigned to capture a key Viet Cong general. Their operation began by blowing up a bridge some distance from the general. This was a planned “distraction”. While the enemy soldiers were focused on the distraction, Gary and a couple of others were able to tranquilize the general and carry him away in a net. Sadly, he was shot and killed by his own men in the fire fight that ensued.

Learning from Jesus should be a top priority in every life! We need to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). Martha, however, was “distracted” from the importance of Jesus. There are also many “distractions” today seeking to keep us from sitting at the feet of Jesus. One obvious example are the 3.8 billion smart phones that dominate the lives of many. So many people are addicted to their smart phones that medical science has coined the term, “nomophobia,” to describe the fear of being without your phone. According to recent data the average person spends 3 hrs. and 15 minutes on their smart phone every day. If you had to choose between sitting at the feet of Jesus or using your smart phone, which would you choose?

All truths are equally true, but not all truths are equally important! The Jewish scholars had selected 613 laws from the Torah. All of these laws were obviously important, but some were more important than others. Please consider the priorities of Jesus: **“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”** (Matt. 22:36-40)

Please do not be distracted from sitting at the feet of Jesus! **“few things are needed—or indeed only one”** and it cannot be taken away from you!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce