

## ONE THING NEEDED

Read [Luke 10:38–42](#)

Once when Jesus was traveling, he was welcomed into the home of a couple of sisters named Martha and Mary. These sisters were exact opposites. Martha was a go-getter. As soon as Jesus entered her home, she got busy getting things ready. You can imagine how she felt. After all, the biggest celebrity in the nation was in her home, along with his entourage. There were refreshments to get, rooms to straighten, towels to put out—or whatever first century Holy Land hospitality required. The Bible says she “*was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made*” ([Luke 10:40a](#)).

Her sister Mary had a different response to Jesus’ visit. She didn’t help Martha get anything ready. She didn’t worry about making the house respectable for the neighbors who were dropping in to check out this traveling miracle worker. She didn’t offer to run next door to borrow some extra bread. What did Mary do? The Bible says she “*sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said*” ([Luke 10:39](#)). She just sat there in Jesus’ presence while her sister Martha did all the work.

Well, you can imagine how Martha felt about the third or fourth time she brought in a plate from the kitchen—and there was Mary just sitting there like one of the guests. Finally, it was too much, and she said to Jesus, “*Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!*” ([Luke 10:40b](#)).

How do you think Jesus responded to Martha’s complaint? Do you think he sympathized with her? Maybe said something like, “You’re right. Mary, you should get up and help your sister do the work”? His answer might surprise you:

**41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”**

**[LUKE 10:41–42](#)**

Jesus did not rebuke Mary. Rather, he *commended* her for choosing to sit before him and listen to his teaching. He even said that her choice was the “*one thing ... needed*” in life.

What can he mean here, because he’s certainly aware of all the necessities of life pressing in on us—work, financial issues, health concerns, family and relationship responsibilities, and so on? What can he mean that, in spite of all these concerns, the one thing needed is to spend time with him? He means that time with him is the key to handling all of the concerns of life successfully. He means that if we will spend time with him, God himself will see to it that everything else works out.

In other words, time with God is the most *practical* thing we can do:  
It gives us peace, which leads to wise decisions.  
It gives us direction—as we listen to Jesus’ words in the Bible.  
It gives us real help from God.

And it’s help we need. USA Today several years ago asked experts from various fields to estimate how much time was needed for the daily necessities of life—how much time was needed per day to exercise properly, to brush our teeth, to play with the kids, to drive to work, to get a good night’s sleep, and so forth. When all the estimates from all the experts were added up, the time needed for the daily necessities of life came to forty-two hours! In other words, there literally are not enough hours in the day to do everything the experts want you to do.

You may feel that way about your own life: overwhelmed with all you face. That’s why meeting with God is the most practical step you can take. God can do more by moving his little finger than you and I can with a lifetime of effort. That’s why Jesus says the one thing needed is to come to him. It will give us real help from God. He will see to it that everything else falls into place.

What are some things that compete for the “**one thing needed**” spot in your life?

How might these areas of your life improve if you spent time with Jesus first?