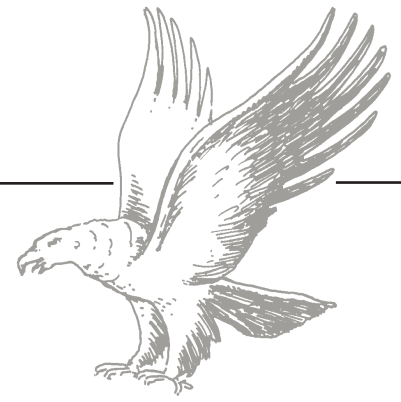


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



April 19, 2015

That Good Part

Martha's desire to prepare a meal for Jesus was commendable, but it betrayed a lack of judgment in managing priorities. We often make the same mistake in deciding how to use our time.

“But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (Lk. 10:42).



Not everyone can say they have personally hosted Jesus Christ in their home—but sisters Martha and Mary could. Martha in particular was eager to make His visit—especially the meal—a memorable one. But the reception did not turn out at all like she expected.

No one can criticize Martha for her hospitality and hard work. But by focusing exclusively on her hostess duties, Martha was passing up a much greater opportunity that lay right front of her—a chance to participate in a Bible study conducted by the Son of God Himself in her own home. How many people in history can post *that* on their Facebook account? The food she was preparing would soon be digested and gone; but the spiritual feast Jesus was serving could change her life forever—if she took the time to listen.

Jesus' rebuke of Martha was gentle but firm. Her decision to focus so much

attention on the meal was not an act of defiance or moral evil; rather, it was a mistake in *priorities*. Jesus reminded Martha of “that good part” (or “good portion,” ESV) that she was ignoring. Martha had two starkly different options before her, and she prioritized them poorly. In making a *good* thing her top objective, she missed a chance to acquire a *better* thing. It was an unfortunate choice that, once made, she would regret forever.

Martha's mistake should be familiar to all of us. Life is a complex mosaic of responsibilities, and we frequently have to weigh the merits of all the duties that press upon us, and decide which should come first. Jobs, families, civic and social interactions, benevolent needs, spiritual development—all of these are important and deserve our attention. But in a well-rounded life, each can get only a part of our time. The trick is knowing which part deserves my full attention *right now*. Given a set of overlapping obligations, which one is “that good part” that I should move to the top of the list, while putting the others off to a later

time? The ability to make those judgments is often the difference between accomplishing something good and achieving something great.

So how do we prioritize among the options before us? There are several factors we could mention, but we will look at only two. First, *what are the payoffs?* Given the potential short-term and long-term benefits among all the options, which would be the best use of my time? Second, *which option holds the smallest window of opportunity?* Is one of these options so unique, so fleeting, that if I pass it up now, I won't see it again? In Martha's case, both of these tests should have led her to skip the meal and listen to Jesus teach. But she missed the clues and thus missed a far greater gift.

In rebuking Martha, Jesus was not insisting that we spend all our time in home Bible studies; nor was He condemning hospitality. Each has its rightful place and time. Rather, He was teaching us to discern, at any point in time, what is “that good part” that represents the best possible use of my time and resources.

– David King