



focus



Study Passage:

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ 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!"

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 10:38-42



distracted

To say that life is full of distractions would be an understatement. What's on your to-do list today? It's full speed ahead as you chauffeur your children to soccer practice and band rehearsal. You have to squeeze in a trip to the grocery store before heading home to tackle a large pile of laundry. All this after a full day at the office! Take a few moments and list some of the distractions/tasks that fill your schedule.

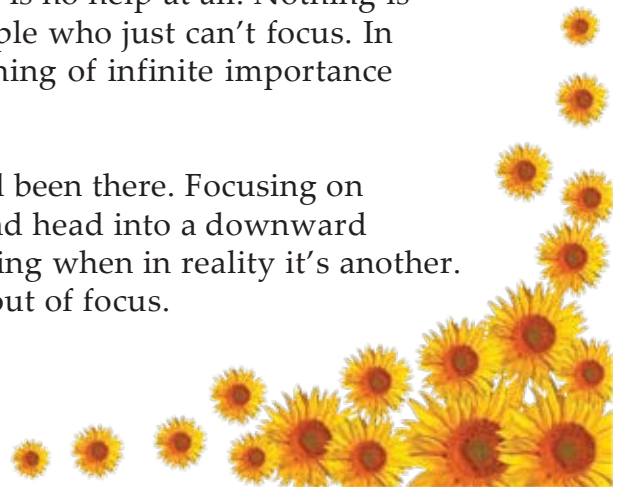
A silver pen and a pair of glasses are resting on a calendar page. The calendar shows a to-do list with numbers 1 through 5. The pen is positioned diagonally across the page, and the glasses are in the foreground, partially obscuring the calendar. The background is a soft-focus image of a calendar page with a to-do list.

Our study passage is the familiar account of Jesus' visit to the home of Martha and Mary. We can relate to Martha. A lot of energy is expended on cooking and cleaning when we're expecting company. Martha appeared to be very focused. Appearances can be deceiving. Martha wasn't focused, she was distracted (verse 40).

out of focus

Have you ever been left to handle a difficult task alone? The person you are expecting help from seems to be distracted and is no help at all. Nothing is getting done! Mary appeared to be one of those people who just can't focus. In reality Mary was very focused — focused on something of infinite importance (verse 39).

Martha couldn't see the forest for the trees. We've all been there. Focusing on things of lesser importance, we become frustrated and head into a downward spiral. We think the answer to our problem is one thing when in reality it's another. That's what happens when our lives are spiritually out of focus.



martha, martha

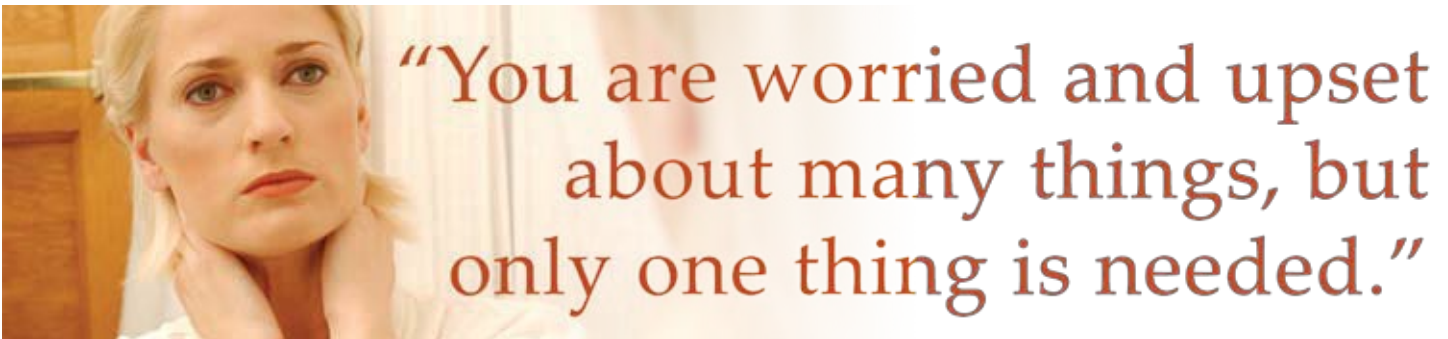
Read again the words of Martha in verse 40. Martha is not happy with her sister and she seems to be holding Jesus accountable as well. "Lord, don't you care..."

Jesus does care. He recognizes that Martha is upset and worried about many things (verse 41). She is not unlike the rest of us. We also become upset and worried when the earthly distractions that fill our lives become the focal point. The caring voice of our Savior calls to us, "Susan, Susan" or "Jennifer, Jennifer." He calls to us through his word:

³¹ So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:31-34



in focus

Food and drink, clothing and shelter — these are things that constantly demand our focus. Our Savior tells us not to worry about them. Don't focus on "stuff" the way unbelievers do. Don't forget that your heavenly Father knows exactly what you need and provides for those needs.

Mary had chosen the right stuff. She was focused on Christ's kingdom and his righteousness. Spiritual growth through word and sacrament is what we need to keep in focus. Weekly worship, Bible class and personal Bible study are ways in which faith in Jesus grows and is strengthened.

maintain focus

People who are successful in business often attribute that success to their ability to get things done. Somehow they manage to accomplish things even when the list of tasks seems overwhelming. Among the keys to their success are having a plan and setting priorities. They maintain the proper focus. We can adapt those practices as we choose to make the study of God's word our top priority.

Come up with a plan. Go back and revisit the task list you put together on page two. Prioritize your tasks. Make spiritual growth number one and then set the priorities for the remaining tasks. Use your new punch list to help maintain spiritual focus for yourself and your family.

help others focus

Gospel Focus describes the ministry of Christian Life Resources. The number one priority is sharing the message of salvation through Christ. The Holy Spirit transforms people through the gospel. People who were once fatally distracted sinners are now focused and forgiven. Their focus is on the source of that forgiveness, Jesus Christ.

You can assist Christian Life Resources in this vital work in a variety of ways:

1. Pray for the ministries of Christian Life Resources and our maternity home, *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*.
2. Pray for the Pregnancy Counseling and Life Resource Centers that are operated by the affiliate chapters of Christian Life Resources.
3. Financially Support *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers* by participating in the *Change for Life* program.
4. Volunteer at your local Pregnancy Counseling or Life Resources Center. They can use you in many ways, including receptionist, hotliner or counselor.

Learn about how you can assist *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*:
www.HelpNewBeginnings.com

Locate the Pregnancy Counseling or Life Resource center in your area:
<http://www.christianliferesources.com/?/affiliates/centers.php>

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