

the best *you can be*

Lesson

10

## A PATIENT *woman*

“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.’”

Luke 10:41, 42

THE STORY OF MARY AND MARTHA has many lessons for us. If we read this story with open minds and hearts, we can learn many good things, including how to be a patient woman (see Luke 10:38-42).

This story has been told for centuries. These two women represent the world of women who have very different personalities. Jesus loved both women. They were like family to Him, and He showed them respect and compassion. If we read the story carefully, we can see how Jesus taught Martha to be patient, to be quiet in her heart, and to spend more time listening than being busy or even talking too much. It also teaches us to be considerate of others by accepting them for who they are and doing our best to support them.

Think about Martha. She was a woman who had more to do than she could possibly get done in one day. Think about her experience when Jesus came to visit—how anxious she was to please. Yet her sister Mary appeared to be lazy. Perhaps Martha thought, *“What a lazy sister I have. I wish she were more like me—hardworking, busy, organized, dependable. I wish she would change.”*

In contrast, consider Mary. She concentrated on what Jesus said while sitting at His feet absorbing the lessons He shared. She was not even aware of Martha’s frustration. So Martha became impatient and interrupted the conversation, asking Jesus to tell Mary to come and help her.

Others were displeased with what Mary did at the feet of Jesus. That time she anointed His feet with expensive perfume at the dinner given in His honor following the resurrection of Lazarus (Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:1-7).



Look at the disciples. They were indignant, but didn’t notice how Jesus felt. They probably thought, *“Look at her as a servant at His feet! She should be more aware of social appropriateness. And she has no concept of the value of that needless action.”*

Listen to Judas Iscariot. He complained, “What a waste of costly perfume. The money for this could have been used to help the poor.” But he didn’t really care about the poor. He probably thought, *“She should be more like me—shrewd, careful, a wise investor, intelligent, good with money.”*

God created each of us as unique individuals. People’s temperaments and personalities differ widely. Reading about the different personality types can help us better understand ourselves and be more patient with those of different temperaments.

We should not be impatient with those who do not have the same temperament as ours. Life will be pleasanter when we learn to accept and appreciate other people for what they are—special in God’s sight.

## ACCEPTING PEOPLE

Just because people are different from us—in habits, ideas, personality or beliefs—doesn't make them wrong. The way we approach life, our particular temperament and personality, is related to our DNA (*a molecule called deoxyribonucleic acid - DNA, which contains the biological instructions that make each species unique*), the very genes that God put together in us. When we realize that we are not responsible for the way other people are or behave, it takes a lot of pressure off. It is liberating to realize that God created us as unique individuals, and we don't have to conform to someone else's ideas, but neither should we expect others to conform to ours.

## ACCEPT, BELIEVE, COMMIT

We may tend to be critical of others, but there are steps we can take to become less judgmental. Above all, we need to look to Christ as our example.

Jesus ACCEPTED Mary just as she was, with her weaknesses and her strengths. He loved her completely.

Jesus BELIEVED in Mary and could see the hope and beauty inside her. He was positive.

Jesus COMMITTED her to God. Jesus lifted her from despair and ruin. He prayed for her.

Think of experiences in your life where acceptance and love have helped, have saved the day, or have turned people to Christ.



## RATE YOURSELF

Suppose the social committee in your church is planning a big picnic that will include food and games. What part would you like to have in the picnic? Choose which part you would feel most comfortable in.

- 1. Picnic coordinator.** You are the one in charge. You organize everything, telling everyone what to do. You are responsible to see that all runs smoothly. You might even umpire one of the games.
- 2. Player in a game.** You want to be right in there with everyone else playing the game, whatever it is—softball, football, tug-of-war, soccer, or hockey. You like to hear the cheers of the crowd as you play the game well.
- 3. Food committee.** Or any other committee. You like to work behind the scenes, attending to all the details that help to make the picnic a success. You are pleased to prepare food, make posters, send out invitations, buy supplies, or plan a game the children could play.
- 4. Cheering section** - You bring your own mat or chair to sit on and are happy to sit on the side, watching the others work and play. You are part of the cheering crowd, enjoying yourself as you sit back and relax.

## WHICH TEMPERAMENTS DESCRIBES YOU?

1. If you chose picnic coordinator, you are likely to be a CHOLERIC personality. You like to get things done .... now! You are energetic, dynamic, hardworking,

disciplined and well organized. A sense of being in control of a situation is very important to you.

2. If you picked player, you probably have a more SANGUINE temperament. You like people and action, and like to be noticed by others. You like people to cheer you and laugh at your jokes. Being around people gives you energy. Having lots of friends is important to you.
3. If you chose the food committee, you are likely to be a MELANCHOLY personality. You are someone who enjoys attending to details. You want things done right and are happy to work in the background to make the program a success.
4. If you decided on the cheering section, you probably have a PHLEGMATIC temperament. You would rather be in the audience, sit back, relax, and enjoy the experience from the sidelines. You are steady, dependable, and easy to get along with.

### PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISES

If you have never taken a temperament test, contact your local mission, church pastor, or Women's Ministries director. Someone

there may be able to give you a test or tell you about a coming seminar or workshop where you can take the test. This will help you understand yourself better and make you more understanding and patient with others.

You may also enjoy reading one of the many books about personality types.

### SUCCESS PRINCIPLE

The most successful way to facilitate change in others is the ABC model:

- A - accept them
- B - believe in them
- C - commit them to God

### MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

Dear patient God, Help me slow down, quiet my mind and heart, and listen to You and others. Help me to accept others when they don't agree with what I say or do and to be ready to hear their opinions and ideas. Forgive me for being anxious and angry when others do things differently than I would. Help me to understand that You have made us all unique and that is okay. Thank You for Your limitless patience with me. Bless me with patience and acceptance of others.



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