

It's Time to Correct These False Ideas About Jesus

Invitations can be expensive. The thick paper, the elegant writing, the fancy envelope—they boast of important events.

And the nicer the invitation, the better we expect to be treated.

God is the only One who can be invited into a situation who doesn't take the rights of a guest. A true servant, He would help out in the kitchen, diffusing the stress in the atmosphere; wash dishes for the host, freeing her for additional tasks or clean His own hotel room before checking out.

We're unfamiliar with this approach. Even Jesus' friends had a hard time understanding His actions.

Mary and Martha had opposing reactions to Jesus' presence. While Mary eagerly seized the opportunity for fellowship, Martha immersed herself in activity, keeping herself from Jesus presence and His penetrating gaze.

When she welcomed Jesus to her home she assumed her default position—moving into what was most comfortable—hiding in the busyness of works away from the One who could look beyond the outward appearance and see her heart.

While this was only one of the times Jesus would visit the sisters, Mary sat at Jesus' feet knowing there were truths the Good Rabbi wanted to teach her.

Her heart resonated with the same truth that stirs our hearts today: There is more.

As they went, He entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. She had a sister called Mary,

who also sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she came to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Then tell her to help me."

Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed. And Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her" (Luke 10:38-42).

Although there is always much that needs to be done to facilitate an impromptu dinner party, Mary seized the opportunity to be with Jesus. She opened her heart to connect with her Maker, to learn from Him and respond to the invitation He verbalizes in Matthew 11:28 and still offers today.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

The stark contrast of each sister's response to Jesus prepared the way for an argument. For anyone with siblings, this is not a surprising result. Siblings occasionally argue. It happens.

And an argument between sisters?

Well, it begs to be settled. If not by a parent, then at least by a trusted friend. But when that trusted Friend is the Son of God—well, all arguments are quickly extinguished by wise words of truth.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver (Prov. 25:11).

The wise judge of all the earth, Jesus, cut to the heart of the matter, exposing the real issue of importance. In that moment, the Lord drew a sharp distinction, pointing to what was best.

The opportunity to serve the Lord is always a good one to pursue, but more than tired servants, the Lord desires passionate children with joyful, connected hearts that enjoy and know Him.

In the course of life, there will always be a list of things that need to be done and numerous requests others need you to meet sooner rather than later. Whether it's the request to serve in an additional ministry or pick up another shift at the volunteer outreach, the needs are present.

There is nothing wrong with serving. Jesus came to the earth to serve. He is our example for serving others with love and compassion out of pure motives.

Many times, what the Lord is drawing attention to are our priorities.

What is often needed is to sit and rest with and learn from God, to see our moments with Him as our best thing—even more meaningful to Him than anything we can accomplish in our own strength—instead of giving in to the distractions of the day, oblivious to His nearness, growing anxious as we put our tasks ahead of relating to Him.

This approach is not popular, and at times, it feels futile. But as culture shifts and the rapid pace of life and needs within our churches increase, the wisdom of prioritizing fellowship with God becomes even more evident as a deep need for every believer and not just the luxury for a few.

It's during these crucial times of drawing near to our good Teacher that we become wise, investing in our relationship as we are instructed to in the Scripture.

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be like ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them. But the wise took jars of oil with their lamps (Matt. 25:1-4).

Through our daily interaction with God—talking with Him in prayer, listening to Him as we read His Word, meeting with Him in concentrated times of praise—we invest in the most important relationship from which everything else flows. Every mission trip, every volunteer opportunity, every word that can be spoken to encourage the discouraged, heal the broken and guide the lost must first come out of the place of fellowship with Jesus. This is the source of power for every believer.

Actually getting to know God is the only thing that will stabilize us. Like a concrete foundation dug deep into the earth or an ancient tree with roots that grow hundreds of feet below the ground's surface, His truth anchors and grows His children. With so much shifting in the world and the instability exhibited in the nations, Jesus calls, inviting us into true fellowship.

In this place, He breaks down false ideas about His nature that have cropped up to accuse Him. He leads us beside those still waters and brings restoration. He breathes on dry places within, displaying His ability as the Resurrection and the Life.

Gently, tenderly, He grows us, beautifying our lives, bringing transformation. Like an abandoned lot being transformed from a slab of concrete to a lush oasis in the midst of a busy city, this is what happens when we respond to Him, the Lord God gracious, who has always desired to draw His children near to know Him.

But invitations must be accepted.

There will always be a million things to do. God will not force anyone into greater depths of His love and goodness, but He does ask again and again. In so many ways throughout all our days, he calls to those deep places within that He desires to fill and beautify as we find our rest, our strength, and our restoration seated at His feet. {eoa}

To grow deeper in knowledge of the Lord and love Him more, consider the One Thing Internship, beginning July 13, 2017. This six-month internship at IHOPKC is geared to connecting 18–25 years olds with biblical truth in an environment of continuous worship and prayer.

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