

**20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning**  
**Week 42 (October 13-19, 2013)**

I have become a student of the four types of personalities that make up the human race. This week, we will study the lives of two of those personality types displayed in two sisters, Martha and Mary.

**Sunday** -- October 13 (Luke 10:38-42)

Jesus loved to go to the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany. They were some of His closest friends. As our text begins, He arrives at their home. Notice, however, that the Scripture calls it the home of **Martha**. It is apparent that Martha rules the roost at home (v. 38). She is a **project lady**, one who organizes everything down to the tiniest detail. She would be horrified to think that Jesus could come by and find a “dust bunny” in her house. Mary, on the other hand, is very laid back and is not at all motivated by projects. Instead, she is a **people person**. She has no trouble at all in stopping what she is doing (or not doing) to sit at Jesus’ feet to listen to everything He has to say (v. 39). This is where the misunderstanding comes into play. Many folks, even today, see Mary as spiritual and Martha as worldly. Let’s try to look at these two women through Jesus’ eyes in the days that lie ahead.

**Monday** -- October 14 (Luke 10:38-42)

Those who are wired with a “Martha” personality will always struggle with the tendency to be “distracted by all the preparations that have to be made.” They will also be prone to **criticize** others who never give a thought to the home and food preparations (v. 40). Jesus rebukes Martha for being so uptight and compliments Mary for choosing “what is better” (v. 41-42). At face value, it sounds like He is playing favorites, but He is merely chastising Martha for criticizing Mary. Martha needs to learn how to **eat, drink and be “Mary”!** I’m sure Jesus loves Martha’s fried chicken and clean house, but He also wants her to slow down long enough to listen to Him. I’m very sure He loves having Mary sit at His feet, but He also wants her to assist her sister so that **both of them** can worship. In tomorrow’s devotions, I will tell you why this material is so important to me!

**Tuesday** -- October 15 (Luke 10:38-42)

You don’t have to be around my wife, Verona (Roni) and me very long before you become aware that these two sisters perfectly describe our relationship. Roni is the purest “Martha” I have ever seen. She cannot worship until the clutter is straightened up in her office. I, on the other hand, can crawl over anything to get to my designated place of worship in my office. She is wired as a **project person**; I am wired as a **people person**. It is not a matter of right or wrong; it is a matter of seeing the same picture from two different perspectives. I could never be so laid back if I were not married to that special someone who takes care of all the details inside (and outside) the house (and ministry). Likewise, she would wear herself out if she did not have me to slow her down so that she can hear her Lord say, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). God loves diversity; therefore, He designs us so that we do not all see everything alike. We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). I challenge you to learn to appreciate the differences in your spouse (sister, brother etc.). This truth will make your life (and theirs) much more peaceful!

### **Wednesday** -- October 16 (John 11:1-16)

You don't have to read very far in today's text to realize that Mary is one of the original "village people" (v. 1). While Martha rules the roost at home, Mary is out in the village making friends. The two ladies come together, however, for a common cause: Their brother Lazarus is very ill (v. 2). In their desperation, they notify Jesus, although making no specific demands (v. 3). The Lord does not hurry to return to Bethany (v. 4-6) even though His love for this family is not in question. When He decides it is time to go back, His disciples disagree with him because of the obvious danger (v. 7-8). Jesus gives them a great lesson in theology by stating that the person who **walks in the light** has no fear (v. 9-10). The Lord answers their continuing protests by telling them bluntly, "Lazarus is dead" (v. 11-15). Thomas, the eternal pessimist, tells the others to come with Jesus, even if it kills them (v. 16). We will see the two sisters' personalities come back into play in tomorrow's devotions.

### **Thursday** -- October 17 (John 11:17-28)

In today's text, Martha leaves her kitchen and goes out to meet Jesus. She wants to know why He failed to come when they called (v. 17-20). She delivers a "guilt trip" (v. 21) along with a statement of faith saying, "But I know that **even now** God will give you whatever you ask" (v. 22, emphasis mine). Jesus assures His friend that her brother "will rise again" (v. 23). Martha is aware that Lazarus will be taken care of in Eternity, but she wants him to be with her down here on earth (v. 24). That's when our Lord tells her that He has **both bases** covered because He is "the resurrection **and** the life" (v. 25-26, emphasis mine). Martha makes another affirmation of faith (v. 27) and then does a beautiful thing that goes beyond her previous critical nature. She goes back and tells her grieving sister, "The Teacher is here and is asking for **you**" (v. 28, emphasis mine). Wow! Aren't you glad that **love** conquers natural misunderstandings regarding the personalities and intentions of others? We will follow the story tomorrow.

### **Friday** -- October 18 (John 11:29-44)

Mary leaves immediately to go out to meet her Lord because she has the same question on her heart that her sister had asked (v. 29-32; see also v. 21)). The only difference is that she falls at His feet before asking it (v. 32). Jesus is deeply moved by the pain that His friends are experiencing and actually joins Mary in weeping (v. 33-35). Upon arriving at the tomb, the Lord commands the people to "Take away the stone" (v. 38-39). It is a reminder to us that He cannot show us His miracles unless we are willing to remove the **heart of stone** that we often bring to Him. Martha's detailed personality comes back into play when she thinks how embarrassed the family will be from the stench of her brother (v. 39). Jesus reminds her of **His promise** and brings Lazarus back from the dead following a rare public prayer (v. 40-44). Don't miss His command: "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." If you also have found new life in Christ, be sure that you take off your old "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) and replace them with His "robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10).

### **Saturday** -- October 19 (John 12:1-11)

In today's text, we conclude our week's studies with a beautiful story. These ladies finally put their differences aside and prepare a meal "in Jesus' honor" (v. 1-2). Martha does her thing in the kitchen while Mary does her act of worship at the Lord's feet (v. 2-3). Judas' duplicity is exposed for the readers of John's Gospel (v. 4-6), bringing about a serious rebuke from Jesus (v. 7-8). Read the rest of this text and you will see what our Lord **foreknew** causing Him to weep (11:35) prior to bringing Lazarus back from the dead (v. 9-11). When Jesus delays an answer to your prayer or when He says "no," it is always because He sees a bigger picture. Learn to trust Him in all situations (see Philippians 4:11). You can serve Him like Martha and worship Him like Mary.