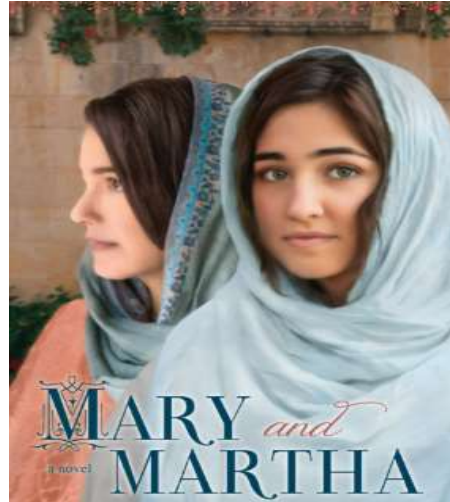


MARTHA & MARY

Class by Sylvia Powell, September 30, 2025



This class is an account of two sisters who had very different personalities. Martha was more of an extrovert, being outgoing and industrious; and Mary was more of an introvert, being more contemplative and devotional. They were both Godly women who loved their Lord. Today we're going to delve into what characteristics made them who they were and why they were so loved by Jesus.

Gary Chapman wrote a book about the 5 love languages.

- 1. Quality time**
- 2. Words of affection**
- 3. Physical touch**
- 4. Service**
- 5. Giving gifts**

I believe that most people, sometime in their lives, have shown love in each of these categories. One category you will generally score higher than the rest. I scored very high in physical touch. We all know that I'm a big hugger.

Now, what do you think Martha would score the highest in? SERVICE. How about Mary? Probably QUALITY TIME.

This doesn't mean that one was better than the other – just different. Think how crazy the world would be if everybody ran around hugging each other 24/7. Wow, that's a lot of hugs. But, if that were the case then a hug wouldn't make a person feel as special when they are hugged.

MARTHA



HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is a selfless, sacred Christ-driven act of generosity, welcoming and providing for strangers and vulnerable people, extending privileges to outsiders as if they were insiders, with the ultimate goal of honoring God and spreading Christian love and community.

Martha definitely had the gift of hospitality. **Romans 11:13** "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."

In **Luke 11:39** we see her gift of hospitality unfolding. "Now it came to pass, as they went, they entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house."

Let's talk about that term "her house" for a minute. We don't know how she came into possession of her house. Perhaps she was married to a man who died and left it to her. She wouldn't have inherited it, because Lazarus was her brother and he would have gotten it. In those days women were not able to purchase a house. Because it was her house she was considered the head of the household, not Lazarus. I found it interesting that the name Martha is derived from the Aramaic word Marta and means "lady" or "mistress of the house."

I would assume that Jesus had visited her home before as it talks about how Jesus knew and loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus. So, she welcomed Jesus into her home without any hesitation—embodying a good hostess. She wanted everything to be the best for Jesus. I think maybe she could have been somewhat of a perfectionist. Now that can be a good thing and a bad thing. If it goes into the extreme, it becomes a prideful thing.

Now imagine if you had just found out Jesus and probably His disciples were coming to your house. They would be hungry and expecting to be fed. Even if you knew your guests were coming in advance you would still want everything to be nice for them. You would get up early to make sure your house was clean. Then you would get in your car and go to the store to get the freshest food to prepare. It's a monumental task but you want your guests to be comfortable and happy.

Bear in mind, though, that you've got a nice stove, microwave, and a dishwasher you can stash the dirty dishes in, if necessary, and an electric can opener that gets your cans open in an instant. But, even with all these modern conveniences you are still anxious as you don't want your guests to have to wait to be fed a delicious meal.

In Jesus' day they had to walk to the market and pick out the freshest food and carry it home. There would have had to have been quite a bit of food to serve that many people. When you got home you would have to start a fire, prepare the food over that open fire, and make sure there are enough clean dishes to serve Jesus and His entourage. By this time, you are feeling a little frazzled and agitated that Lazarus is just lying around on a couch (this makes me wonder if Lazarus was not a healthy man) and Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet. No one is helping you!

In **Luke 10:41**, "But Martha was encumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, does thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she helps me."

Then in **Luke 10:42 & 43** Jesus says to this already frazzled woman: ". . . Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Notice, though, that it isn't Jesus who first chided Martha for being distracted. He doesn't say "Martha, stop running around like a chicken with its head cut off and come and sit with me like your sister." It wasn't until Martha whined about doing all the work that Jesus got after her.

I think He might have been a little frustrated with Martha. She whined about Mary and then demanded that He get her to help her.

Paul tells us in **Philippians 2:14 & 15** "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

I'm sure her light wasn't shining to all those who were present. Did her actions and words reflect that she was a good hostess? Have you ever been in a situation where words were being exchanged in a heated manner? Did you wish you were anywhere but there?

Psalms 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

I don't think she was reflecting that scripture. I know sometimes when I get upset or frazzled, like Martha, I sometimes say or do things that I normally wouldn't. Those scriptures show us how important what we say is. They can bring comfort and reflect, and in the next moment spew hate.

I greatly dislike it when I hear someone say something they shouldn't and then say "I didn't really mean that." Well, those words came from their mind so at some time they must have been thinking about it.

Let's put ourselves in Martha's shoes for a moment. How would you feel about what Christ said to her? You had been working hard to provide for Jesus and His disciples and Jesus is telling you that Mary's sitting at His feet is more important than all that you had been doing. That probably stung—as at that time she probably didn't understand what He was talking about.

So often we get caught up with all the things we have to do that sometimes we don't allow time to converse with God or get into His Word. I know I have to pray before I get out of bed in the morning, because the minute my feet hit the floor I'm off and running. It's interesting that when I pray, sometimes I'm able to get more accomplished than if I didn't. So, God is telling us in this story that we need to make time with Him a priority.

SERVICE

Serving others is a primary expression of faith and a reflection of Jesus' own life. Our scriptures provide consistent instruction and examples that encourage believers to serve others with humility, love and generosity.

Martha's love language was definitely SERVICE. She was an action-oriented person who was probably known in the community as being a very giving and loving person whose life reflected the Second Great Commandment: to love our neighbor as ourselves. Because she loved Jesus so much, she wanted to show her love by serving Him.

In **Mosiah 2:27** King Benjamin tells his people how to raise their children. He says, "Ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another."

Martha and Mary's mother undoubtedly raised them to understand what God expected of them, and she set a good example for them.

RESPONSIBLE AND SELFLESS

Mosiah 2:28 "And also ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need." Martha didn't hesitate to host Jesus and his disciples even though it might have been a strain on her time and grocery budget. She was putting Jesus before herself. I'm sure she had other things she could have been doing and ways to spend her money, but she chose to take care of Jesus and His disciple.

EXPRESSIVE & DIRECT

Martha had a strong personality and wasn't afraid to speak her mind, even to Jesus. Obviously, Jesus must have had a close relationship with Martha for her to come to him and demand He make Mary help her.

We also see these characteristics when Lazarus became ill and Jesus was notified. He didn't come until Lazarus had died and had been in the tomb for four days. I'm sure Martha was upset with Him when He finally got there.

John 11:17-21 "And when Jesus came to Bethany, to Martha's house, Lazarus had already been in the grave four days. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

When Martha—as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming—went and met Him. But Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

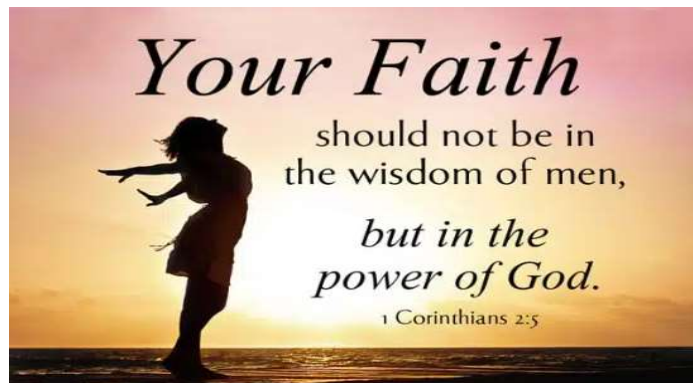
Again, it seems like she was kind of berating Jesus. Now, understandably, she was beside herself with grief, but this was the Lord she was talking to. She didn't understand the reason why Jesus had not dropped everything to come to Lazarus as soon as He found out he was sick. Again, I go back to the thought that perhaps Lazarus had not been well for some time.

Have you ever in moments of frustration and discouragement queried God why your prayers weren't answered right then, and in the way you had prayed?

In **Luke 11:4** Jesus tells his disciples, “And when Jesus heard he was sick, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

We might not always understand God's ways but we need to have a close enough relationship with Him to know and understand that He always has our best interests at heart.

FAITH



Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Martha knew, without a doubt, that if Jesus had come sooner, He would have saved Lazarus. Listen to what she said next.

John 11:22-27 “But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give thee. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day; Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yes, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

Martha acknowledged to Him that she believed that whatever He asked of God He would be given. Because of that, she knew that even now, Jesus could raise him from the dead.

John 11:28-36 “And when she had so said, she went her way and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee. [He wanted Mary to witness the miracle, too.] As soon as Mary heard that Jesus was come, she arose quickly and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met him.

"The Jews then, which were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!"

Jesus loved that family very much. He would never do anything intentionally to bring them grief and pain. Sometimes, though, God uses those instances to help us grow spiritually. That was the case here.

When someone you love dearly is upset and crying don't you feel like crying also? At Charlie Kirk's memorial service, I bet there wasn't anyone that watched Erika forgive the young man that murdered her husband that didn't have tears in their eyes. Talk about a Godly woman. She was very bold in voicing her appreciation of God for bringing Charlie into her life. I know, without a doubt, that God has his hand on their ministry and through it many more will come to know and love the Lord. And desire to serve Him. Let's continue with the story.

John 11:37-45 "And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? (Again, reprimanding her.)

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."



Talk about a faith building experience. To see a man that had been dead for 4 days walk out of his tomb alive! Don't you know there was a lot of hugging going on and tears of happiness.

Probably none of us have ever experienced anything that dramatic but we've all seen God's hand at work in our lives.

MARY



Mary was the quieter of the two sisters. She was more introspective than Martha. She could sit for hours listening to Jesus, where if Martha was listening to Jesus she was probably getting up periodically to go and check on the food, unable to truly absorb what He was saying. When we are distracted by a million things running through our mind can we truly hear God's still small voice? Don't you wish sometimes that you had a switch that would allow you to tune out the world?

HUMBLE

In the scriptures humble means “Having a correct, modest view of oneself in relation to God and others, characterized by self-denial, a lack of arrogance, and a focus on others' needs and God's will. It is the opposite of pride and involves recognizing one's dependence on God, submitting to His plan, and serving others. It means not feeling superior to others but rather being considerate and valuing them. True humility is not self-deprecation but a quiet confidence and a willingness to admit when you're wrong. It means putting others first and using your skills for the common good.”

Again, I go back to the second great commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Pat Carrick was a living example of being humble. So, let's talk about some of the characteristics of a humble person. Pat exhibited all of these throughout her life.

Modesty: A humble person does not boast about their accomplishments or seek attention.

Pat was very accomplished and talented. She was the perfect Susie Homemaker. She cooked, baked, gardened, sewed, wrote books, taught classes, and even went back to college to get her teaching degree when she was old enough to retire just so she could homeschool her family. She was women's leader for many years and mentored me when I started doing women's ministry. She was soft spoken and had a great sense of humor which I loved.

Consideration for others: They prioritize the interests or needs of others and value them above their own. No matter what might be going on in Pat's life if she saw someone in need she wouldn't hesitate to help them. When I was women's leader at Atherton if I saw a sister that I felt needed a home visit I always called Pat and no matter what she was doing she would always go with me.

Lack of Arrogance: They are not overbearing, pretentious or convinced of their own superiority. If anyone complimented Pat about something she would always give God the credit.

Quiet Confidence: Humble individuals have healthy self-esteem without feeling they are better than others.

MY GIFTS AND TALENTS

Admitting Fault: They are able to admit when they are wrong and can be open to different viewpoints. She never hesitated to admit when she was wrong. Actually, I think I remember there was one time she was wrong about something.

What humility is not: Thinking less of yourself. Humility is not about belittling oneself or feeling inferior.

Seeking Attention: True humility is not a performance or a way to get people to notice how humble you are.

A Disguise: It is not a servile or sheepish act, but a genuine state of being.

None of these things applied to Pat. I know when God took her home, He welcomed her with open arms.

So, the essence of humility is to not focus on yourself and, instead, direct your attention to others.

CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Lord, I know I'm not perfect; I mess up, sin, and sometimes I forget to pray or thank you for my blessings. There are moments I ask for forgiveness only to come back and ask for more. There are moments I hear your voice but don't listen. There are moments I try to do the impossible without you. Even with all my flaws and sins you hold me up day after day. God, you are so amazing. Through the good times and bad times in my life I will always give you all the glory and praise. I love you Lord and desire to serve you to the best of my ability.

Many things about our personalities come from the example that our parents and others set for us. These traits can be good or bad. It's what we do with those examples that are important.

In **Alma 16:137** Alma is talking to the people after they told him that they were no longer permitted to worship in the synagogue due to their poverty.

He said “Yea, he that truly humbleth himself, and repenteth of his sins, and endureth to the end, the same shall be blessed, yea, much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble because of their exceeding poverty; therefore, blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble.”

DEVOTION

The scriptures encourage total and unwavering devotion, primarily to God, which is expressed through complete love and obedience, as well as one another in the community, characterized by love, service and unity. This devotion is shown through fervent prayer, consistent service to others, and an undivided heart that prioritizes God above all else, leading to a life of righteousness and honoring Him in all things.

Mary certainly exemplified devotion. This is pure speculation, but I think something might have happened in Mary's life that prompted this great devotion. Perhaps Jesus knew about this and forgave her??

1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

He freed her from it and that prompted Mary's great devotion. It is interesting that there are many definitions for the name of Mary. In Hebrew it can mean hardship, beloved or favored. I think probably all three of them could apply to Mary.

Jesus' forgiveness has significant implications for believers—profoundly affecting their relationship with God, their personal lives, and their actions with others. It is the basis for their reconciliation with God and meant to transform them from inside and out.

QUIET & REFLECTIVE STRENGTH

The scriptures describe strength primarily as a gift from God—found in trusting Him, enduring hardships, and relying on His grace, even in weakness. Christians are encouraged to draw strength from God's presence and power, not their own abilities

Mary's strength lay in her devotional and focused love for Jesus. She prioritized her relationship with Him above everything else. Her actions in sitting at Jesus' feet to learn more from him showed how she prioritized the importance of Jesus' teachings. In **Luke 10:41** when Martha asked Jesus to make Mary help her, Mary didn't defend herself as she knew that was what Jesus wanted her to do.

COURAGE

The scriptures tell us that true courage comes from God and is found in trusting Him, not from the absence of fear. We can find courage by relying in God's presence, His promises and the presence that comes from trusting Him in difficult circumstances.

Joshua 1:9: "Have not I commanded thee? (Ladies, this is a commandment from God.) Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid; neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord, thy God, is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

This is one of my favorite scriptures. Sometimes when I need reassurance, I think about that scripture and somehow, my burden doesn't seem as great.



Let's continue with Mary's story. **John 12:1-8** "Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served; (notice it's always Martha who does all the work) but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. (Notice before he was lying on the couch, now he's sitting at the table.) Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?"

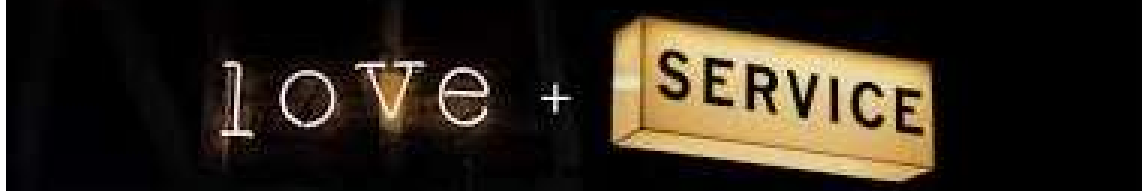
This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone; for she hath preserved this ointment until now, that she might anoint me in token of my burial. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."

In Jesus day it was not the custom for women to wear their hair loose in public. Doing so was widely seen as a mark of immodesty, sexual promiscuity or dishonor. They would cover their hair with veils, headscarves, or hairnets when outside the home.

It was also unwise for a woman to touch a man she was not married to as it would have been considered inappropriate and in violation of strong social and religious norms. This was especially true if the man was a religious figure or rabbi. Such contact would have caused a public scandal, as it carried implications of ritual impurity and sexual impropriety.

CONCLUSION

We Need Mary's Heart and Martha's Hands



This journey into the lives of Martha and Mary has shown us the importance of having the qualities of both of these women in our lives. A lot of these characteristics listed can apply to both of these women as well as ourselves. We are called to have a servant's heart like Martha, but we also need to make time to draw closer to God like Mary. We need to have a balanced life that includes dedicated time for prayer and spiritual things, alongside necessary actions and service.

Ultimately, both Mary and Martha were loved by Jesus, and their story encourages us to serve with wholehearted love, whether YOUR gift is service, quality time, words of affection, physical touch or giving gifts.

Just as those gifts bring balance to a loving relationship, all of the characteristics these two remarkable women exhibited bring balance into our daily lives.

I leave you with this challenge found in **D&C 4:1-2**: “1 Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men; therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day; therefore, if ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work; for behold, the field is white, already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perish not but bringeth salvation to his soul; and faith, hope, charity, and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualifies him for the work. 2 Remember: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence. Ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you. Amen.”

Mark 1:16-19

GOD CALLS EACH OF US TO SERVE AND FOLLOW HIM

Each of us
is called for
a specific purpose.