

# Mary, Martha and Lazarus

by J. Oswald Sanders

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*The sermon highlights the importance of prioritizing spiritual things and expressing love and devotion to Christ, using the examples of Mary and Martha's different approaches.*

**Duration:** 1:36:35

**Scripture:** Luke 10:38, Luke 10:40-42, John 11:6, 2 Corinthians 1:4, 1 Timothy 6:8

**Topics:** "Lazarus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of materialism and the desire for constant upgrades in our society. He emphasizes that the Bible teaches principles rather than specific rules, and one of these principles is to be content with what we have. The speaker encourages Christians to resist the temptation of constantly seeking something better and instead find contentment in their current circumstances. He also shares personal experiences of dealing with loneliness and highlights the importance of learning to be content in all situations.

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## Transcript

Tonight I want to speak about Mary and Martha, and of course the appendage Lazarus. Would you turn to Luke's Gospel, chapter 10, verse 38. Now as they went on their way, he entered a village, and a woman named Martha received them into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.

But the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. One thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion which shall not be taken away from her.

The home at Bethany was an oasis to our Lord in the desert of the life he lived, and the loneliness after his exile from heaven. To be able to drop into this home and relax to him must have been a wonderful blessing. And it says now Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus.

Martha probably was a widow. She had her own house, and it's quite possible she was a widow. Mary apparently was not married, and Lazarus was single.

So the Lord didn't mind putting up with singles sometimes. And to him it was a refreshment of spirit to spend time with these three people. Lazarus doesn't seem to be a very prominent character.

The sisters seem to be the two dominant people, and they're totally different types. Martha, practical, bustling, busy, competent. Mary, dreamy, probably unpractical, meditative, reflective, meditative, so on.

And all three managing to live together in comparative harmony. Apparently there wasn't always harmony, but there was such an atmosphere in that home that made it a great joy to the Lord to be present. Lazarus apparently was a rather passive man.

You don't find anything active said about him. He was obviously a good brother. They loved him.

He was obviously a good man. The Lord loved him. And afterwards, after his resurrection, many believed on the Lord because of Lazarus.

His testimony obviously after his resurrection was something that really commended the Lord, and many believed because of Lazarus. But he was not the dominant character in that group. One man was asked, now which character do you like best? Do you like Martha best or Mary? The man thought for a while.

He said, well, I like Martha best before dinner and Mary best afterwards. Well, I think that's very nice when there's a combination of Mary and Martha, but there's not always a combination, isn't it? But it's very nice to have a Martha. And I'm sure that our Lord appreciated her cooking.

But in this case, she carried it a little bit too far. Both men had a strong individuality that showed itself. They were clear types.

They say there are no pure types, but they seem to be fairly pure. And they manifested it in the way in which they reacted to the presence of the Lord. There were three incidents in which Mary and Martha were concerned.

The one was the incident where it was a choice between cooking or company. And Martha chose the cooking, and Mary chose the company. The second incident was in the resurrection of Lazarus, where you find our Lord adopting a different method in dealing with Martha from that of Mary.

It was a case of talking with Martha and tears with Mary. And then the third case was the place where Mary anointed the Lord with the anointing oil. And in that case, it was a case of devotion or dollars, which is the most important, love for the Lord or selling the anointing oil and giving it to the poor.

So those were the three incidents in which these two women appear. Now, the first is Martha's dinner party, of which we read just now. She was the hostess.

It was her house. They were there as guests. And Mary is serenely sitting at the feet of the Lord Jesus, listening to the pearls of wisdom, the treasures that drop from his lips, and enjoying it wonderfully.

Martha is distracted, the word is distracted, with much serving. The word means not knowing which way to turn. Anybody ever found a situation like that in the kitchen? Distracted with much serving, not knowing which way to turn.

She wanted to turn on a really special meal for this loved and honored guest. She was going to do use her best skill to do it. Mary, meanwhile, sits in the guest room.

She sits there, piously listening to the Lord, while pressure builds up in the kitchen. And pressure can build up in the kitchen too. Lord, don't you care that my sister has left all the work for me to do? Tell her to help me.

My, don't you think that a few days afterwards, after the resurrection of Lazarus, Martha could have wished she'd torn her tongue out, rather than speak to the Lord of Glory like that. But you see, her undisciplined temper got her into that trouble. She was quite right in expecting, doubtless, Mary should have given a hand.

She should have helped perhaps before, even if she didn't do now. But she had a right to expect that, but she had no right to rebuke the Lord in that way. And the Lord indicated to Martha that she was doing more than was necessary.

You've doubtless heard it suggested, where he said one thing is needful. The idea was one dish would be sufficient. You're going to the trouble of making a whole lot of special dishes, but one general dish, some chow mein with everything else in it would do.

One would be sufficient. And he didn't speak harshly to her. He didn't chide her.

He just said, really, Martha, you're going to too much trouble. One dish would have been adequate. We could have got through on it.

And Mary, unpractical Mary, is indulging her temperament, sitting at the Lord's feet. And Martha is allowing her undisciplined temperament to master her. It's interesting the way in which the Lord treated them.

He didn't chide Martha, and he didn't chide Mary. He pointed out things to Martha, and he also indicated that it wasn't wrong for her to expect Mary to have helped her. But he said, of the two, Mary has chosen the better part.

Your concentration is on cooking. Mary's concentration is on food for the soul. Man shall not live by bread alone.

It's wonderful to have a nice meal, but there's something even more important than that. But the gentle, tactful way in which he did it was very, very beautiful. Now, Martha made three mistakes.

The first mistake was she forgot herself and rebuked the Lord, and that was unpardonable. The second thing was she interpreted Mary's devotion as laziness, and it wasn't. It's very easy for different types of people to arbitrarily judge the action of others, especially if they're the opposite type.

So easy to do that, and we all fall into the... She thought that Mary was dreamy. She didn't have any much room for dreaminess. She liked practicality.

Well, that was her second mistake. And then thirdly, her third mistake was she was obsessed with an unduly lavish meal that caused her to neglect fellowship with the one who could feed her soul. In other words, she got her priorities wrong.

She chose cooking instead of the company of the Lord of Glory. So there was Martha, a lovely hostess, a good cook, and yet who had her priorities wrong. But in spite of her outburst, Jesus didn't rebuke her, nor did he redirect Mary.

He didn't say to Mary, now Mary, you should really have been out helping Martha. He didn't say that to her. He didn't undervalue the love and devotion which Martha was expressing through her fingers, nor did he undervalue the devotion of Mary, who expressed her devotion through sitting at his feet.

And I think we've got to recognize that different people express their devotion to Christ in different ways, and we're not to be judgmental about if somebody does it a different way. Well, the Lord doesn't misunderstand. He appreciates it.

He didn't suggest that Martha should do exactly as Mary did. He just said, well, Martha, if you've got to make a choice between the two, she's made the wiser decision. That's all he said.

And he commended Mary for her choice. Now, God had given to each sister a different temperament. God gave it to them.

They didn't generate it. You didn't choose your temperament. If I had chosen mine, I might have made a different choice.

Probably would have been worse, but we've got no choice in that matter at all. It's something which God has done. And he gave each of those their distinctive talents, and he expected them to use them to his glory, but to put first things first.

Mary chose to do that. We are given our distinctive talents. God gave them to us.

We didn't choose them. We had no word to ask. He knew exactly what he had for us, the ministry he had for us in the body of Christ.

He knew he gave us those talents which would enable us best to glorify him. Therefore, there's no need to envy anyone else in the world. He's given us the best talents for us to fulfill our place in the body.

And if I find myself at a disadvantage compared with somebody else, well, it means probably that I'm not in the sphere where God wants me. There are one or two things we can learn from it. We could emulate Martha's hospitable spirit.

That was something very nice. She wanted to do the very best she could for the Lord, and that was commendable. We can be fervent in spirit without being slothful in business.

Here is Mary who was fervent in spirit. Martha was not slothful in business, but we can join the two, as Paul says, and be fervent in spirit while not being slothful in business, being practical as well as being contemplative. Now, take the second incident where Lazarus was ill.

When the sisters, Jesus at the time was way up in the north, when they saw that Lazarus was very ill, they immediately sent a message up to their friend in the north, and they expected that he'd come to their side without any hesitation. They never thought for a moment that he wouldn't rush down and heal Lazarus, because they believed in his power. But as you read in John chapter 11, it says there that when Jesus got the message, he stayed two days in the place where he was, which is something that you wouldn't have done or I wouldn't have done if I had the Lord's power.

I'd have either exercised my power from up there in the north, or I'd have come down to be with the sisters in their trouble. But he didn't. He purposefully stayed two days in the same place where he was, with the result that when he did come down, Lazarus had been dead four days.

He allowed the two sisters to go through the trauma of seeing their brother sickening and dying, and he wasn't with them. And the two sisters were devastated. They got their heads together, and as they talked it over, they were disappointed.

Their friend had let them down. And when Martha went out along the road to meet Jesus, I don't think she lifted her eyes to him. She said, Lord, if you'd been here, if you'd done what we expected you, Lazarus would still be alive.

She was really heartbroken. Not only had her brother died, but their friend had let them down. And Mary, when she didn't even go out, when Jesus came and Mary saw him, she said, Lord, if you'd done as we expected you to do, Lazarus would still be alive.

You see, they'd been talking it over together, and they'd both felt that they had been let down. And Jesus said to them, he said, you know, I am glad for your sakes that I was not there. He wasn't glad for his own sake.

He was deeply moved, but he said, I'm glad for your sakes that I wasn't there. Why? Because he had something infinitely more wonderful than a healing. He was going to demonstrate the fact that he was the resurrection and the life.

And if you read that passage, you'll notice that the word believe comes again and again. Said I not unto thee that thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God, he said to Martha. And what he was doing was he was seeking to educate their faith.

He was giving them a lesson in faith. And he was glad that he wasn't there. Now it's very interesting that it was Martha, practical Martha, not contemplative Mary, who brought up the subject of resurrection.

She, she brought up the subject of resurrection. It was Martha and not Mary who made the great confession. So even practical Martha, she wasn't without her devotional side either.

She was different. She expressed in a different way and yet it was just as real. Now, Martha was the logical person.

She's guided more by her intellect than by her emotions. And when the Lord comes to Martha, what does he do? He talks things through with her. He reasons it out with her and they have a little theological discussion together.

That's the way he meets her. When Mary comes, she's overcome with emotion. She can't say a word except to express her disappointment that he hadn't come.

What happens? That shortest verse in the Bible says really, Jesus burst into tears. How did he deal with emotional Mary? By reasoning with her? No, by weeping with her. And to me, that's a very precious thing.

The Lord knows our temperament. He knows our strengths. He knows our weaknesses.

And he deals with us according to our need. He reasoned with practical Martha. He wept with emotional Mary.

And the Jews who were around there, they said, behold how he loved him. He didn't stay away two days longer up north because he didn't love him. No, it wasn't that.

He wanted to teach them a lesson that they would never forget. Can you imagine the reaction of Mary and Martha as they stood outside that tomb? And the one, their loved one, who was a corrupting corpse, already decomposition had set in. There was a repulsive odor.

And they saw their brother come out when Jesus spoke the word and stand at the door of the grave. They saw the disciples take off the grave clothes. And there was their brother, safe and whole.

Can you imagine as they sat around the breakfast table the next day, probably with the Lord with them? And they say, how glad we are that you didn't come as we expected you would. And wouldn't they feel the greatness of the privilege that the Lord of glory himself had raised their brother from the dead. And the Lord still does what he did with Mary and Martha.

He still deals with her and with us in the same way. And then we have the other story in Matthew chapter 26. We'll just read it because it's a very beautiful story.

Now, when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive ointment. And she poured it on his head as he sat at table. But when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, why this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.

But Jesus, aware of the this, said to them, why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you have always the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial.

Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her. Then one of the 12 who was called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest and said, what will you give me if I deliver him to you? Now here you have the very beautiful story of Mary's anointing of our Lord with the precious ointment. The feast was being held in the home of Simon the leper, probably one whom our Lord has cleansed.

It's been conjectured by some that Simon may have been the father of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, who had to live in a separate house because he was a leper. You find Martha is the one who presides at this gathering. Whether that's so or not, we don't know.

At this very moment, while Mary was doing this, you'll read that the authorities were meeting together to plot means how they could destroy Jesus. You have these two things going on at the same time. Here in this part of the city, they're plotting how can we kill him.

Here you have our Lord being anointed with the precious ointment by the one who loved him so much. Mary sees a long-sought opportunity. This wasn't something that was just the thought of the moment.

This is something she obviously had thought for a long while. She had saved up this precious alabaster, beautifully cut alabaster flask of anointing oil. Now she sees the opportunity of pouring it out on the Lord.

Now, when they anointed in the East like that, they didn't use a whole bottle. A few drops was all that was necessary for the anointing in that way, the usual thing. The kind of anointing oil that she had was used only for kings or for great people.

We're told the value of it. When I tell you that the value of that flask of ointment was 300 days' work, what would you get here for 300 days' work? You people would get what, \$40,000, would you? It was a tremendous sum. This was no mere, just a little gift.

But as far as she was concerned, she didn't pour just a few drops. There was no calculating how few drops can I get away with. No, the idea was how much can I give, and she poured the whole lot on it, 12 ounces on it.

I don't know whether someone has suggested that the 133rd psalm was fulfilled while the ointment flowed down to the fringe of his garment. I don't know whether it did, but she anointed his head anyway and broke the flask on his head, the evidence of her love and her devotion. What a wonderful outpouring of love that was.

And we have another practical man in the group, Judas, and the other disciples, they thought it was rather a waste too. You could have done with less than that, but Judas said, why, you could have sold that and got so much and given it to the poor. Not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief.

And so here again you have the perfidy of Judas and the love of Mary expressed in that beautiful scene as she broke the box of ointment, the flask of ointment, and wiped his hair with her feet. Now the women were not supposed to take down their hair in public, and yet she was quite prepared as an expression of her ardent love for Christ to break social conventions even in order to express her love. There was no measuring it out little by little, it was a spontaneous and a complete expression of her love.

Loveless hearts are always offended when there is a lavish outpouring of money. People look at it so often from the utilitarian point of view, and we can do that, but the Lord didn't look at it. He never suggested there was any waste at all.

He said to Judas, now you have the poor with you always, you have plenty of opportunity of doing that, but me you will not have always. This is a unique occasion that has never occurred before in the history of the world and never will occur again. And what this woman has done, this expression of her love and devotion is of such a quality that it will go down through the ages resounding to my glory.

What a wonderful thing it was. Inspired, that act of hers has inspired thousands of people to love acts of loving devotion. I suppose many of you have read some of Isabel Kuhn's books.

I was with her when she was dying, she was dying of cancer in Philadelphia, and at the time she was there her daughter was going out as a missionary to Thailand where her father and mother had been. And then when her mother was so ill she felt she must stay at home with her mother, but her mother said, no, no, no, you must go, the people need you. Nothing is too precious for me to give to Jesus, and so she sent her daughter away and wouldn't have her stay with her.

That was breaking an alabaster flask of ointment on the Lord's head, nothing too precious for Jesus. Well, there were others who came and they brought their spices, Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds weight of precious spices, but he was too late. When he got there, the chrysalis was empty, too late.

And we can do that too, we can be too late. Sometimes we do it with our own folk, we express our appreciation after instead of before. And our Lord said, you know, Mary's the only one of all my disciples, male or female, she's the only one who anticipated my death.

And she, in this act of hers, she anointed me for the burial. Now, you don't anoint people for the burial usually, they're embalmed after the burial, but she had foreseen this and she said, now if I'm not going to have the opportunity of performing the last rites, I can now give expression of my love while he's alive. And so she did.

And that's the reason that successive generations have thanked God for Mary's act of love and of devotion. And I believe it's good for us to think of that too in our relationship with other people. Let us express our love, our appreciation while they're alive and do things to show our love.

When my wife was alive, we were, we had a very busy life and we had several home responsibilities that kept her very, very much tied to home. And we didn't have a great deal of time together. And it came to me, well, I'm not really doing what I ought to do.

I ought to give more time. So I decided, I said to her one day, now look, I'm going to never, as far as possible, never take any appointments on Tuesday between 12 and 2 o'clock. That's your time.

And I'll take you, we'll go downtown and have lunch. You can get away from home and so on. And, you know, that became a very precious thing for us.

It was taking time to love each other and have fellowship with each other. And I was very glad afterwards when the Lord took her to know that I had, while we were alive, made special opportunities for us to enjoy each other. Now, you haven't got a mate.

I haven't now either. But there are ways in which we can express our love, our appreciation of others and thoughtfully going out and do it before we separate or before they die or before. So there's something we can learn from it.

And Mary gave us that beautiful lesson. So here you have these two sisters, so different. And yet, each of them loving the Lord, you can't say one loved him more than the other.

Certain temperaments are able to express love in a way that others can't. Some feel more inhibited and they worry because they can't sing hymns at others. For example, you take that hymn of Father Faber.

Oh, Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord, forgive me if I say for very love thy sacred name a thousand times a day. Oh, wonderful that thou shouldst let so vile a heart as mine love thee with such a love as this and make so free with thine. Burn, burn, O love within my heart.

Burn fiercely night and day till all the dross of earthly loves is burned and burned away. And it goes on. My, but how many of us could really say that? That's not everybody's kettle of fish, is it? No, because we express it.

We feel it differently. We express it differently, but not necessarily with any less reality. The Lord recognizes, accepts differences of temperament as he did with Martha and Mary.

And when it's speaking about his relationship to them, it says Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, all three of the singles. He loved them all. Well, there's a little study in temper and temperament.

Dear old Martha allowed her temper to get away. Well, how he talks. Now take some of the questions.

There was one asked that isn't exactly on the subject or the way thinking of tonight, but one person asked, please expound the concept of walking in the spirit or walking by the spirit. Since this is not a classical how to sort of topic, I feel somewhat nebulous about the issue. Well, they are just very simply speak about walking is the term that's usually used for our daily living.

If we walk in love, what does it mean? It simply means that my life will be characterized in its attitudes and in its actions by love. My love will be the characteristic of my life. As I go about my daily life, I'll express love in my relationships and I'll express love in my actions.

I walk in love. If I walk in truth, what does it mean? It means that in my speech and in my relationships, I will speak the truth and I will be truthful in all my attitudes, in my speech, in my writing, in my relationships. I will be characterized by truth.

What does it mean to walk in the spirit? Perhaps you can get it best by thinking of its antithesis. What is it to walk in the flesh? When you're walking in the flesh, what are you doing? Well, you know very well what it amounts to. When we walk in the flesh, we are responding to and obeying the passionate desires of the flesh.

That's all. When the flesh comes with its solicitation, we welcome it and extend hospitality to it. What does it do when we're walking in the spirit? We extend hospitality to the Holy Spirit.

We walk about in the consciousness of His presence. We recognize the fact that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We don't ignore Him, but we welcome Him.

Just as the carnal person, welcomes the flesh and gives it every opportunity. Well, so we have that in our relationship to the Holy Spirit. We walk in the consciousness of His presence with us.

The person who's walking in the flesh, he responds to the promptings of the flesh and gives way to it. Well, we're walking with the Holy Spirit. We respond to the promptings of the Spirit and we obey Him.

We depend upon Him for His help. He's the counselor, so when we're walking in the Spirit, we are asking His counsel. He's the helper.

That's another rendering. Well, when we need help, we're looking to Him for help, so that the Holy Spirit becomes the sphere and the atmosphere of our life. We walk in the Spirit.

I think that's as simple as I can make it. It's the antithesis of walking in the flesh. If you walk in the flesh, well, you reap corruption.

If you walk in the Spirit, you reap life everlasting. Another one. As single women of various ages, how should we be relating to our parents, especially in the light of Ephesians 6, 1 and 2? You know, that's where it says that children obey your parents and the Lord honor your father and your mother.

Well, parents always remain parents. They're always our parents. There's no change in that relationship.

Children, it's referring to children. It's not referring to single women there. It's male or female.

It doesn't make any difference. They're still parents and you have responsibilities and relationship with your parents. Until adulthood, you are under parental control and you are to obey your parents.

That's without any exception or equivocation. The child is to obey the parents. I was very interested to read that there's the oldest piece of writing extant is in a museum in Turkey.

And on that it says, alas, children do not obey their parents as they used to. That's the oldest piece of writing extant. So apparently there's not been much change over the years.

When one reaches adulthood, then one determines one's own life. There is a difference in relationship. Filial love continues.

It doesn't cease because we're older. There needs to be a filial expression of love to our parents. But filial love doesn't involve parental domination.

And when we reach adulthood, I don't believe that we are under the control of our parents. Our lives are now our own to control. We are to still retain the attitude, the filial relationship.

But we are responsible and we are primarily responsible to God first. In Matthew 19, 29, remember where it speaks about no man hath left father or mother for Christ's sake. There it's envisaged that a person will leave father and mother, even although they are related, they leave them.

In Luke 14, we're told to hate father and mother, that is, love them less than we love the Lord. And it's envisaged that in the interest of the Lord at his direction, there are times when our obedience to Christ will involve leaving our parents, leaving our children too. Well, the crunch comes when you are aging parents.

Now I've had to face up to this a lot with our missionary ladies especially, and especially the single ladies. Because if you're single, you're not doing anything. So your responsibility is to look after your parents.

Other children at home, where they may have important positions, but you're not doing anything. You're just Christian work, it doesn't matter. And that really, it's surprising how often that is the viewpoint.

Now that's the person, oh you should, they should give up their job, they're not doing anything important. We're earning money. And I've often found that our lady workers have a really agonizing decision to make.

Where does my responsibility lie? Now, there's no easy answer. There's no one, two, three, and this at all. You've got to pray it through and think it through, and every case is different.

Here you've got several children at home. And you're away somewhere else, in another place, away from home. Those other children are equally responsible with you as far as your parents are concerned.

And they should do their, if they're sympathetic of course, they'll do it. But sometimes they're not. And you remember in the case of the man who wanted to follow the Lord and said, suffer me first to go and say goodbye to my family.

You know what the Lord said to him? He said, let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom. What he was saying was this, you're, the, where he said that let the dead bury their dead, it didn't mean that this fellow's father was dead. That's a, that is just a common saying.

George Adam Smith, Professor George Adam Smith said that when he was in Palestine, a man said that very thing to him, let me go bury my father. His father wasn't dead, but what he meant was I've got family responsibilities to attend to. And what our Lord was saying to that man was, put me first.

There are others who are dead to the kingdom, let the dead bury their dead, they're not concerned with the kingdom. There are other members of the family, your father will get buried all right, the family things will be taken care of, but you, you go and preach the kingdom. Now that's a very tough saying.

And sometimes you've got to face up to that. Is this really, does the Lord really want me to go and assume those home responsibilities? Or is he calling me, even with the disapproval of my family, to go ahead and preach the kingdom? Well that's something that you have to discern for yourself, nobody else can do it for you. But the Lord can show you and if he's really calling you to do it, he'll look after the other side for you.

On the other hand, it may be that you're the only one, there's no one else can care for your aging parents. And then it may well be your responsibility to go and do it out of filial love. Well, if that's the will of God, then you do it and the Lord will be with you in it.

But I think that we've got to recognize that we owe something to God as well as to our parents. We're not to neglect our filial responsibilities, but we're not to allow those who are dead to the kingdom to shuffle off on us responsibilities which may rightfully be theirs. I think that's the best I can say about it.

Now, somebody else got any contribution to make on that or any challenge on it? No, you can't make them, no. But you can make them face up to it though. What I mean is you don't just supinely succumb to it without making an endeavor.

If they're there on the spot, they're equally responsible with you. I've seen too much of that happen, really, where the Christian worker has been imposed upon very badly. Could you define a little more fully where you would say a person is no longer a child but is an adult? Especially as we're working with college students, are they children, are they adults? I don't know that there's no scriptural definition that I know, but I would say that once you reach the stage, for example, when you reach college stage, you're out from under the, if you're in your parents' home and there, well, you conform to the rules of the home.

But if they're away from home and so on, I would feel that that would be a stage, yes. Well, in that case, they still, they would have a special responsibility to the parents. I'd like to hear other viewpoints on it.

I don't know the answer. What do you think, Jerry, on this? I feel that basically once they reach 18, I can no longer make their decisions for them. However, because I think there's a good transition time as a Christian parent, under which I really am a point of counsel to them, whether they ask for it sometimes or not.

You know, I don't feel like I just wait for them to come. Thirdly, because, especially for my daughters, now my son, because he's come back under a little more responsibility financially, that they have a responsibility which isn't altogether different from an employee. You know, I've expressed to him, in a sense, and to other students, like I did a little study down at Oregon State this time, I said, you know, you really are working for your parents if they are supporting you.

During this time, and you have a similar responsibility, as though you were delivering a portion of work and you were being paid for it. And so, there is the responsibility. I think the But that responsibility is largely, at that point, one of doing that which you came to do, i.e. go to school.

But I don't really feel that I can control my children in other areas of their life, and nor can a parent with their kids. I think we as staff have to be very sensitive. I think that's the way I would feel about it, too.

But each case is different. You can't just say, there's the line, 18 and you're finished. But when they get up to that stage, they are really making, they ought to be making their own decisions.

The next one, you give some guidelines concerning lifestyle and standard of living for the Christian in a materialistic society. Well, that's a very pertinent question today, isn't it? And it's a question that many young people are taking very seriously. And I think a lot of our delinquency stems from our rebellion against the lush lavishness of our affluent society.

But the Bible teaches by principles. It's got no one, two, three, four, you'll do this and don't do that. But it teaches by principles.

And I think that we've got to find out what are the principles governing our lifestyle. For example, you take this one, be content with such things as you have. Now, there's a fairly comprehensive statement, isn't it? That covers a pretty wide area.

Be content with such things as you have. Don't listen to every TV advertisement and say, I must get something better, bigger, longer, shorter, higher, deeper, and so on. Because that's the society we're living in.

But the Christian's not to be like that. You've got the necessities, right? I'd be content with that. Another one, Paul says, I have learned whatever my circumstances to be content.

Now, Paul didn't learn that in a day. That was a process over a long period, I've no doubt. But he got to the place where he said, there's two things, I've learned two things.

I have learned how to be content. I've learned the secret. He'd arrived, he'd got there on this matter of lifestyle.

He said, it doesn't matter whether I'm much or plain. He wasn't a stoic. He said, I know how to abound.

When there was the good meals at Asilomar Lodge, he'd enjoy them. But if he had to go hungry next week, he'd go hungry quite happily. I know how to abound.

I know how to be hungry, and I know. Immaterial to me, I've learned to be content whatever my circumstances. Well, I think you find it very difficult to fit in the luxurious lifestyle in which we're constantly upgrading our standard of living.

I think we can't justify that from scripture. I think that our standard of living has to be a balanced standard of living. We don't need to go to extremes.

When our mission pulled out of China and we were going into other countries, we were going into the Philippines, and we had responsibility for work in an area on the island of Mindoro where there were tribal groups who had never been reached before. And we were determined after our experience in China that our lifestyle would be exceedingly simple. And when our missionaries went out after we started afresh, the total amount of goods they took with them was 250 pounds weight, with 50 pounds weight of books.

That was it. And one of our ladies was going into work among a tribal group, and they were very timid. If you got near them, they'd run away.

And they had had practically no contact with other than their own people. And she went in to work among this tribe. Everything she had was on a little sledge.

She was a linguist. She didn't even take in her typewriter because she thought that would scare them to death. So everything she took in, she took on this one sledge.

When she got there, they had a home for her. There was a bamboo platform and some poles up the side and a roof on the top, no walls or anything. So that was her home.

That's the way she started. Well, that was rather extreme. Not many had to do that.

But it was marvelous the way that that lady got that people. I saw the first woman to be converted, an old granny. I went up the little ladder into the bamboo house where the missionary was living in.

This old woman came, and I heard a cough. I said, oh, here's somebody to see her. And they found this old woman, skinny, with a bunch of bananas for me.

Well, I didn't need the bananas. She needed them. She was the first of that group to be converted.

When she was being baptized, the person who was baptizing her said, do you believe in the Lord Jesus as your Savior? Of course I do. And wouldn't I have believed sooner if you had come sooner, she said. Well, here was a girl who was prepared to adapt her lifestyle to the people she was going to.

We had another man who was working in another group of people. And one day he came and he said, I want to put in an estimate for a Rolls-Royce motor car. I want to put in an estimate for a Rolls-Royce motor car.

Oh, why? Oh, well, isn't it right that we should try to live to about the standard of the people we're working among? It was just doing it in fun, of course. But well, what do you do? What do you go into a situation like that? What's your standard of living? Well, I think, and what we adopted after trial and so on, was to reach a standard in which you can move upwards without embarrassment and move downwards without embarrassment. So we took the, I think it's too hot, there's a switch out there, just by the door at the side.

We decided to take the standard of a teacher in whatever country you're there. That would be about a median standard. And I think that in the society, the kind of standard would be a median standard that would not embarrass you in the ministry God is calling you to either way, either up or down.

And I think you arrive at that yourselves and find out what it is. But don't go to extremes. Let it be a balanced lifestyle.

Let it be a disciplined and not an extravagant lifestyle. I think one of the things that has done a tremendous damage to missionary work is missionaries going out into countries where they're poor and displaying an extravagant, affluent lifestyle. My, I wonder what, how many souls that has accounted for.

Something to, that I think is very, very bad. And another thing is if we regard it as a steward, we are stewards, we are not owners of what we have, then we'll be careful of the way in which we exercise it. So if we say, I'm prepared for whatever lifestyle will render my ministry most effective.

Another question? Sir, may I? Yes, yes. Address two specific things that apply to those of us who are in Christian work. The issue of lifestyle, this is one thing as to how we relate, you know, in a particular

culture, two other things related to that.

One is public expectation and our, you know, our donor public for people who give. Some expect you to live like them, some expect you to live much lower. Some will criticize if you have even the things that they have no problem having.

So that's number one. How should we relate to public expectation of what we do? For instance, I know my parents are very well-to-do and I have, every time I got in the home, I've always thought, well now, how will my parents feel if they walk into this? Because they would, of course. The second thing has to do with staff comparisons.

You know, here's a staff who has been on the staff for 25, 30 years and they happen to be able, perhaps they're in gardens or something, to have a relatively nice home. And then a young couple just gets married. And the attitude in America today is to, it isn't like before, you live on apple crates for the first four years and build it up one at a time.

It's we want to have everything now. The nice home, the nice car, the nice job, the nice dinnerware, good furniture, etc. Now, that, we're not exempt from those same feelings.

So a young staff person comes on, a couple of 28, and they walk into the home of a staff person. Perhaps even a returning missionary has a very lovely home today. They don't know what happened for 25 years in that person's life.

And there's some envy. There's both, you know, is that person living too high? Because look what I've got. My income, for instance, because it's a faith mission, it's not there.

So two things, public expectation and staff comparison of one to the other. I think that we must not be indifferent to public expectation, but we must not be governed by public expectation. I think our responsibility is before the Lord.

And I think it's a bad thing when we are governed by our donors. I don't, I think that when they try to control things, it means that you tend to adapt your policy to them, and I don't think that's a good thing. On the other hand, if it's obvious that something is a stumbling block, well then, if meat causes my brother to offend, I'll eat no more meat while this world stands.

But because somebody thinks that missionaries should, or that those doing Christian work should have less than others, then I don't think for a moment you need to pander to them, pay any attention to it at all. I don't think that's important if they think that way. And you're living before the Lord, and you're not living in an ostentatious way, or in keeping with your, I think that I wouldn't pay personally too much attention to it.

I'd be sensitive to see what would be right, but I wouldn't be unduly swayed. With regard to the other, the ways of the Lord are not equal, the people complained. I know, but the ways of the Lord are fair, of course they are.

But it, everybody doesn't have to be a copper plate, a replica, exact replica of the other. And I think that there's room there for developing of a maturity of outlook. In ordinary society, the, when you're starting life, you don't have all that you necessarily finish up with.

We try in our mission to, for example, when they're on the field, we supply the basics for our, for all our centers, so that everybody has fairly, fairly basic things. And there's not much problem along that line, but where each one chooses, has, it's not provided for them, and they have to get it and so on, you get variety according to people's tastes or ability or anything else. You don't want to stifle individuality, but on the other hand, if, if there is a ostentatious difference and if there's an unnecessary expense, well then, then deal with it.

I'll never forget going a way up into northwest China, just on the borders of Tibet, and there a missionary had carried, taken up there an enamel, white enamel stove that didn't work, actually, when they got it there. They carted over a couple of thousand miles over China, and there it was, sitting in the earth floor kitchen, the thing didn't go. Well now, what, how stupid, that's totally, totally out the culture that nobody had ever seen a stove before.

And yet, they'd gone to all this trouble, spent all that money. Well that kind of thing, where, where you have this, this, it's entirely out of keeping, it's quite another matter. But I think that the young person, too, has to, has to grow mature and face up to some of these things, too.

But again, I believe that where there is a sensitivity and, and there's not, no extravagance, but that which is necessary to, to run a home efficiently and so on and leave free for work, I think that I, I would give a certain amount of liberty, yes or no? Yes. How, on an average, does our standard of living compare? Very similar, very similar, yes. I don't, I don't think, I would say it was, it would be very much the same, yes.

There's no, I didn't notice any great dissimilarity, no. I didn't notice any undue lavishness, no. It was nicely done, which is right, I think.

Well, any more you'd like to say on that, Jerry? No, that's good. I think sometimes, that's one issue I'd probably like to talk over with you when we're up in Seattle just a bit, just to talk, because I think that we get involved in counseling staff at various points when they're, when they're moving into homes or when they go into an area. We have, well, when John and you guys went to UCLA, the techies, I think they had to pay \$1,200 a month and I got just to live near the school and I got the relative amount of feedback on YouTube that I permitted that, but just because of the expense, it wasn't a very nice house, particularly, you know, it wasn't that ordinary, but just the cost.

Some things overseas, you know. Yes, it's, it's getting terrific overseas. I was talking to a conservative Baptist couple in Japan and they said it costs us \$35,000 a year for our family.

Well, you know, missionary work is, many people are leaving, missionaries have to leave Japan, they can't do it. So that it's, these things are real factors and I think that keep your expenses down rather than up, don't constantly upgrade our standard of living. That's, I was very impressed with one church, I was in one of the southern states and it was a church that gives over a half a million a year to missions and the, they raised a pastor's salary and when they told him, he said, no, he said, I won't take that.

He said, I am trying to teach my people to give sacrificially. He said, how can I keep on giving sacrificially if you keep boosting up my salary? No, I won't take it. Now, there, there was adapting lifestyle to situations that, I was rather, I thought, no wonder his church prospered.

Next one is, how, what is happening when a person walking closely with the Lord experiences spiritual dryness? How should we respond during these times? Well, I wonder how many of us has gone through

life without having period of, experience a period of dryness? Many volunteers? Well, it's not a, it's not a unique experience. I think the first thing to determine is that, so far as you know, sin is not the cause. I mean, that's, that goes without saying.

But in this case, it says somebody is walking closely with the Lord and I take it that you've determined that it's not sin. You know nothing that is the cause of it. Well, there are three possible causes.

One is that it's physical. You're either, you may be, as Jerry said the other night, physically and emotionally drained. When you're like that, you've got no more response.

That's all. There's no emotional response and you feel dry. Well, that's what, that's one possibility and there's nothing culpable in that unless you're foolishly overspent.

Then it serves you right. Nature is just taking its revenge and it serves you right to have a dry time. You mustn't do that.

The other, another possibility is satanic. Satan has been called Sabbathless Satan. He never takes a holiday.

And he's a dirty fighter. He likes to strike at you when you're low, when you're down, when your reserves are low, and sometimes the, it is satanic attack. Satan fears nothing more than an un, a walk in unbroken fellowship with Christ.

He knows that he that is abiding in him is not sinning. And so the thing he'll do will be he'll endeavor to stop you abiding in Christ and he'll cause a period of dryness to come. For some reasons, it must be a wise reason, but I wish it wasn't so.

God allows him to have access to our, our spirits. And sometimes he tries to dislodge us and to disturb us and disturb our fellowship with Christ so that we have no consciousness of fellowship with him. Well, what's the remedy? I've, I've found this where, where, for example, I don't know any reason and yet I feel depressed in spirit and I don't seem to be able to arise.

There's no joy in prayer and the Bible doesn't seem to say very much and so on. Well, again, there are two possibilities. One is that this is from the devil.

And I take this, this attitude, Lord, if this thing is from you, if you, if you are trying to teach me something to this experience, then that's okay. I accept it and I'll go through with it. If this is from the adversary, I refuse it.

I reject it. I take my stand on the cross and I refuse to allow Satan to do this to me. And it's amazing how when you do that in faith, how often lifts and you find the, find it's just been satanic oppression.

It hasn't been anything in yourself at all. Sometimes it is in yourself and the Lord shows you what it is, but where it comes, Lord, if this is from you, I accept it. If it is from the devil, I reject it.

And you'll find that that taking that attitude really oftentimes dissolves the cloud and solves the issue. A third possibility is that God permits this to come as a test, a test of whether we love him because of the lovely emotions he gives us or whether we love him for himself alone. Is my love something that depends upon my being emotionally stimulated and titillated or do I love him whether I feel like it or not? In other words, am I living not merely in the realm of the emotions, but in the realm of the will? And after all, love is

more of the will than it is of the emotions.

You may challenge that and I may be wrong, but I find that in John 3, 16. God so loved the world that he felt a pleasurable emotion stirring in his heart. Did he? No, the very reverse.

God so loved the world that he tore out his heart. He exercised his will because he loved me. And there the element was not his emotion.

He went against every emotion of love. And he chose to do it. And so when it comes to love, do I love him because I choose to whether he sends pleasurable emotions or not? So that's sometimes.

Remember what he said to Peter? He said Peter, now you've got to go and be my representative and you've got to promise me, one, two, three, that you'll be loyal to me, that you'll do this, you'll do that. Did he say that? Not at all. He just said, Peter, do you love me? That's all.

Do you love me, Peter? Do you really love me? He knew that if Peter loved him, everything else would fall into place. And so that's where it is. And sometimes the Lord allows us to go through these periods of dryness, not because he loves us, he wants us to be miserable, but because he wants us to become mature in the realm of love and of our emotions.

And we love him. And what do you do about it? What's the remedy? Well, you go on as usual. You go on, you read your Bible and you pray, and whether you feel like praying or not.

You do the duty, the next duty that comes, just the same as you did before, and let emotion come or go, I go on. I keep on doing the will of God as I see it. You'll find before very long the tunnel will come to an end and you're out in the rift in the clouds and the sun comes through again.

But that's the way I would handle that. Another one, how have you dealt with loneliness in your life? Well, I know that too. That's 10, 11 years now since my wife died.

I know what it is to be lonely. I move around the world by myself. I'm going in constantly into groups of people.

Often I don't know a soul in the city or in the church or in the conference I'm going to. And that kind of thing can be lonely. One of the wonderful things when you're married is that even if you're away from your wife, you can write and tell, share things, what you've seen and who you've met and so on, but nobody to share it with now.

It doubles when you've got somebody to do it. I know what loneliness is. And we're living in a generation that is probably lonelier than any other generation has ever been.

You think in Singapore, for example, nearly 70% of the people there live in high-rise apartments and generally they don't know the person in the apartment next door. It's a lonely world. And our loneliness can be an important factor in our ministry because we know what loneliness is.

We can minister to those who are lonely. We are comforted of God. What for? That we may comfort others with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted.

And I think that is one way to look at it. Well, this is part of God's disciplinary training for my ministry. It's part of the price of it.

So it's not being wasted. Even if it's painful, it's not being wasted. It's doing something.

I don't think I've told this group, but when I was a young fellow during the Depression, we used to have in our city a meeting for the wives of the unemployed and the ladies used to get them on a Sunday afternoon and give them a nice afternoon tea and give them some clothes and have a gospel meeting. They came to me one day and they said, would you come on the first Sunday of the month and we'll get the women to bring their husbands along and so we'll speak to them. Would you speak to them? I said, I'd gladly do that.

So the first Sunday of the month I used to go along and speak to the group. And after one meeting I was in a room at the side and there were two ladies in the next room and I heard them talking. They were talking about me.

I couldn't help overhearing. This is what I heard. Well, what did you think of his message? Oh, his message was all right.

He'll be all right when he's had a little sorrow. What was she saying? It was a very discerning statement. Here was I, a young buck that had very little in the way of sorrow or anything else like it.

And here I was talking to people. And you know, unemployment in those days, there wasn't the unemployment benefit and that kind of thing like there is today. It was really wicked.

And here was I with everything I needed and here were these people. I was saying the right things, but I hadn't experienced it. And I believe that that's why the Lord allows us to have some of these experiences so that we can, out of our own experience, I can talk to anybody about losing a wife.

I lost my first wife, nursed her for two years with cancer. And sometime later I married again, married for two years. My second wife developed multiple sclerosis and I nursed her for two and a half years and she died.

Then I went to Papua New Guinea. When I retired from that, I came back to New Zealand and my niece, her father had died when she was a kiddie and I'd really been father to her most of her life. And she'd been a missionary in Ethiopia.

She came back, invalid at home, and she came, she said, Uncle, you buy a home and I'll look after you and mother. Her mother was a widow. So I got a home and we got it set up.

And one month after we moved in, she got cancer and we nursed her and she died. And so when I was at home, I lived with my sister and my sister died about six weeks ago. So I've had a succession like this.

I can go to anybody and comfort them with the comfort where with God has comforted me. So I'm putting that as one aspect of how to deal with loneliness, regard it as, in one sense, an asset and not as a liability. Another thing, the Lord Jesus knew what loneliness was.

Can you imagine how lonely it was for him to leave heaven and the adoration of all the holy angels and come down to earth among men who hated and despised and despised and rejected of men. What loneliness he had. So that you're in good company.

He knows all about it. We can't tell him anything about loneliness. In all our afflictions he was afflicted and because of that, because he has suffered and being tempted, he is able to succor those who are tempted.

Now how did he, how did he deal with it? Well one way was he made use of the Bethany home. That was one way and he helped overcome his loneliness. He had social contacts with friends, real friends and used to go to their home.

He had three intimates, Peter, James and John, whom he used to take about with him on special occasions. He selected them. Well there are two hints anyway.

If we're going to deal with loneliness, one of the important things, one of the essential things is that we have warm family if we can have them or if we haven't got that, warm social ties with someone so that helps to take the edge off. It doesn't cure it but it does help. The Lord wanted those three men what for? He didn't want any advice from them.

He didn't even want them to pray for him. He never asked them to pray for him. They said he asked them to watch with him.

He didn't tell them to pray for him. He didn't want them to pray for him. What did he want? He wanted human companionship.

That's what it was and he enjoyed women's companionship. The women used to go around with him and the women supplied the Lord with money we're told. He was truly human and his loneliness was in some way assuaged by that.

I think to have friends that have reliable confidants, very often the Lord will give a special friend and provided the friendship doesn't become too special and too exclusive. It's very good to have a special friend, the one to whom you can let your hair down if you have any and that you don't have to think twice about what you're going to say so that you can really just let it come out and not be afraid you'll be misunderstood. I think you should pray if you haven't got one that the Lord will give you somebody like that that you can really share with.

So I would suggest in order to deal with loneliness, lose yourself in the interest of others. Self-occupation, somebody called that dismal fungus, self-occupation. If you're occupied with yourself, you won't make many very beautiful discoveries by the way.

But if instead of being occupied with yourself, you are occupied with the interests of others, that's a therapy. Self-occupation is a self-fulfilling recipe for loneliness. If you want to be lonely, well, become self-occupied.

So that's another thing you can do. Set your desires and ambitions on objectives outside yourself. You see, the more you turn in, the lonelier you get.

The more you turn out, the more you're able to deal with it. I jotted down somewhere, someone said this, man either transcends his own loneliness in a new encounter with God or he succumbs to its agony. That's a good statement.

Man either transcends his own loneliness in a new encounter with God or he succumbs to its agony. I think that's true. What is it is going to satisfy loneliness? Christ's presence, that's it.

We'll find the fullest relief for our loneliness only in living fellowship with Christ. Now, it doesn't mean we're dehumanized. It doesn't mean we'll never feel lonely.

It can still be a devastating experience, but it needn't be the period of devastation. Need be a very temporary, a passing one when we are counting on the unfailing presence of Christ. You take some of these promises.

Exodus 33, 14, my presence will go with you and I will give you rest. Psalm 23, 4, thou art with me. Emmanuel, God with us.

Isaiah 41, 10, fear thou not for I am with thee. Be not dismayed for I am thy God. Thy maker is thy husband.

An old lady at our mission said to me one day, you know Mr. Sanders, do you know the first question I'm going to ask the Lord when I get to heaven? She was a single lady. She was a real hard case and I knew she'd have something up her sleeve. I said, no, I haven't an idea what you're... She said, well, when I get to heaven, I'm going to say, Lord, why didn't you give me a husband? She said, I wanted a husband.

And she said, I'd have made him a good wife too. But the Lord didn't give her a husband. By now she's asked the Lord the question.

I'd like to, when I get up, I'll ask her what answer she got. But you know, what did she do? Do you know that that woman in China and in England won hundreds of children to the Lord. She had an amazing gift among young people.

She didn't have a husband, she had no children around, but she's got hundreds of spiritual children. Isn't that better? And what did he say, am I not better to you than a dozen husbands? Well, there it is. And there you have Hebrews 13 verses 5 and 6. I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.

Have you ever thought that your loneliness may be one of the Lord's methods of trying to get your undivided attention, trying to get your ear perhaps? Mightn't that be it? Maybe part of it anyway. Well, I've gone on far too long and I haven't, I was going to speak about singleness, but that's quarter past nine now. But I will talk about something about the role of women at a later time.

Well, first of all, and while marriage is the normal state, it's the, it's God's intention. He created man, woman for man, man for woman. Singleness is no less a gift of God.

Marriage is a gift of God, it's honorable. Singleness is a gift of God and it's honorable. And there is no inferior or superior.

They are both, if it's the will of God, they are both equally good, equally perfect. If singleness is God's plan for you, it's a plan that cannot be improved on, that could not be improved on, it's perfect. The rub comes, is it acceptable? If it's good, if it can't be improved upon, then it's to be acceptable, it'll be accepted too.

Now, it's not easy sometimes. Well, it may be, maybe it's your choice. And that's quite, the scripture recognizes that.

There's an advantage sometimes in being single. As Paul says, you can give undivided devotion and attention to God when you're single. When you're married, you've got to share it with your wife and with your children, but when you're single, it can be undivided attention and devotion to God.

And that is a very real advantage. Paul advised singleness. I think, personally, I think that Paul had been married.

Remember he spoke about how he gave his vote against the Christians. And it was the vote of the Sanhedrin. And that meant that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, and you couldn't be a member of the Sanhedrin without being married, and one of the conditions was to be a father.

So it's quite possible that Paul had been married, even had children. Nothing said about what his wife, whether his wife may have left him, I don't know. But I think there is a case for saying that Paul had been married, but now he was single.

And he said, I wish you were as I am. Supposing everybody did what Paul said, what would happen? There'd be no Christians. I'd die off.

But if you read in its context, it's in 1 Corinthians 7.26. Why did he say that? Because of the present crisis. You see, here you've got to read things in their context and in their setting. And at that time there was a crisis in which Paul says it's better for you to be single for this present crisis.

He wasn't stating something that was a universal thing, but in view of the circumstances that existed at that time, he said it would be better for you, perhaps better for the work of God, if you were as I am. But even then, he wasn't stating that you must do it. He was just giving his opinion on that matter.

But he could see that there were advantages. And when you come to think of it, in the missionary constitution of all the missionaries of the world today, there is one man, one married woman, one single woman, just about equally divided. And it means that two-thirds of the missionary work in the world today is in the hands of women.

There's that.

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