

from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) Are you developing your spiritual relationship with God?

Second, Relationship Develops Spiritual Understanding

Mary believed Jesus would die and rise again because she listened to Jesus and had possibly discussed it with Him. She had an understanding of Jesus' purpose as part of God's plan because she listened and spiritually "heard" what Jesus said. The disciples weren't willing or ready to spiritually hear God's plan.

Developing a strong relationship with God through Bible study and prayer can establish you with a background of Who God is and what His plan is all about. It will give you the knowledge and understanding to effectively follow Christ and make wise spiritual decisions in your Christian life.

Third, Relationship Develops Love

Mary's relationship with the Lord developed a love for God and for Jesus, as well as an opportunity for Mary to receive Their love for her. God's love for us is one of our basic needs as a Christian and relationship with the Lord is the main source for receiving it. It is also the main source of developing our love for God. You can't develop a love for someone if you don't spend time with them in close relationship. How strong is your love for God and how strong do you know His love for you?

Fourth, Relationship Develops Trust (Faith)

Mary began to trust the teachings of Jesus because of the relationship that had developed between them. His character, sincerity, love, and commitment could be seen and felt by Mary so that she could trust His words. Part of the trust we develop in God and in His word comes as we sense His presence, feel His love, and experience God speaking to us by His Holy Spirit. The Christian life is not based upon a book of rules, rituals, ideas, or doctrines; but on a supernatural relationship with God. The fact that the risen Christ has made Himself known to me through real spiritual experience, I am able to trust Him and His word.

Fifth, Relationship Produces Christian Service

Martha, Mary's sister, was so pre-occupied with serving Jesus in her own way that she missed what was important to God. Many Christians put the "cart before the horse" and attempt to serve God without proper spiritual motivation and direction. Relationship with God gives us the proper spiritual motivation and

direction to effectively serve God and do it His way. Are you so busy trying to serve God on your own that you have failed to find out what He wants you to do and how He has gifted you to do it?

Sixth, Relationship Offers Hope and Peace

Martha was experiencing anxiety, resentment and frustration as she attempted to please Jesus. Because Mary had been listening to the spiritual and eternal words of Jesus, she began to see things from a different perspective. Tending to the material needs of life or becoming caught up in this world's activities didn't seem as important to Mary as the eternal values and priorities that Jesus was teaching. Though we live in a world that is complex, demanding, and filled with attacks on our emotional well-being, we can find the hope and peace that comes through relationship with the Lord. We can enter into that place of mental, emotional, and spiritual refuge as we are refreshed in God's presence.

Finally, Relationship Brings Change

Mary brought this expensive perfume in a vessel and broke it in order to allow its contents to pour out on Jesus' body. Mary's act demonstrated her own brokenness, her surrender to God, and her willingness to change to conform to what God wanted her to be. When we get with God through reading His word and prayer, we are surrendering ourselves to Him so that He can bring His changes to our life. Relationship with God brings us to see areas of our life that need His life-changing power and adjustment. We pray with the Psalm writer, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.*" (Psalm 139:23,24)

Is the foundation of your Christian life built on a close, personal relationship with God? Will you, like Mary, commit yourself to sit at Jesus' feet and develop a strong relationship with God? If you would like help in developing your relationship with God, please contact:

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The Foundation
of Your
Christian Life

KNOW THE TRUTH



Pastor Lynn Kern

"...AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE."

God's Main Purpose for You

Whether you have been a Christian for many years or have recently become a Christian, your relationship with God must become the foundation for your Christian life. God called us to Himself in order to have a close and ever-growing relationship with Him as His children. He created us for fellowship. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will fellowship with him and He with me." (Revelation 3:20) This is the heart of God for His people and His church.

Mary's Example

Jesus taught this important truth in His visit with Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42: "Now as they were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'"

The "Good Thing" To Do

What is the "good part" that Jesus said was the most necessary thing in life? What was Mary doing? She was listening and involved in relationship with her Lord. That was the "good part" the one real necessary thing in life that God wanted to do with His children above all the others. He created us for that reason and nothing else is as important as your relationship with God, your Heavenly Father.

Relationship Involves Listening

Mary was listening to Jesus. She was listening to what He said about God, about God's plan and promises, about Who He was and what He came to do, and the personal interest He had in her life as a believer. Obviously, we don't know what Jesus said to Mary, but we can be sure that much of it contained the above information.

Relationship Involves Communication

We can also assume that Mary talked with Jesus in response to His teachings. She may have expressed a question or two, along with some comments about what He was teaching her. In any case, there was a

deepening of the relationship that Mary had with the Lord.

HOW DO YOU HAVE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

The Word of God

Through Bible reading and study, we gain an understanding of God and His plan for our life. We hear Him speak to us through truths contained in His word - words of promise, correction, guidance, purpose, and spiritual principle. "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...." (II Timothy 3:16) God's Holy Spirit is faithful to speak to us through the Bible.

Prayer

Through prayer, we can communicate with God and express a wide range of thoughts and concerns. We can share with God our love, worship and praise, along with our thanks for what He has done and for who He is. We can share with God our needs, confess and deal with our sinful failures, and intercede for friends and loved-ones. In prayer, we can learn to hear God speaking to us through the Holy Spirit. He puts thoughts and direction in our mind, warns our heart with love and concern for people, gives wisdom to deal with our problems, and supports us with hope and confidence through the reality of His presence.

Time

If you are to develop a strong relationship with the Lord, you must take the time to read and study the Bible, and you must take the time to pray. Many Christians find themselves too busy to take time to read and pray. They neglect the most important relationship in their Christian life and fail to fulfill the purpose for which God created them. Discipline and priority is needed in order to make time for our relationship with God. It takes time to read the Bible, study the Bible and to meditate on what God is saying to you. Don't just read your Bible, take time to think about it and how it applies to your life. It takes time to pray, really pray. It takes time to share with God all that is on our heart and mind, as well as listening for Him to speak to you. Take the time!

Mary: A True Believer

On a number of occasions, Jesus told His disciples about His coming death and resurrection. "And again

He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will deliver Him to the Gentiles. And they will mock Him and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.'" (Mark 10:32-34) Again and again they refused to believe His words, even to the point of Peter rebuking Jesus for even mentioning the thought.

But Mary believed. "Mary therefore took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus...." (John 12:3) And Jesus went on to say, "She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, that also which this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her." (Mark 14:8,9) Because of Mary's relationship with the Lord and having listened to His teaching earlier, she had believed in what He had said about His death and resurrection. She acted on her belief and anointed His body with this costly spice, preparing it for burial.

Both Mary and the disciples had heard Jesus' teachings and had a close relationship with Him. So, what was different about Mary's relationship with Jesus? Was it Mary's stronger faith? Possibly. Maybe what led to her stronger faith was the quality of her relationship with Jesus. She might have been listening more closely to His words, meditating on what He said, and allowing God's agenda to replace her own. The disciples may have allowed it to just go past their notice because they were too busy thinking about their own spiritual agenda. Whatever the reason, Mary's relationship with her Lord influenced her to believe and demonstrate her belief by anointing His body. True belief and true demonstration of our belief comes from a strong relationship with our Lord. Are you working on your relationship with the Lord to make it stronger and to draw closer to Him?

THE RESULTS OF A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

First, Relationship Pleases God

Jesus said that Mary had chosen the one necessary thing in life: to listen and have relationship with her Lord. Mary was developing her spiritual relationship with God. If Jesus said it was the most important thing in life, then it must be one of the most pleasing things to God as part of His plan for us. "...Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds