

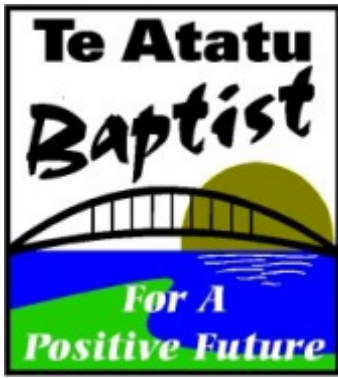
With wings *of an eagle*

Part 6 of 12

Martha

The threat of resentment





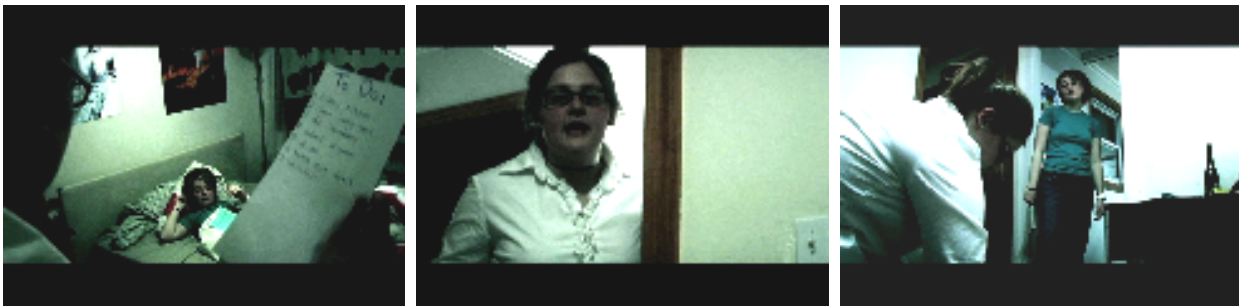
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Ps Roger Spackman
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Slide # 01 - Video Clip – Mother's to-do list!

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Two characters – Mary the daughter, and *Martha the mother*.

Mary – I thought you were going to get these things done today?

I'm sorry, I guess I forgot.

We're having company tonight.

Martha, I'm sorry I forgot!

You are always forget – sorry isn't going to make dinner or clean up this mess!

What's the big deal?

It's business, it's important and I need to make a good impression.

Why – I thought it was just friends.

No – it's business. We need to clean up this mess. Haven't you done anything today?

I did a lot of reading... tried to figure out what... well – I'm sure it's not as important as anything *you're* doing!

Don't make me out to be the bad guy! Why am I always the bad guy – just because I'm trying to do something good with my life!!!

What - Running around, being stressed, snapping at people!!

Don't!!!

What – just because you're out trying to save the world, doesn't mean you're actually doing anything worthwhile!

Listen to what you're saying...

Ah!!! – I don't want to talk about this!

Welcome to our 6th Bible Workshop in the With Wings of an Eagle series.

We are looking at *real* Bible characters as they face the *real* stuff that we each have to face on a daily basis.

Slide # 02

Today we are looking at Martha – and the threat of resentment.

Our *abiding principles* for today are:

- ⊕ Resentment can be a clear indicator of misspent energy, misplaced service, or misguided enthusiasm – where we are more concerned about what others think, that about what God thinks.

The image displays a presentation slide and a video player. The slide on the left is titled "With wings of an eagle" and "Part 6 of 12" with the subtitle "Martha The threat of resentment" and an eagle illustration. The video player on the right shows a video titled "Slide # 01 - Video Clip - Martha's to-do list" with a "Play" button and a "Full Screen" icon.

- ⊕ Arising from this first point – resentment often comes when we try to please others because we desire affirmation from them, placing our self worth in the hands of those we try to please.
- ⊕ The only power somebody has over you – is the power you give to them.
- ⊕ Sometimes anger and resentment arises because your expectations of others are too high.
- ⊕ Resentment is often caused by lack of assertiveness or negotiation skills

Slide # 3

Looking at Martha

In Bethany, an obscure little village 5 kilometres from Jerusalem, two sisters and a brother shared a home.

Martha, the oldest, was more or less the head of the household.

Her younger sister Mary, was thoughtful and meditative.

Mary's main role was to provide help and assistance.

The brother Lazarus – was the recipient of their combined and constant care.

But – one spring day, Jesus of Nazareth came to town along with His disciples – and a group of devoted and curious followers.

Bethany became His temporary home as He entered the final week of His earthly life.

On one particular visit to her home, Martha (the oldest sister) decided to go *all out* for her Master.

She planned a feast of enormous proportions!

But in the midst of all this, she became angry and resentful of her younger sister, who seemed more interested in sitting rather than serving.

Martha stands forever as an illustration of the outcome of misplaced zeal and unrealistic expectations.

But in doing so – Martha has left us with an eternal gift – vital insights into the nature and causes of a passion that is common to us all: Resentment!

Let's read the story in God's holy word – the Bible.

Luke chapter 10: 38 ¶ As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home.

39 She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said.

40 But Martha was distracted by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand."

41 The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing.

42 One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her."

John chapter 11: 17 ¶ When Jesus finally got there, he found Lazarus already four days dead.

18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, only a couple of miles away,

19 and many of the Jews were visiting Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them over their brother.

20 Martha heard Jesus was coming and went out to meet him. Mary remained in the house.

21 Martha said, "Master, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died.

John chapter 12: 1 ¶ Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 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 odour of the ointment.

Okay – first things first.

Who – here today – is a *Martha*?

Who considers themselves to be a *Mary*?

Slide # 4 – Sentences below:

The Greek word for distracted in Luke 10:40 actually carries the idea of being *pulled* or *dragged* away and being *overburdened*.

What was it that was overburdening Martha and dragging her away from Jesus?

Martha was confused about what was important and what was urgent. Perhaps she had her priorities confused? Perhaps she was second-guessing Jesus – swapping heads with Him, and thinking that Jesus expected her to do these things – when in reality He wasn't? It's not that food and entertainment weren't important, it's just that Martha placed them as too important.

Slide # 5 – Sentence below

Well – whose responsibility was it to organise the food and other work that Martha was left to do all by herself? Surely, if Martha didn't do it – then it just wouldn't get done!!! (Does this sound like words or thoughts you have owned?)

Thing is, that it WAS Martha's role and job to do these things, or to delegate them to others – perhaps even Mary and Lazarus.

Slide # 6

What skills do you think Martha (and any person caught in resentment) was lacking?

I wonder if Martha lacked assertiveness skills.

I wonder if she was a passive aggressive person – that means when a passive aggressive person gets upset, they don't confront the person, situation or emotions that are causing the problem, they do it in a passive way – i.e. their aggression is passive and manipulative – slamming doors, pouting, sulking, moodiness, withheld anger.

I also wonder if Martha lacked negotiation skills – the flipside and antidote to a lack of assertiveness.

The temptation to become resentful seems especially relevant to those in an care-giving capacity. Paul told Timothy that those in ministry must be careful not to become resentful. (2nd Timothy 2:24).

Slide # 7

Why might resentment be a temptation for those who have a personality or ministry of caring and helping others?

2nd Timothy 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

If they focus upon the person and their needs more than the One whom they serve, they risk burn-out. Resentment often follows a similar path. First the person willingly serves and helps, out of joy and sacrifice. Next they begin to realise – or think – that their efforts are not being noticed and they are being taken for granted. Finally they begin to resent – feel anger- towards those who are taking their time or towards others who are not as willing to help as they are.

In Colossians 3:23-24, Paul gives some good advice about combating our tendency towards resentment:

Slide # 8

Colossians 3:23 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Why is this good advice?

People disappoint, but God doesn't! God rewards, even when people forget or are not able to.

Slide # 9

In the light of the above answer, why do around 50% of pastors and workers in the care-industry *burn out*?

For exactly the same reasons as before, they haven't learnt to take control of their lives, and learn assertiveness and negotiation skills.

Slide # 10

Learning from Martha

Martha plunged ahead to fulfil her own plans for meeting the *needs* of others, but only the needs as she perceived them.

The unfortunate truth is that Martha has already decided for herself what the needs of the group were, and then becoming resentful when no one else helped her to fulfil her vision.

Maybe in this light resentment is wounded pride?

Those of us who are tempted with resentment need to learn to take correction and direction from others.

Here's a few areas where resentment is common.

See which ones apply to you.

Slide # 11 – List below

- ✓ I am criticised *more* than I think I should be praised or acknowledged
- ✓ I have to do all the work to maintain a relationship
- ✓ I am taken for granted by my spouse/friends/parents
- ✓ I receive no help to accomplish my tasks
- ✓ No one takes an interest in my life – but everyone expects me to be interested in them
- ✓ I have no time for myself anymore

Slide # 12

The root of much of these areas is the lack of assertiveness and negotiation skills.

Allow me to introduce just a *few key points* for each topic – just to set you in the right direction.

You see, if you haven't learnt to be assertive, you can't maintain a balance of power in your relationships – and you end up being *walked all over* – and feeling resentful.

You become either the victim or the rescuer.

This skill is all about protecting your boundaries, communicating your expectations, and being honest with yourself and others.

In life – *conflict* is inevitable and natural.

Learning to be assertive is the number one escape route from being a victim.

Learn to communicate your expectations with the right choice of words, and above all – recognise your maladaptive coping mechanisms such as withdrawing, silent treatment, sulking or passive aggression.

Those of us who suffer from resentment are often chronic *second guessers*.

We have perfected the art of *swapping heads* with others around and thinking we *know* and can *anticipate* what others are thinking or expecting from us.

That's exactly what Martha did with Jesus and the disciples.

She thought she knew best, and knew what they needed and wanted.

Second guessing – or emotional based reasoning – has also been correctly labelled Counterfeit Christian Discernment.

Simply bringing these areas to the light of truth is an entirely Biblical and successful way to deal with them. (1st Cor 4:5)

Because having identified this tendency, you now have a choice to overcome it, or further surrender to it.

A good idea for those lacking in assertiveness, is to practice effective *one-liner reactions* to those who have learnt that you can be easily manipulated.

Such one-liners could be:

Why do you treat me this way, when you would never allow me to treat you like that?

Ask people to explain what they expect from you, and listen to what they say, not what you expect them to say.

Now, let's briefly look at Negotiation Skills. But first, listen to this truth:

Slide # 13

Your ability to negotiate will determine the level and intimacy of all the relationships in your life – yes, even in your marriage and family.

It is up to you to learn *how* to negotiate.

Thing is, the example of Martha is just about food, but it can easily be about marriage, money, children or even divorce.

We need to learn how to negotiate the balance of power in the little things like food, so that we can be successful in the larger issues of life.

Slide # 14

Negotiation is an outworking of the teaching of Jesus to *love your neighbour as yourself*.

Until you learn to love others and **equally** love yourself – you will always be giving too much power to others in your life.

Sometimes what we were taught as children – even if it was *good* teaching – needs to be interpreted again as an adult.

As an example, there are many adults who still think it is rude to *talk-back* to other adults, even when they are being emotionally abused or blackmailed!

People, like Martha who have never learnt assertiveness skills or how to negotiate, will often enter into pretend agreements with those around them.

They will pretend to agree or to be happy about something, just to avoid upsetting others – their boss, workmates or even marriage partner.

Until they can take no more, and they explode or totally surrender.

Such *pretend agreements* are an inability to say *no* to the expectation to work long hours at the office, even though it was never part of your initial work contract.

Another pretend agreement is resentfully picking up all the time after your kids – just because they are too lazy to do it themselves or

because they know they don't have to – because *you* will do it for them.

It is a pretend agreement, because you don't want to, and in reality all it teaches your kids is to be lazy and expect *others* to do the work for them.

To learn negotiation skills is to set consequences, and to realise that by allowing others to take advantage of you – you are hurting *them* just as much as you are hurting *yourself*.

Just remember, *correction* does not mean *rejection*.

To learn to negotiate, we need to stop playing the victim.

Debbie and I have a counselling tool we use for most clients who come to us for help – called Discovering your Core Values.

During a half hour period, we show the client around 10 flash cards with different values and character traits on them, and through a process of reflection and elimination – are left with the top 10 core values that defines the personality and character of the client.

And then we come to the *clincher*.

Slide # 15

We work with the client to help them understand that *they are responsible to teach others how to treat them*.

I would have to say that around 6 out of every 10 adults have never learnt how to set boundaries in their lives – understanding that *they are responsible to teach others how to treat them*.

When then ask how they can *defend themselves* against the attacks that inevitably come against their values or personhood.

To be honest, most people *struggle* to answer this question.

Slide # 16

That's why – if you don't learn how to build boundaries, you end up building walls.

And that's why so many people live behind walls of loneliness, insecurity, fear and above all – *resentment!*

Let us take hope, and learn some vital lessons from our Biblical character today.

Martha – the threat of resentment.

Enjoy our final video Clip – Martha – *finally* got it!

Slide # 17 – Video clip – Martha – finally got it!

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