



Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary, who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are the master of the universe, and yet you wish to listen to me and guide me. You know all things past, present and future, and yet you respect my freedom to choose you. Holy Trinity, you are completely happy and fulfilled on you own, and yet you have generously brought us into existence. You are our fulfillment. Thank you for the gift of yourself. I offer the littleness of myself in return, knowing you are pleased with what I have to give.

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Petition: Lord, help me to learn how to pray better.

1. "More Things Are Wrought By Prayer Than This World Dreams of": Many good people see prayer as a weak thing that really doesn't help. So they put their effort into doing great projects, into doing as much as they can to bring about good in the world. This is a good thing. But prayer is essential. Even if I manage to involve thousands of others in my project, I will still not accomplish as much as when I get God involved. Getting God involved through prayer is the first and the most important thing to do if we are going to accomplish anything. As King Arthur says to Sir Bedivere in Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*, "More things are wrought by prayer/ Than this world dreams of."

2. Persevere in Prayer with Love: Many critics of prayer complain that they pray a lot, but it doesn't seem to do any good. Well, there are a couple of things to say about that. First of all, there needs to be love for God in my heart. God needs to be someone familiar to me, a friend. In asking for a favor, I expect to get a greater response from someone I know, someone who is close to me, than from a stranger. Imagine if there was someone I barely knew, and the only time I saw him was when he needed a favor from me. Would I be inclined to give him what he needs? Second, I need to persevere. Like the Canaanite woman who asked Jesus to cure her daughter, I have to persevere in prayer when things are difficult. Her perseverance increased her faith, and in the end it got her what she wanted. If I persevere in prayer with love, I will get all that I need.

3. Cooperate with God's Plan Instead of Insisting on Your Own: I need to remember that every prayer has its effect. How often am I disappointed when I don't get what I'm asking for? Am I open enough in my prayer to let God work as he wants; to follow his plan and not mine? Do I force him to refuse my request by making it so narrow that there is no way to incorporate it into his plan? Even if I don't see the results of my prayer, that doesn't mean God is not listening. God always rises to the occasion and will often do something a lot better than what I wanted him to do. He does what is best for me, even if it does not entirely conform to my plan. I may never know or realize – in this life – the specifics of how God listened to my prayers. It takes faith to accept this.

Conversation with Christ: Dear Lord, whatever project I undertake, help me to remember to start it with prayer, pray while I am doing it, and finish it with prayer. I want to be close to you like Mary. I want to serve you like Martha. Help me to find the right order and balance in my life.

Resolution: When I consider the biggest thing I am doing for God today, I will be sure to ask him in prayer to bless it.