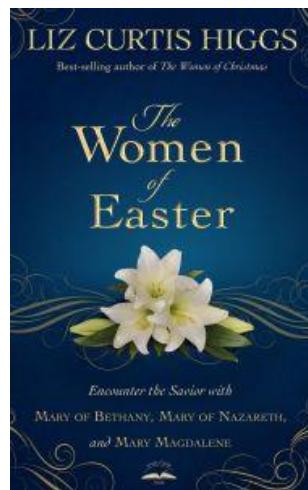


Word by Word with Liz Curtis Higgs on the Faith Radio Network

Bible Study Guide for March 3-4, 2018 | Martha

from *The Women of Easter* by Liz Curtis Higgs



1. The high-profile presence of Mary of Bethany and her older sister, Martha in the gospel narrative affirms a vital role for women in the life of Christ. Even so, the Lord chastened Martha for being “worried and upset” (Luke 10:41) and commended Mary for having “chosen what is better” (Luke 10:42). What did you learn from watching busy Martha and quiet Mary? In what sense were their differences a matter of personality? And in what sense were those variables spiritual?
2. A thousand years before Martha and her sister were born, King David wrote, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4 KJV). What is the “one thing” you desire most from the Lord? Practically speaking, how can you dwell in God’s house, as King David described, and yet go about your day-to-day life?
3. We know that “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (John 11:5), yet He allowed each of them to suffer, if only for a handful of days. What does 1 Peter 1:6-7 suggest to you about God’s purposes for pain in our lives? “For a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” What trial have you withstood that tested and refined your faith? In what ways did you sense God’s purpose in it all?

4. By the time Martha next spoke with Jesus, her faith had taken a leap forward. She told the Lord, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God” (John 11:27). How does her declaration change or reinforce your view of Martha? In the same way, when Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15), Simon Peter was quick to answer, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Jesus told Peter, “This was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 16:16). What might Jesus’s response to Peter indicate about Martha’s relationship with her heavenly Father? When and where have you felt prompted to confess that Jesus is the Son of God. And why?
5. Both Martha and Mary said in turn, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:21, 32). Think of a time when you felt that God’s response to your need came too late and you wondered if He truly cared. What did you express to Him in your prayers? How did His apparent delay impact your faith? We aren’t told how Mary or Martha felt, but the Lord’s emotions are described in detail. He was “deeply moved in spirit and troubled” (John 11:33) until at last “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). How does the image of Him weeping affect your view of Him and your faith in Him
6. What’s the most important lesson you learned from the story of Martha, a woman whose faith grew right before our eyes?