

The Two Sides Of The Christian Life

Luke 10:38-42 [NIV] “As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’ ‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’”

This account of Martha and Mary is often used as an illustration of two different kinds of Christian lifestyle.

Martha stands for the active type of Christian whose life is totally taken up with practical service of other Christians and the local community in which they live.

Mary stands for the contemplative type of Christian where study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, combined with prayer and worship take priority in their lives.

Jesus Christ tells the sisters that Mary had chosen the best way of life.

The truth is that Christians **cannot** be divided into two different types, the most heavenly orientated Christian must break off meditation sometimes to attend to pressing earthly needs.

Also the most active Christian must retire sometimes to recharge their spiritual batteries.

We are **not** to choose to be either a praying and meditating Christian or a working Christian as if it was not possible to be both.

Actually every true Christian is both to some degree, the problem is one of balance.

Stated in modern terms this means simply that every Christian, however practical may be their Christian life, is in some degree a mystic, and their mysticism is to take the upper side of their lives.

Every Christian needs to pray to the Creator God and to meditate on spiritual things, communicating with God and the invisible world.

Every Christian also must of necessity work, eat and sleep and pay their taxes seeking to get on somehow with the hard and difficult world in which they live.

Every Christian, if they are following the example of their Saviour and Master Jesus Christ, must serve God but also other human beings.

The big problem is to keep the two elements of the Christian life in proper balance.

Since the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the pendulum has swung from practical to the mystical and back again, within the Christian fellowship.

Both lifestyles were always present but either one or the other got the major attention at any given time.

The current vogue favours “*Christian action*” where people are more concerned with earth than with heaven.

The vast majority of Christians would rather “do something” than to commune with God.

The average Christian feels a lot nearer to this world than to the world above.

Matthew 5:14-16 [NIV] *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

As we are shown here by our Saviour and Master our bringing of light [truth about why we have been given life] is essential as well as our “good works”.

We can only bring the light of the gospel message to other human beings as a result of study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, and a close relationship with Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:15 [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”*

We have to be ready to clearly explain the hope of our forgiveness of sin, our credited righteousness and eternal life.

Christians can only do this as a result of prayer and a meditative time with the teaching of Jesus Christ and the first apostles.

When we take time to prayerfully test our present Christian life and compare its spiritual quality with that of New Testament Christians, we will find that our lifestyle lacks the mystic worship it needs to be a true light.

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

The Holy Spirit cannot be stagnant, likened to the wind that is always moving [**John 3:8**] the end result of our receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is for it to generate within us love [**Galatians 5:22-23**] that is then expressed through acts of love towards other human beings.

How do we then receive the Holy Spirit and how essential is it for us to live a Christian life?

Ask God for the Holy Spirit. [**Luke 11:13**]

Be led by the Holy Spirit [**Romans 8:9, 14-16**], here we find the key to a balanced Christian life.

Must not resist or quench the work of Holy Spirit in us. [**1 Thessalonians 5:19**]

Only give to those who obey the Words of Jesus Christ [**Acts 5:32**], thus is linked to our study of the Words of Jesus Christ in the Christian Bible.

We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit [**Ephesians 4:30-32**], by not taking on the character of Jesus Christ.

Holy Spirit will open up the deep meanings of the scriptures as inspired by Him [**2 Peter 1:20-21**], only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will God’s Word the Christian Bible make sense to us. [**1 Corinthians 2:9-14**]

Holy Spirit will in the end of our physical life give us eternal life. [**Romans 8:11**]

It is the end result of our spiritual life, empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that the physical aspect of our Christian life will become a powerful witness for our Saviour Jesus Christ and our countering the influence of Satan and his demons in our local community. [**Revelation 12:9-11**]