



Hosting with a Mary Heart

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

⁴⁰ **But Martha was cumbered about much serving,** and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

⁴¹ **And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:**

⁴² **But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.** ¹

Over the past two years God has been showing me ways to simplify and streamline my life to allow the most important things to receive priority. Rising early to keep a tithe of my time for the day with Him daily gives me direction and creates relationship. Here I hear encouragement, learn new perspectives and have a blueprint for reducing commitments to those the Lord says are mine to embrace for this season.

My loving heavenly Father provides the details. My job is to walk in great love as I praise Him in all situations. Jesus embraces my efforts and gently teaches me to listen and yield to His leading. In this atmosphere the Lord guides me to learn to turn my failures and partial successes into future victories. Holy Spirit encourages me to try new ways and follow the ancient paths of truth from the Word of God applied in modern steps.

It is a gradual reshaping of my time, talents and treasures applied with ever increasing love. **Praise and love I have learned must be at the center of my mindset,** filling my heart, mouth and eyes. For whatever is inside me spills over in to my relationships with my family, friends, acquaintances and with God Himself.

Like the story of Mary and Martha in the Bible, there are good things we have always felt we needed to do to take care of our homes, families and to measure up to the priorities of the world. This is especially true for women when we have a house full of people to care for. The pressure to provide quality, ample, interesting meals can be a challenge for our budgets and time.

Little by little the Lord impresses upon me changes to make for the future. For great meals that require so much of my time and energy that I have scant moments to listen or rest come at too high a cost. It is imperative that new ways be found to accomplish the end goals to allow me to be the greatest possible ambassador for Him.

This past Christmas and New Year I realized how much was being lost in precious time with my family. I was still rising to keep my very early time in the morning with the Lord – but because I was the first up and last to bed with no nap for many days my body was reaching exhaustion. As I cooked and cleaned I seemed to move from one meal to the next to the next in continuous service...but the others were gaining the relationships. When the house was once again quiet I had to ask myself “*where did the time go?*” and “*how can we do this better?*”

When we only get to see the ones we love infrequently the need to invest in relationship in the moment is even more important. Months pass before a “do-over” opportunity comes along. We can stay in touch through texting, phone calls, email and many electronic methods but there is nothing like the real deal of in person visits. Chats over coffee and tea, adventures, resting, going, doing, all have their place to build memories.

But when the “*doing*” is not “*engaging*” the relationship connections suffer.

The wonderful thing about walking in yielded, submitted love with Jesus is that He is faithful to teach us.

When we ask for His help He is eager to give us wisdom, direction, peace and love. Great creativity flows from time spent with Him and in His Word. When I bring the problem or issue and lay it down at His feet – then listen closely – the answers start to come. Now I am working with my Master Consultant who has a bird’s eye view. He can see everything so clearly along the continuum of my life and knows what I need to lay down, pick up, start and stop along the way.

Twelve changes I plan to implement for the future include:

1. **Making out my menu(s) earlier to allow shopping for majority of the items to be completed two weeks out.** This, in addition to having many supplies on hand for unexpected hosting, should reduce stress greatly. Then last minute shopping for produce, bread, dairy and any additions necessary should be easier.
2. **Beware overspending.** Plan your budget and menu accordingly. Shop with a calculator and streamline your shopping list even further if necessary. Watch the ads and clip coupons. I keep a running grocery list on my notes on my I-phone and try to divide it by groups of purchases by store, department, etc.
3. **Pre-make as many entrees as possible to put in to the freezer.** I found the “*Joyful Momma 100 Day Challenge*”² on Pinterest. Her website offers many tips like pre-making enchiladas, lasagna, etc., in small disposable metal pans. Cover with double layers of foil and mark both what it is and how to bake then stow in the freezer till needed. Thaw just ahead of the time to bake in staging the meal prep to keep all flowing. Freezing in smaller pans allows more flexibility to adjust to the number of servings needed.
4. **A long-time fan of crock pot cooking I am learning more new recipes to prepare this way, too.** Pinterest has many suggestions for slow cooker soups, side dishes, entrees and desserts.
5. **Prepare vegetables, cheese, etc., as much as possible in advance of guests arriving to allow staging of ingredients.** For example, vegetables can be washed and soaked in a solution of water with a little peroxide to kill bacteria. Rinsed, the drained vegetables can be stored in containers in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Cheese can be grated or sliced and stored in zip lock bags or sealed in containers.

6. **Crock pots, or a 170 ° oven can be used to hold food that has been cooked or baked in advance.** We used this concept in taking food to a pot luck dinner recently. Potatoes wrapped in foil were baked at a 400 ° oven for an hour. At the same time, water heated in my biggest crock pot on high. When the potatoes were finished baking in the oven the water was dumped out of the crock pot and the potatoes were placed inside. Only a small layer of water was left to cover the bottom of the slow cooker. The food stayed hot even after transported and the small amount of water kept the potatoes from drying out too much.
7. **If you have extra refrigerator(s) and freezer space utilize them to prepare portions of your menu ahead of time.** For New Year's our refrigerator space was at a premium so we utilized a Coleman 5-day cooler inside our garage. The temperatures were very low so the food stayed cold. However, for summer, larger frozen containers of ice could be added to help the food stay the proper temperature inside the coolers. Produce like lettuce, carrots, celery, etc., stored in zip lock bags, cartons of eggs, cheese plates, etc., did very well.
8. **Multiply the baking.** If I have to take dessert to more than one function, plus have on hand for guests in our home, I bake two or three cakes at the same time. I also plan to pre-bake their favorite cookies and store in the freezer a few weeks out.
9. **Give yourself permission to slip away and take a 20 minute nap...longer if possible.**
10. **No matter how tired my body might be my time with God must be first.** Coffee can be brewing and breakfast rolls can be ready to bake in a preheated oven – but nothing must come in the way of my appointed, quiet time with the Lord.
11. **Simplify one to two meals a day if possible and make one really nice.** We had several breakfasts of cereal, milk and assorted individual yogurt flavors this year to simplify. One morning was French toast, bacon and scrambled eggs. One breakfast included waffles and bacon. But the cereal, milk and yogurt were served each day. In the past I had felt I must make a full, hot breakfast for each meal. When rest, time with God and time with the people are the priority then some of the traditions had to be adjusted.
12. **Wash less – visit more.** The next time we are hosting a house full of people I plan to invest in a huge stack of heavy duty disposable plates so we can spend less time cleaning up and more time building relationship.

God wants us to draw near to Him and then be love to those around us. Making showing love the priority changes the perspective on everything that is required of us by traditions. Breaking old expectations to allow us to build better memories is crucial. Being rested and having had time with Him we can be ambassadors for Jesus to touch hearts through us.

“A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.”³

Rested, we are best able to listen, laugh and share the love of Jesus. It's difficult to overcome exhaustion when trying to give our very best to our families...but a night of pizza out can be a great investment all around. Hearing joy on our lips as we settle in for a nice chat or an excursion they will be learning to make choices for their future hosting, too.

If the guests remember that they were deeply loved and cared for as we give praise to God for all His blessings we will have made a mark for generations as Christian wives and mothers.

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three;
but the greatest of these is charity. ([1 Corinthians 13:13 KJV](#))⁴
[newer translations showing charity as love]

From the heart with all praise to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Donna Turpin
In Christ Alone

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¹ *Holy Bible KJV*, BibleGateway.com, [Luke 10, v. 38-42](#), King James Version (KJV), www.BibleGateway.com,
Scripture taken from the [King James Version \(KJV\)](#) by [Public Domain](#), <http://bit.ly/1WXruFE>

² **Joyful Momma Website**, Alexis, *Joyful Momma 100 Day Challenge*,
<http://joyfulmommaskitchen.com/category/100-day-challenge/>

³ Forest E. Witcraft, Teacher, Scholar, **Pass It On Website**, *A Hundred Years from Now Quote*,
<http://www.values.com/inspirational-quotes/4244-a-hundred-years-from-now-it-will-not-matter>

⁴ And the greatest of these is love, *Holy Bible*, BibleGateway.com, [1 Corinthians 13, v. 13](#), King James Version (KJV), www.BibleGateway.com, Scripture taken from the [King James Version \(KJV\)](#) by [Public Domain](#),
<http://bit.ly/1NCHPg3>