



- Video Clip – Thumbelina: Follow Your Heart
  - This message is everywhere in our society, isn't it?
  - However, as popular as it may be, it is absolutely not the message of Scripture.
  - Jeremiah 17:9 – *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”*
  - Numbers 15:37-40 (NASB) – *“The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them **and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes**, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all my commandments and be holy to your God.”*
  - Rather, the message of Scripture and the message of our text today, is this:  
**Follow what God says, not what you feel.**
- 1.) Our desires are distracting.
- Martha's problem wasn't what she was doing as much as what she was thinking.
  - There was nothing wrong with Martha making preparations to serve others, especially Jesus. Luke writes in verse 40 that the *“preparations had to be made.”*

- Her actions could have been fine. The heart behind her actions, however, was not, because here we read that she was distracted.
- Can't you just hear her thoughts? ... (Expand)
- Distraction happens whenever the main thing is not the main thing.
  - Mary gave her attention entirely to Christ and what He was saying. According to v. 42, this was the most important thing.
  - Martha, on the other hand, gave her attention to herself and how she was feeling.
  - Mary listened to the Lord; Martha listened to her heart.
- Because Martha followed her feelings, she was distracted from the great privilege she might have had to learn from the Lord and love Him.

## 2.) Our desires are deceptive.

- Even though Mary was shown to be in the right and Martha was clearly wrong in her attitude, she had convinced herself that her feelings were right.
  - Again, we can almost hear her self-justifying thoughts: "Here I am working as hard as I can, and Mary is just sitting there! Here I am doing everything, and there she is doing nothing!"
- We hear Martha's opinion of the situation in v. 40 – "*Lord, don't you care that my sister has left 3.)*"

## Our desires are demanding.

- v. 40 – "*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's unholy desires have so distracted and deceived her, that she begins demanding them.
  - Notice: Martha doesn't humbly come to Christ and ask, "Excuse me, Lord, but do you think Martha it would be better for Martha to help me with my preparations?" (It was Martha's house.)
  - Rather, Martha actually impugns Jesus' compassion, saying, "*Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?*" Then, she makes her unholy demand: "*Tell her to help me!*"
- Our desires battle within us to win our affection away from Christ.
  - When emotion becomes our motivation, our desires will not take "no" for an answer. When we listen to our feelings, they inevitably feed upon themselves and become demanding.

- Our desires want us to hear and obey them.
- Jesus calls us to hear and obey Him.
- Loving God with all our heart, mind, and strength means denying our desires and desiring Christ.
- Luke 9:23 – “*Then [Jesus] said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’*”

#### **4.) Our desires are destructive.**

- In this passage, we see at least three destructive tendencies of feeling-focused living.

##### **a.) Selfishness**

- Following our hearts breeds selfishness.
- v. 40 – Martha makes a selfish demand of her sister.
  - Recall from v. 38 that this was Martha’s house, so the preparations were her responsibility.
  - She would have been fine to politely ask for her sister’s help, but her demand was selfish.
- Martha’s desires are clearly selfish because she attempts to snatch her sister away from doing what pleases the Lord in order to do what pleases her. *me to do the work by myself?”*
- Martha, it seems, wanted to impress Jesus with her preparations, and she deceived herself into following her heart.
  - Jeremiah 17:9 – “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*”
  - How often do we deceive ourselves by following our hearts?
  - Following our selfish desires is not only destructive to us, but it is most often destructive to those around us—those we love.
    - How many marriages have been threatened or destroyed because a spouse follows his/her heart?
    - How many Christians have brought reproach upon the name of Jesus because they followed their feelings?

##### **b.) Worry**

- Following our hearts breeds worry.
- v. 41 – “*‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are **worried** and upset about many things...’*”

- Martha was worried about her house, worried about her work, worried about her preparations, and worried about her sister.
- Because she was worried about her own agenda, she missed a glorious opportunity to hear and learn from the Lord of all.
- Luke 12:25-26 – “*Who of you by worrying can add a single* **3.) Our desires are demanding.**
- v. 40 – “*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’s unholy desires have so distracted and deceived her, that she begins demanding them.
  - Notice: Martha doesn’t humbly come to Christ and ask, “Excuse me, Lord, but do you think Martha it would be better for Martha to help me with my preparations?” (It was Martha’s house.)
  - Rather, Martha actually impugns Jesus’ compassion, saying, “*Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?*” Then, she makes her unholy demand: “*Tell her to help me!*”
- Our desires battle within us to win our affection away from Christ.
  - When emotion becomes our motivation, our desires will not take “no” for an answer. When we listen to our feelings, they inevitably feed upon themselves and become demanding.
  - Our desires want us to hear and obey them.
  - Jesus calls us to hear and obey Him.
  - Loving God with all our heart, mind, and strength means denying our desires and desiring Christ.
- Luke 9:23 – “Then [Jesus] said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’”

#### **4.) Our desires are destructive.**

- In this passage, we see at least three destructive tendencies of feeling-focused living.

##### **a.) Selfishness**

- Following our hearts breeds selfishness.
- v. 40 – Martha makes a selfish demand of her sister.
  - Recall from v. 38 that this was Martha’s house, so the preparations were her responsibility.

- She would have been fine to politely ask for her sister's help, but her demand was selfish.
- Martha's desires are clearly selfish because she attempts to snatch her sister away from doing what pleases the Lord in order to do what pleases her. *hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"*
- Philippians 4:6 – *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."*

### c.) Anger

- Following our hearts breeds anger.
- v. 41 – *"'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things...'"*
- With her desires unmet, Martha lashes out in anger at both Jesus and her sister, Mary. (v. 40)
- James 4:1-2 – *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God."*
- Do any of these descriptions characterize your attitude or behavior lately? Are you listening to what the Lord says, or have you been listening to how you feel?

## Response

- **"Don't let what's wrong with you keep you from focusing on what's right with God."**
- Remember the chiasmic structure (ABBA) that began back in v. 27:
  - Luke 10:27-41 – Chiastic Structure (ABBA) – A. Love God (v. 27a) ⇔ B. Love neighbor (v. 27b) ⇔ B. Love neighbor (v. 28-37) ⇔ A. Love God (v. 38-42)
  - Ultimately, this passage is about true worship. It paints a picture of what it means to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind.
- **Mark Batterson – "Worship is forgetting what is wrong with you and remembering what's right with God."**

- Surely, Mary had problems she could have focused on and complained about as well. However, if we only worship God when everything is just right, then what are we really worshipping: God or our circumstances?
- Martha focused on what was wrong with her and her circumstances. Mary focused on Jesus.
- There are basically two types of people in the world: Worshippers and Whiners.
  - Whatever the circumstances, whiners will focus on how they feel, and they always find something to complain about.
  - Whatever the circumstances, worshippers will focus on what God says, and they will always find something to praise God for.
- Batterson – “The circumstances you complain about will become the chains that imprison you.”
  - This was certainly the case with Martha in our text today.
  - The life of a whiner is a life of constant distraction, self-deception, unholy demands, and steady destruction.
- Focusing on God and not your feelings is the way out of the trap.
  - In other words, worship is the way out.
  - v. 42 – “...*but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*”
    - This one thing was concentrating on the Lord.
    - Mary did so, and Jesus said, “*It will not be taken away from her.*”
      - In other words, what Mary did had everlasting value.
- Listening to the Lord (not our hearts) and following His Word yields eternal blessing and treasure.

-- Psalm 1:1-3 – “*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*”

-- James 1:25 – “*The man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.*”

## Application

### -- How do we follow what God says, instead of what we feel?

- 1.) Read God's Word.
- 2.) Meditate on God's Word.
- 3.) Memorize God's Word.
- 4.) Pray God's Word.
- 5.) Sing God's Word.
- 6.) Preach to yourself.

-- Drive sinful desires and emotions away by preaching God's Word at your heart.

-- 2 Corinthians 10:5 – *“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

- 7.) Strive to replace your own desires with a desire for God and His glory.

-- Psalm 37:4 – *“Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.”*

-- John Piper – “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”

-- So each of us has a choice today: Will we follow the world-saturated advice of Jocimo, or the Word of God? Will we follow our hearts, or will we follow Jesus Christ?

-- For the glory of God and the good of your soul, follow what God says, not what you feel.