

JCI #217 March 2020

THE MAIN THING IS KEEPING THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

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It is our prayer and hope that these devotionals encourage and strengthen you in your walk with Christ and your work for Christ. He alone is worthy!

I enjoy seeing people who are passionate about something!

That drive, that interest, that intensity, that focus, that energy....

I've also noticed that it is quite impossible to be passionate about many things!

Passion doesn't flow from a divided heart

Passion demands Commitment

Passion doesn't flow from a doubting heart

Passion demands Confidence

Passion doesn't flow from a distracted heart

Passion demands Concentration

The truly passionate are quite particular in their passion!

If you only had **ONE THING** on which to focus your energy.....What would it be?

(Some of you are already thinking... "Ha! One thing? Right!!! How about one hundred?!!)

One Thing! "Just One Thing" into which you pour all your passion and energy?

In the midst of a thousand things we must do..... What is the One Thing....the Main Thing?

Let's take three biblical characters, and take a spiritual stethoscope and listen to their hearts.

For David it was the Presence of God

Psalm 27:4 "One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: 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 inquire in His temple."

It is priority – One thing

It is personal – have I desired

It is passionate – desired of the Lord

It is pursuit – that will I seek after

It is persistent – dwell...all the days

It is purifying – to behold the beauty of the Lord

It is particular – to enquire

David desired the presence of and fellowship with God above all things.

This is the "one thing" of a "man after God's own heart." (1 Sam 13:14) Do I?

For Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus, it was the Word of God

Luke 10:38-42 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

And she had a **sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word**. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. **Only one thing is necessary, and Mary has chosen that good part,** which will not be taken away from her."

Martha was busy doing good – too busy doing good! (self-pity is the greatest thief of joy)
Her eyes were on **her service** – the enormity of the task (I have to do everything!)
Her eyes were on **her sister** – the laxity of Mary (She's doing nothing!!)
Her eyes were on **her self** – the apathy of Jesus (He isn't doing anything... about it!)

Jesus' observation...Martha and her MANY THINGS...

Mary and her ONE THING...

ONLY ONE THING IS NECESSARY! TO LISTEN, REALLY LISTEN, TO JESUS!

Some things are good...only ONE is essential!

Mary made the best choice and it won't be taken from her!

Martha's choice... Mary's choice...

Neither made an evil choice. Generosity and Worship...both are commanded & commended!

Martha's choice went bad when **the good** superseded **the best!** Troubled about many things...

Third-soil people...not hard, not shallow, just crowded!!! Matthew 13

Pursuing too many things!!!

When everything becomes necessary, the truly essential gets crowded out!

Your time with God requires being serious... still.... silent....and submissive!

For Paul, it was the Will of God

Phil 3:8-20 Yet indeed I also count **all things loss** for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; **that I may know Him** and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; **but one thing I do, forgetting** those things which are ***behind*** and ***reaching forward*** to those things which are ahead, ***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

The single most repeated command in the Bible is the command to "listen." In the OT the Hebrew word "shema" or listen/heed/hear/obey... is found in over 1,000 verses! In the NT the Greek equivalent is found another 500! David, Mary and Paul all understood that to live in the presence of God, listen carefully to the Word of God and pursue passionately the call of God is that ONE THING.

THE MAIN THING... THE ONE THING...

To **dwell** in His presence...**listen** to His Word... **respond** in eager and persistent obedience

"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain!" Phil 1:21

WHAT REALLY IS THE MAIN THING?

ONE THING - Psalm 27:4 A King, warrior, songwriter, leader - One Thing...**to know God!**

MAIN THING - Luke 10:38-42 Jesus said only One Thing was necessary..**to hear God!**

KEY THING - Phil. 3:8-20 Paul said only One Thing mattered...**to follow God!**

As we consider an often too busy life, may God call us back to the quiet place of His presence, to hear His word, and to follow His calling joyfully and continually for His glory alone.

"Father, forgive me for so easily forgetting the main thing in the midst of my many things. Help me to simplify my life so that I am able to keep the main thing the main thing continually. Give me the discipline necessary so that I am able to enter into the delight of an unhurried fellowship with You. It is hard for me to say "no" to good things. But help me see what is truly essential, that I not lose the best for the sake of the good. Lord Jesus, you were never in a hurry, never distracted, never dissuaded from the essential of Your Father's will. You told the Enemy "It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God." Help me to remember that even the seemingly essential must give way to the absolute essential. I ask for your grace and wisdom today. In Your glorious Name I pray, Amen.

Make It Personal:

- 1) Choose one of the "One Thing" verses we looked and memorize it this week.
- 2) Write down some of the "good-but-not-necessary" things that are "Martha-izing" your life and need to be removed.
- 3) Choose the daily time, place, and book of the Bible you are going to spend time with for the coming month to renew your fellowship with God.

Further Study: Read the gospel of Mark – it is sometimes called the breathless gospel, as it uses the word immediately 36 times! Read it carefully and note how the Lord Jesus dealt with all the pressure and conflict he faced, and yet kept the main thing the main thing every time!

Remember, you are very special to us and we thank God for you.

Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4

Rou & Val

**Seeing the Invisible, Embracing the Unapproachable,
Declaring the Unexplainable, Changed by the Immutable,
Running after the Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
Spending our time on eternity,
Owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY.**