

Be Like Martha? Scripture's Invitation to the Overly Responsible

Laura Andrews

Luke 10:38–42 ³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

- Introduction

- What do we mean by the “overly responsible”?
 - Labels - positive and negative

 - They tend to:
 - have a high *sensitivity* to others' needs and overwhelming *empathy* for others' pain

 - *assume* or habitually *take on too much* responsibility

 - jump to *independent analysis* and *action* when there is a problem

 - *over-identify* with their *usefulness*

 - *over-depend* upon their *effectiveness*

- Consequences
 - Contributing to unbalanced and dysfunctional relationship dynamics
 - Defensiveness + criticism and manipulation of others

- Using Martha’s story to illustrate the *over-responsibility cycle* and *how Jesus interrupts it* (pg. 4 diagrams)

- Reflect: Where do these things apply to your life and ministry?

- Four goals for helping the overly responsible:
 - #1 - **See** their lives in Scripture and see Scripture come to life
 - Weave together their stories with Martha’s
 - Locate themselves in the cycle
 - Identify the insufficient “tests” they create to answer the big questions

- #2 - **Speak** with God
 - Realistically - when they feel angry, interrupted, and embarrassed

 - Candidly

 - Vulnerably

- #3 - **Suffer** well (John 11)
 - Interpreting Jesus' delay
 - Now Jesus *loved* Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he *stayed* where he was...

 - Grieving with Jesus
 - Jesus *wept*... then...some of them said, "Could not he...have kept this man from dying?"

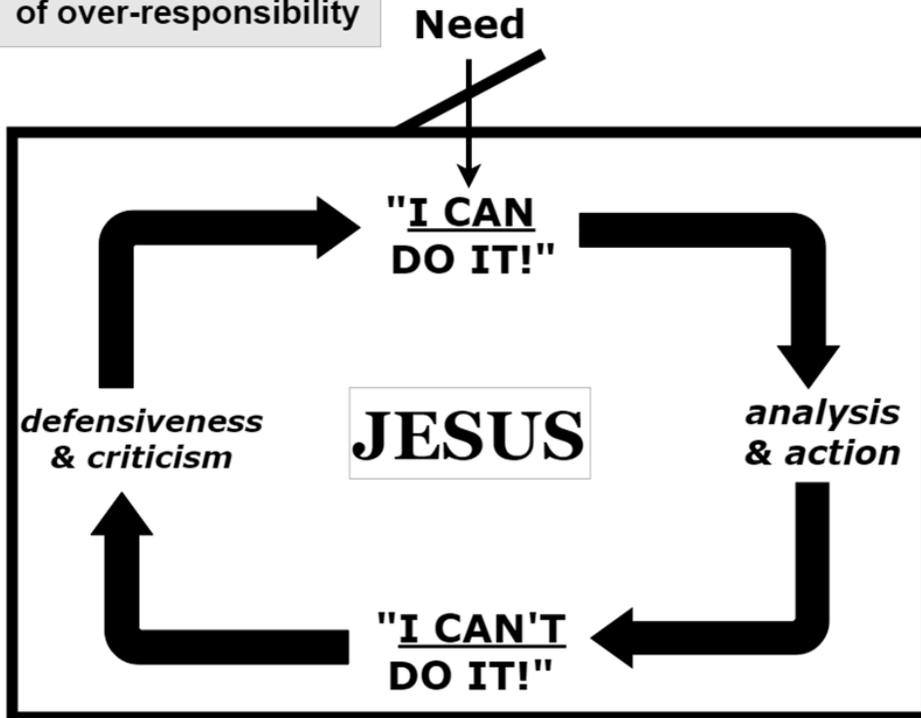
- #4 - **Steward** what they've been given
 - Recognizing and accepting the "can'ts" - *we don't have God's attributes*

 - Thoughtfully stewarding resources with the "cans" - *budgeting*

 - Remember: stewarding is a *relationship-centric process* that fosters *dependence*, not a formula that produces self-sufficiency

- Closing: Embracing our Martha-ness

Martha's Cycle
of over-responsibility



What drives
this cycle?

