

COURTING THE KING



ETTY BLANEY

COURTING THE KING is an anointed study in learning to develop a Love-Walk with God. It is a radical approach to an old, old religion. Totally scriptural. Refreshingly new.

COURTING THE KING

By ETTY BLANEY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - The Sale	1
CHAPTER TWO - Understanding the Truth.....	23
CHAPTER THREE - How Do I Woo You, Lord?	39
CHAPTER FOUR - Solomon's Song	45
CHAPTER FIVE - Draw Me	69
CHAPTER SIX - The Bridal Chamber.....	75
CHAPTER SEVEN - Love	85
CHAPTER EIGHT - Come Away with Me*.....	97
CHAPTER NINE - Choosing the Better Way.....	111
CHAPTER TEN - Living the Better Way.....	123
CHAPTER ELEVEN - A Name Change	139
CHAPTER TWELVE - Failing God	151
CHAPTER THIRTEEN - Compounding the Iniquities.....	157
CHAPTER FOURTEEN - The Consequences of Sin.....	163
CHAPTER FIFTEEN - Holiness	173
CHAPTER SIXTEEN - Joseph	179
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN - Praise	187
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN - Show Me Your Ways, Oh Lord.....	195
CHAPTER NINETEEN - Faithfulness	205
CHAPTER TWENTY - Awake!	221
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE - Wash Me.....	227
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO - Worship	233

CHAPTER NINE

Choosing the Better Way

Twenty years ago, if you had asked me if I knew Jesus, I would have assured you that, of course I knew Him, loved Him, served Him.

I would have told you that I had known Him since early childhood. I would have said that I could remember composing songs of praise to Him when I was still in my crib.

I would have related to you things that I had done in service for Him; cities I had traveled to witnessing for Him, places that I had preached, healings that had taken place in my ministry.

I would have told you that He is wonderful, and He is. I would have encouraged you to get acquainted with Him, to pray the prayer of Salvation and join me in Heaven someday. I would have told you these things and I would have believed them with all of my heart.

But getting acquainted with Him is not enough. Praying the "Sinner's Prayer" is not

COURTING THE KING

enough. Going to church every time the doors are open is not enough.

He wants more from us. He wants us to *really* get to know Him. He wants intimacy. He wants absolute surrender. He wants us to sell ourselves to Him completely, spirit, soul, and body; because of His deep, unceasing love for us. He wants to reveal to us the depth of His love. He wants us to adore Him in return.

Like the Psalmist David, we need to go after the heart of God. Like Mary, we need to choose the better way and sit at His feet and commune with Him. Like Moses, we need to seek His face. That's what He wants.

He wants us to yearn to be with Him. He said, *"If you seek (search out in worship and prayer, strive after, and make a requirement of) Me, you will find me, if you search for me with your whole heart."* Jeremiah 29:13 It is that complete, intense desire to know Him that He will reward by revealing Himself to the seeker.

How long has it been since you sought the Lord with your whole heart? How long has it been since you spent a dedicated hour of your time focused on communion with Him, praising Him, loving Him, listening to Him speak to you?

In Psalm 85:8 David said: *"I listen carefully to what God, the Lord, is saying for He speaks peace*

to His people, His faithful ones." No wonder the Lord talked to David! Are you faithful? Are you listening carefully? Can you hear Him speaking softly to you?

He wants you to worship Him in spirit and in truth. He longs for you to set aside your busyness, your favorite television shows, your computers, your books, your friends, even take time away from your service for Him; and just spend some deep, intimate time with Him.

This is what a true courtship consists of: intimate time together, sharing yourselves, and getting to know the depth of the loved one's heart and soul. Anything less is a sham.

"But," you say, "Sometimes, I feel so dry inside. I feel like, even though I love the Lord, He is far from me. It makes me feel empty."

I went through that when I was a young Christian. We had lots of "revivals" when I was a girl. When a revival was on, God was incredibly near and we had such wonderful times of refreshing! I walked in clouds of joy for days, overwhelmed with His presence, overflowing with praise. But, when the revival had been over for a while, I would "dry out." So my life in Christ would yo-yo. Up one day, down the next.

I didn't know how to fix it.

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One evening, I attended a service at a local women's group and the speaker asked a question that I had never considered before. She asked: "How did you view your earthly father when you were a child?"

My daddy was an evangelist. He was gone for four or five weeks at a time, then, he would come home for a week, only to leave for another four or five weeks. That lasted for nine of my first eleven years of life. When he was home, we had great times! I loved fishing and canoeing with him. He was almost always kind and patient with me. I adored him!

But, he didn't stay home. He went away again. I didn't resent his going, because I knew that he was doing the work of the Lord, but I missed him.

When he was gone, I knew that I was still his child and I knew that he was still my daddy, but he wasn't there. The day he was due to return home, I would sit in the driveway of our home, or at the front window if it was raining, wanting to be the first to greet him when he got back. Then, the good times would begin again!

The woman speaking at this meeting stopped my mental processes when she said, "I have no doubt that your early childhood view of your father is how you view God!"

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She was right! I viewed God as coming and going in my life. When He was there, we had such good times, but He seemed to go away. When He was gone, I still knew He was my Father. I still knew I was His child, but He wasn't there. I was sad and lonely. And spiritually dry.

"Now," said the speaker. "I have to tell you that God is not your earthly father. He is the One that sticks closer than a brother. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He is the One who never fails."

From that day until this, He never has. My spiritual life changed that night. The yoyo-ing stopped and my life in Christ became a steady walk of joy in Jesus.

~ ~ ~

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, has always been one of my favorite Bible characters because I can so relate to her adoration of the Lord. One day, Jesus walked into her town and into her heart, and everything changed in her life.

Her love for Jesus was so profound that nothing in the world mattered, except spending time in His beloved presence.

Mary's sister, Martha, was the "good" child. Little mention of her life before Christ came into it is in the Bible, but she got so busy in service for

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Him and others, that she neglected what was most important...the state of her relationship with the Lord Jesus.

On the outside, where everyone could see, Martha was full of good works. She was a great cook. She looked holy and unblemished. On the inside, where only she and God could look, there was bitterness, selfishness, manipulation, pride, temper, anger, and resentment.

The condition of her heart rendered her good works of no eternal value whatsoever.

Getting to know Jesus intimately would have changed that, but she didn't have time! She was more interested in appearances than she was in her soul's welfare. She might even have convinced herself that all of her good works were acts of righteousness.

Let's take a good look at Martha. Scripture tells us that Jesus loved her very much. If we look at Luke 10:38, we see that one particular day, Jesus came to their village and Martha received Him into her house.

It doesn't tell us for sure, but from the context of all the work Martha was doing to prepare a meal, Jesus probably had His disciples with Him and possibly several other people, too.

You notice that it didn't say "into *their* house." Martha was the responsible one. It was her

house. She kept her own home and her brother and sister lived with her. That looked like a wonderful gesture for Martha to make, letting her siblings share her home, but Martha was chock-full of resentment and anxiety. Emotions that Jesus could have removed from her if she had given Him the chance. You might say that Martha was a control freak. A perfectionist. It was into her well-kept home that Jesus came on that fateful day.

Here we see Martha, the one who usually had all of her duckies in a row, scurrying around, trying to get a meal on the table for all those unexpected guests, probably freaking out that there were so many of them and they hadn't given her enough warning of their coming so she could make a proper meal on time.

And Mary, who adores Jesus, is forgetting everything else she should be doing, just sitting down at His feet and listening with rapt attention to all of the wonderful things He has to say about the cool miracles that have been happening in His ministry. She could sit all day and listen to Jesus tell about the amazing works that He has performed. She loves the sound of His voice!

Mary happily sets aside the chores that need to be done, the table that needs to be set, the assistance that Martha requires. They don't even

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enter her mind as she gazes up into that beloved face and worships Him with her whole heart.

Martha, on the other hand, casts her eyes on the job before her and plunges in to do the responsible thing. *Somebody* has got to do it!

We would probably have really admired Martha, at least from a distance. But Martha is harboring a secret anger. In the King James version of the Bible, it says "*Martha was cumbered about with much serving.*" And she is *not* happy!

She is so irritated that she has been left to do all of the work; she decides to shame Mary in front of Jesus and the others and thereby, manipulate her into doing the right thing.

You have already learned that manipulation is a form of witchcraft. If you make a practice of manipulating people for your own purposes, you need to repent right now and turn away from it. You are living in sin. Repent! It is impossible to please the King if you practice manipulation.

Mary forgets what her annoyance looks like to her guests. She goes with an angry frown into the room where Jesus is delighting His listeners with His words and she dumps cold water, figuratively speaking, on the whole, sweet worship scene!

How many of you have ever met someone who is so out of touch with the spirit of worship

that you have been basking in, that, because of their own agenda, they miss the blessing that God wanted them to have? I've watched it happen over and over again. It hurts me to see it. How many of you have been guilty of doing it? Don't ever let yourself do it again!

Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation (adverse eternal sentence, judgment, damnation) to them that belong to Jesus; who walk not after the flesh (the frailties of human nature, the passions of the body, the carnality of the mind) but after the Spirit (God's Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit.)"

You can be absolutely certain that you are walking in the flesh, if you are angry and resentful while you are doing good works.

Martha was walking in the flesh. Resentment negated the eternal value of her gifts of works. Without love, her good works were just "clanging brass and crashing cymbals."

So, here comes Martha, right into this joyous scene, and she has hair flying in every direction. There is flour up to her elbows. Beads of sweat stand out on her upper lip and on the tip of her nose, and her eyes are flashing with irritation.

COURTING THE KING

"Jesus," she says. "Don't You **care** that my sister has left me high and dry?"

Let me just ask you a question. Why do people always accuse the Lord of not caring about them? Why do they always assume that He doesn't really give a flying rip about the tough times they are going through?

He knows *everything* that you are facing! He has been tempted in all ways like you are, yet without sin. Don't let the devil lie to you! God cares more than you can even imagine!

Remember, sometimes the things that are irritating and difficult for you to put up with are the "chains of gold" that the Lord has put on your neck to train you, so that you become moldable to His will, moving you from glory to glory to conform you to His image.

You have bowed to Him as He slipped the gold chains on you, telling Him that you want to be like Him, so why are you complaining to Him about the chains now? The leash hurts sometimes, but if you learn the lessons, you won't need it.

Martha needed a leash! She goes on in her tirade to the Lord. "Don't You care that I am doing all of the work? Don't You care that my sister is so selfish that she leaves me slaving while she sits in here with You and enjoys all the

COURTING THE KING

blessings? Don't You think I'd like a little blessing once in a while?"

Can't you just see Jesus, Who has been totally delighting in Mary's worship, as He turns His loving, patient eyes to cranky Martha; and instead of seeing a sweaty, angry, self-centered woman, He sees her need? He doesn't respond to her mood. He responds to her need. Jesus looks at her through Love-eyes.

"Martha, don't you know I love you? Martha, don't you know I long for your worship? You are anxious and careworn and disturbed by many things. There is only one thing that is important at this moment and Mary has discovered it. Mary has chosen well. She has chosen that which will benefit her for eternity. No one can take that away from her. Won't you choose it, too?"

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