

## AUGUST 2014 GUIDE

# *My Name is Believer*

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### *Beginning thoughts...*

There's a popular TV show called "The Walking Dead." The premise of it is that survivors of some horrible apocalypse are constantly being terrorized by zombies. Do you know any walking dead? You may not think you do; but what about people who have guilt, bitterness, overwhelming sins, messed up lives, and who live with no hope? Until they realize the need for salvation, for Jesus, in their lives, they will not have an eternal future. This is all there is. Oh, how sad!

Lazarus, dead or alive, must have been a very unique person. He was a friend of Jesus and not afraid to dine with Him, even though the Romans wanted him dead... again. I just wonder about the conversations he, Mary and Martha must have had after his four-day stay in the grave. Unbelievable? No, not so much for us who know the Bible is true. These were real people intermingling with the only Son of God. It must have been so exciting to actually see Jesus raise someone from the dead. And Lazarus didn't come out of that cave looking like a zombie, I can assure you.

How then, just a short time later, could people really think that Jesus had been put to death permanently? I want to believe that I would have said, "Oh, He's only asleep. Remember, what happened to Lazarus?" Yet, if I had been there, I'd probably, like the others, have wondered how Jesus had allowed this to happen? I'm so thankful that we have the rest of the story. We know Jesus didn't remain dead either. He came forth victorious over sin and the grave. His glory was proclaimed for everyone. Oh, the joy that Lazarus, Mary, Martha, the disciples, all those who loved and believed Him must have felt.

Martha did not regret one minute of serving Jesus and being around Him every chance she got. She knew the Messiah, the Son of God and the Savior of the world. She was so thankful and blessed to have had Him in her home. She was thrilled that He had taught and ministered in her presence. Hospitable, giving, gracious and faithful, Martha remains an example for all women. She was a believer.

## *My Name is Believer*

### REBUKE

**Key Verses:** “*And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her*” (Luke 10:41-42).

*“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17).*

**Key Thought:** Our Lord sometimes uses rebuke to reveal misplaced cares and misguided activities that hinder belief and preempt our time in His presence.

- Write the key verse in your journal.
- Go over the Interaction questions, page 37, Treasure. Be as honest as possible answering.
- Think back to this story. Why was there a supper for Jesus in the home of Martha? (*Jesus was passing through or staying in the home (as He did on occasion) and Martha tried to put together a spur of the moment meal—Luke 10:38.*)
- Are these type events successful for you? (*Sometimes yes; sometimes no for me.*)
- This was a “no” time for Martha. She was trying to do too much as indicated by her outburst to Jesus in Luke 10:40. Read this aloud.
- Have you ever been there? (*Think about large family gatherings, holidays, church get fellowships, etc.*)
- What are women usually known for? (*Hospitality, getting things done, service, decorating, caring, and the list goes on.*)
- Why did Jesus rebuke Martha? (*She had let the stress of the day push aside her focus on Him.*)
- Jesus still wasn't harsh with Martha, was He? (*No, He tenderly reminded her that she needed to remember why she was serving.*)
- Was Martha's serving a form of worship? (*Yes, people worship in many ways—some by singing, praising and serving.*)
- Service is real worship, as we are told to do everything “as unto the Lord.” (*Ephesians 5:22; 6:7: I Corinthians 15:58*)
- Do you believe that Martha was a true believer? (*Yes, we will read more about this in the next section.*)
- Write the word for Lord: *Father* in your journal.

**Reflection:** Dismiss in prayer by praising and thanking God for being your Father.

# *My Name is Believer*

## REBUTTAL

**Key Verses:** *“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25-26).*

**Key Thought:** Christ challenges us beyond belief in resurrection to belief in Him, the Resurrection and the Way to eternal life.

- Who is Jesus referring to when He said, “.....he that believeth in me, though he were dead? *(Those who have already died in Christ.)*
- Then in verse 26, who is Jesus speaking of, “.....whosoever liveth and believeth in me....” *(Us. We are still alive. The Greek phrasing is, “He will never, ever die forever.”)*
- Read the passage, after filling in the blanks on p. 3 of *Treasure*.
- Just like Martha, do we forget that God is with us right now?
- When Jesus arrived at the grave site, Martha still believed. However, she wasn't focusing on what Jesus could do, but the fact that He wasn't there at the moment. Don't we do that, also?
- Lazarus had been dead four days. Why did Jesus delay in coming to Bethany? *(John 11:14-15. Look up the song lyrics to “Four Days Late” written by Aaron Wilburn; performed by Karen Peck and New River.)*
- When and how will Jesus act? *(In His own time and in His own way.)*
- But what do we tend to do? *(Focus on our problems and trying to find solutions to them.)*
- Have you ever been discouraged, defeated, facing many problems, afraid, or timid? *(Of course, everyone has moments like this.)*
- What should we do in these times? *(Rely on our faith in Jesus and what He can do.)*
- What does “belief” involve? *(Faith and trust.)*
- But to have those things, there must first be *obedience*. But obedience to what? *(God's Word—John 14:23; Revelation 22:14.)*
- Do your children always obey you? How does that make you feel? How much more, then, do you think God grieves when we don't obey Him? *(Psalm 78:40; 1 Samuel 12:15)*
- Write Jesus Christ: the same yesterday, today and forever in your journal.

**Reflection:** Dismiss in prayer and praise to Jesus Christ who never changes.

## *My Name is Believer*

### RESURRECTION POWER

**Key Verse:** “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:40).

**Key Thought:** We see God’s glory revealed as we believe and trust in Christ’s resurrection power.

● Write the key verse in your journal. Then read the passage aloud on p. 41 of *Treasure*.

● The *Thompson Chain-Reference Bible* lists Martha as a “Notable Woman” but, also, a “Worried Housekeeper”. How do these two titles belong together? (*Because of faith/belief—John 11:27.*)

● Some other characteristics of Martha were: (1) Hospitality—Luke 10:38; (2) Energy—Luke 10:40, John 11:20; (3) Spiritual Knowledge—John 11:24.

● In our key verse today, what was Jesus telling Martha? (“I told you so!”—John 11:40)

● What had Martha just witnessed? (*Lazarus, her brother, being raised from the dead—John 11:44.*) Did this event change Martha’s way of believing in the Lord?

● What does the Apostle Paul say about death? (*1 Corinthians 15:55*) Does Scripture hold the same hope of resurrection for those who don’t believe in Jesus? (*No—John 3:18; Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:2.*)

● What does *resurrection power* mean to you? (1) Bringing forth Lazarus from the dead? (2) The power which brought Jesus back to life? (3) The power which will enable us to never die but live eternally? (*Could it be all of the above?*)

● Martha’s faith here in John 11 needed a little encouragement. Jesus gave her that in verse 43. Does your faith need encouragement, a word from God to steady it?

● Why did Jesus cry? (*He was weeping because He shared His friends’ heart ache. He sympathized with them. It wasn’t because Lazarus was dead because Jesus knew He would soon be alive—John 11:35.*)

● Don’t you love to have others sympathize with you? (*Romans 12:15*) The Apostle Paul sympathized with Timothy, a young man struggling to live a Christian life in the pagan city of Ephesus, when he reminded him in 2 Timothy 2:8 of the resurrection of Jesus. What was he saying in this verse? (*The glory of the Good News is that Jesus our Hope is with us always. Look at 1 Peter 1:3.*)

● Write the name for God: *Glorious Lord* in your journal.

**Reflection:** Dismiss in a prayer of praise for our ‘Resurrected Lord.’”

# My Name is Believer

## REST

**Key Verse:** *“There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him” (John 12:2).*

**Key Thought:** Keeping our hearts at rest while our hands are busy serving results in joy and spiritual acts of worship.

● Write the key verse in your journal. Then read the passage of Scripture on page 43 of *Treasure*.

● What does rest mean to you? (1) Taking a nap; (2) Reading a good book; (3) Vacationing in the mountains or at the beach; (4) Sitting in your favorite spot and watching TV; (5) Not cooking or cleaning?) Or is it rest for your soul? Which is more important? (*Hebrews 4:3*)

● What are some benefits of rest for the soul? (*Peace—Psalm 4:8; God’s presence—Exodus 33:14; Eternal rest—Hebrews 4:9-10.*)

● Do you think Martha found and experienced the benefits of rest? (*Yes, Martha believed, especially after experiencing the “Glory of God.”*)

● Imagine what Martha did when she saw her brother, Lazarus, walk out of his grave? Spend a few minutes discussing. Did she have any doubts at all that Jesus was the Son of God? (*I don’t think so.*)

● We’re not told how Martha reacted, but I think she, also, fell at Jesus’ feet, praising Him. Why? (*She witnessed His resurrection power.*) Do you think Martha had a grateful heart? (*Remember, her brother was now alive—John 12:1.*)

**LEADER’S NOTE:** Ray Stedman, in some of his expository writings, states that, “Worship is a heart transformed that expresses itself regardless of cost. It’s, also, expressed in service and fellowship as a choice to invest oneself in order to express the love of a grateful heart.”

● When we find Martha, again, what is she doing? (*Serving—John 12:2*) Many of you work diligently around your church. Do you consider your service to God as worship?

● Should our work or service for the Lord ever end as long as we’re on this earth? (*No, think of all the examples of older people serving God in the Bible—Read Hebrew 11.*)

● The words to the song, “Find Us Faithful” tell us we need to lead lives that will inspire others to believe. Do you think that we should strive to do that?

● When the time comes will you be ready for your final rest? (*Revelation 14:13*) What about in the here and now? Can you trust and rest in Jesus’ Word?

● Write the name for Christ: *Servant* in your journal.

**Reflection:** Dismiss in prayer. Thank God for Christ as servant, the One who is preparing our final rest.

## *Closing thoughts...*

Unless the Lord leads differently, this will be my last online guide. To those who have used or read any of these guides, I say thank you. When I started in 2006, I never imagined that I would write until 2014. It's been a joy to write and minister in this way. In thinking about all the study guides, I found that I couldn't pick a favorite. They've all been such a blessing and a humbling experience. I never realized I knew so little until I started studying. Please allow me to close with a personal word of testimony. I've been a Christian since I was 15 years old—a very long time. In all these years, I've seen many church trends, watched worship styles and music styles change often, heard many different sermons, and met many wonderful people along the way, whom I may never see again. The one thing that doesn't change is Jesus. He's the same today, tomorrow and forevermore. My life has had its share of ups and downs. I've experienced major illnesses, deaths of loved ones, disappointments and burdens. Yet, through it all, God has been faithful to me. I know Him; He knows me. I want people to look at my life, just as we did Martha's, and say, "she's a believer." That's what I want to be known as. Ladies, I've enjoyed it. Don't stop studying and trying to learn more about the Word of God. Hide the Word of God in your heart. You'll never regret knowing Him in a closer relationship. Until my final rest, I want to be a servant for the Lord. May God richly bless each and every one of you.

—*Carolyn*