

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

### **Before you make copies and use the studies...**

- **[COPYRIGHT]** – Each of the Bible studies that are a part of *Folks Like Us* is copyrighted. You have permission to make as many copies as you like/need for yourself and/or whatever ministry environment you intend to use them. You do *not* have permission to sell these studies. You may, however, request a small fee to cover the cost of copying, if necessary.
- **[PRINTING]** – The security setting for each PDF allows you to print the study, but not to edit it. When you print these studies, you may want to use the “Print Page Range” feature of your software, and start the printing with Page 3, and you won’t have to print the color cover or this Introduction page. *If you plan to have them printed professionally, you may want to include the cover.*
- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handsofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handsofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: [information@fransciacca.com](mailto:information@fransciacca.com)

### **Other great resources on fransciacca.com**

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



# FOLKS Like Us

MARTHA

“The Threat of Resentment.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,  
for a journey with God in the modern era.

**Fran Sciacca**

## “*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca  
Birmingham, AL

# MARTHA

## “*The Threat of Resentment.*”

**A** **BIDING PRINCIPLE** – Resentment can be a clear indicator of misspent energy, misplaced service, or misguided enthusiasm, whenever we become more concerned about what other people think than about what God thinks.

“*Nothing on earth consumes a person more quickly than the passion of resentment.*” –Friedrich Nietzsche

**I**n Bethany, an obscure little village two miles from Jerusalem, two sisters and their brother shared a home. Martha, the eldest, was more or less the "head" of the household. Her younger sister, Mary, was thoughtful and meditative. Her main role was to provide help and assistance. The brother, Lazarus, was the recipient of their combined and constant care.

But one spring day, Jesus of Nazareth came to town, along with His disciples and a group of the devoted and curious. Bethany became His temporary home as He entered the final week of His earthly life.

On this particular visit of Jesus to her home, Martha decided to go "all out" for the Master. She planned a feast of great proportions. But in the midst of it all, she became angry and resentful of her younger sister, who seemed more interested in sitting than serving!

Martha stands forever as an illustration of the out- come of misplaced zeal and unrealistic expectations. And in so doing, she also provides us with vital insight into the nature and causes of a corrosive passion common to us all: *resentment*.

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** Luke 10:38-42; John 11:17-21, 12:1-3

### STUDY QUESTIONS...

---

1. How do you think Martha went about determining what "needed to be done" in regard to her dinner party?
  
2. a. The Greek word translated "distracted" (Luke 10:40) carries with it the idea of being pulled or dragged away, and being overburdened. What do you think was overburdening and dragging Martha away?
  
2. b. Who do you think was *actually* responsible for all the "work" Martha was "left to do" all by herself? What is one principle about a cause of resentment that can be gleaned from this story?

3. The temptation to become resentful seems especially relevant to those in any care-giving capacity. Paul told Timothy that those in the ministry must be careful not to become resentful (2 Timothy 2:24). Why might resentment be a temptation for those who are serving and helping others?
  
4. Paul's comments in Colossians 3:23-24 can provide some insight into this tendency toward resentment. How can what Paul says to servants be applied to the problem of resentment, and why are his commands in this passage so important?
  
5. Below are some additional verses that deal with resentment. Look up each one, and in your own words, write out *what* it is that we tend to resent, and *why*.
  - Proverbs 3:11-12 – What we tend to resent & why:
  
  - Proverbs 19:3 – What we tend to resent & why:

## LEARNING FROM MARTHA...

---

**M**artha plunged ahead to fulfill her own plan for meeting the "needs" of this group—as she perceived them. The unfortunate truth is that Martha had already decided for herself what the others needed, and then became resentful when no one helped her fulfill *her* vision. When we hear what Jesus said to her, we don't have to wonder too much what He would have told her had she simply asked Him what He needed or wanted when He first arrived.

Resentment hunts and haunts those who give to others. If we are not convinced that what we are sacrificing is what God wants, we will eventually be hurt and become resentful. Our motivation in sacrifice and service must be the Lord's commendation, never that of those to whom the service is rendered. Moreover, we must be careful to make sure that the "needs" we have determined worthwhile are truly needs to those we believe have them !

We must also be open to the Lord's correction and rebuke, whether it comes in the form of a comment from a friend, a message from the pulpit, or a passage from the Scriptures. Martha probably responded to the Lord's suggestion to shorten her "menu," and was not offended in the process. And by doing so, she cut off her resentment before it had opportunity to take root.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS...

---

6. The first two words of Job 5:2 are, “*Resentment kills.*” Why do you think resentment such a *damaging* emotion?
7. Below is a list of some common areas where resentment loves to take root. Put a check beside the ones you struggle with.
- I am criticized more than commended.
  - I have to do all the work to maintain a relationship.
  - I am taken for granted by my children (or parents).
  - I am taken for granted by my spouse (or girlfriend/ boyfriend).
  - I am taken for granted by my coworkers.
  - I receive no help at my work place.
  - I receive no help taking care the house/property.
  - No one takes an interest in *my* life, but everyone expects me to be interested in theirs.
  - I have no time to myself.
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
8. Look back at the items you've checked above. How many of them are due to:
- your own expectations or standards?
  - improper motivation?
  - not clearly communicating with the other person(s)?
- Select one or two, then write out what you can realistically do about this resentment and how you plan to go about it.
9. Perhaps you're in a position of authority or leadership, away from home or at home, in which others constantly serve you. Look at the list in question 7, and circle two or three areas where you could minimize others' feelings of resentment by means of better communication, or proper affirmation or action. Write out what you intend to do, and how you plan to go about it.

10. Do you have a friend who is struggling with feelings of resentment? How might you share the principles from this lesson to help?

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY** (optional)

---

- Guarding our emotions – Proverbs 4:23
- Proper motivation for serving others – Colossians 3:23-24