

What Is Spirituality, Really?

by John E. Phelan Jr., p. 42

Columnist John E. Phelan Jr. weaves stories from both the Talmud and the Gospels to reinforce the importance of the ordinary in our spirituality.

1. The article opens with a story about a rabbi and Elijah. What unlikely occupations might replace the prison guard and the clowns if the story were retold today? How would you describe the importance of the care they provide?
2. The story from the Talmud mentions prisoners, women, and the downhearted. What people groups today would you add to this list?
3. Who do you think of in your own church that embodies the concept of “heroes of the spirit” in the way they faithfully serve even in the most mundane tasks?
4. When John E. Phelan arrived to pastor the church in Salina, Kansas, a parishioner expressed her concerns about how he would preach about Mary and Martha because Mary is usually lifted up as the more spiritual one. How might Martha be equally “spiritual”?
5. If your occupation is not in ministry, how do you do your work for the glory of God?