

INTERRUPTIONS

"LINGER"

LUKE 10:38-42

This Week's Core Competency

Single-mindedness – I focus on God and his priorities for my life. Matthew 6:33 *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Single-mindedness is not a matter of doing one thing to the exclusion of all other things. It's a matter of priorities and proper balance. It's not a matter of choosing to *either* work like Martha *or* worship like Mary. It's a matter of choosing to put both work and worship in their proper place. Warren Wiersbe's comments on Luke 10:38-42 are too good to not share. He writes: "It seems evident that the Lord wants each of us to imitate Mary in our worship and Martha in our work. Blessed are the balanced!"

"Consider Martha's situation. She received Jesus into her home *and then neglected Him as she prepared an elaborate meal that He did not need!* Certainly a meal was in order, but what we do *with* Christ is far more important than what we do *for* Christ. Again, it is not an either/or situation; it is a matter of balance. Mary had done her share of the work in the kitchen and then had gone to 'feed' on the Lord's teachings. Martha felt neglected after Mary left the kitchen, and she began to complain and to suggest that neither the Lord nor Mary really cared!"

The most important part of the Christian life is the part that only God sees.

– Warren W. Wiersbe

"Few things are as damaging to the Christian life as trying to work for Christ without taking time to commune with Christ. 'For without Me ye can do nothing' (John 15:5). Mary chose the better part, the part that could not be taken from her. She knew that she could not live 'by bread alone' (Matt. 4:14).

"Whenever we criticize others and pity ourselves because we feel overworked, we had better take time to examine our lives. Perhaps in all of our busyness, we have been ignoring the Lord. Martha's problem was not that she had too much work to do, but that she allowed her work to distract her and pull her apart. She was trying to serve two masters! If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is terribly wrong with our service!"

"The key is to have the right priorities: Jesus Christ first, then others, then ourselves. It is vitally important that we spend time 'at the feet of Jesus' every single day, letting Him share His Word with us. *The most important part of the Christian life is the part that only God sees.* Unless we meet Christ personally and privately each day, we will soon end up like Martha: busy but not blessed.

"Often in my pastoral ministry, I have asked people with serious problems, 'Tell me about your devotional life.' The usual response has been an embarrassed look, a bowed head, and the quiet confession, 'I stopped reading my Bible and praying a long time ago.' And they wondered why they had problems!" (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:213).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

Luke 10:38-42

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Cf., other translations

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him as a guest. 39 She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted with all the preparations she had to make, so she came up to him and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work alone? Tell her to help me." 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the best part; it will not be taken away from her." (NET)

38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. 40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

41 But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! 42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her." (NLT)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Bracket "on their way" in v. 38.
- * Bracket "opened her home" in v. 38.
- * Circle "sat" in v. 39.
- * Underline "listening" in v. 39.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 40, 42.
- * Underline "distracted" in v. 40.
- * Circle "preparations" in v. 40.
- * Bracket "don't you care" in v. 40.
- * Circle "work" in v. 40.
- * Underline "Martha, Martha" in v. 41.
- * Bracket "worried and upset" in v. 41.
- * Circle "one thing" in v. 42.
- * Circle "best part" in v. 42.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Jesus and his disciples are on their way where? (See 9:51.)
2. To whom *exactly* did Martha open her home?
3. How do you picture the setting?
4. Describe the relationship of Martha and Mary.
5. What does Mary's body language tell you?
6. Explain the *contrast* in verse 40.
7. Was Martha annoyed with Mary or annoyed with Jesus? Explain.
8. How did Jesus want Martha to change? Explain.
9. Describe the "one thing" that is "better."
10. **Discussion:** Talk about why you think you are more like Martha or more like Mary.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Luke gives us a glimpse into Jesus' personal relationship to Martha and Mary in his elegant account of the Savior's visit in their home. Jesus and his disciples come to the village outside of Jerusalem where the women live, presumably with their brother, Lazarus (see Jn 11). Once there, we hear nothing more about the disciples. Perhaps they are present, although according to Luke, "Martha opened her home to him," i.e., Jesus. Lazarus isn't mentioned either. Perhaps he is present also. On the one hand, a house full of people would explain why "Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made" (v. 40). On the other, Martha may have been overdoing it in an effort to honor the Lord by preparing him a meal he would never forget. Regardless, "Martha certainly meant well, but alas, her too great zeal to entertain the Saviour well, caused her to become sulky towards her sister who sat and listened, and also towards the Lord Himself because He did not tell Mary to go and help with the serving" (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, 315-16). Whatever the case, the story is only about Martha, Mary, and Jesus.

Events unfold rapidly once the characters are introduced. Mary sits down at the feet of Jesus, like any good disciple would, to hear every word he had to say, leaving "all the preparations" for the meal to her sister. On the significance of what Mary did, one commentator writes: "The significance of this scene is enhanced when we recognize that it fits into a repeated discipleship theme of hearing and doing the word, relating that theme *to women*. Both the indication that Mary had 'seated herself beside the Lord's feet' and the statement that she 'was hearing his word' (10:39) show her beginning to assume the role of a disciple. She is beginning to respond to Jesus' call to hear his words and do them (6:47). This challenge and invitation is reemphasized in 11:27-28, following the story of Mary and Martha, and there is a special concern to indicate that this challenge to discipleship applies to women as well as men . . . A woman's happiness and fulfillment are not simply by-products of her role as wife and mother. Therefore, Jesus protects the right of Martha's sister Mary to be free from domestic

duties in order to begin the path of discipleship" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1:137).

Martha also wants to hear what Jesus is saying, but she has more urgent things tugging at her. The story reaches its climax when Martha can put up with Mary no longer and asks the Lord to intervene. "Lord don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" She is obviously annoyed with Mary, who left all the serving to her, but she may be annoyed, as well, with Jesus, who welcomed her sister's undivided attention. Martha expects Jesus to respond to her rhetorical question by correcting Mary. Instead, he responds by correcting her. She is "worried and upset" over many evanescent things, he says, when "one thing" matters more than them all.

The story concludes with the Lord's somewhat surprising response. Instead of telling Mary, "Go help your sister; we can talk more later" or words to that effect, he tells Martha, "Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." One commentator summarizes the point of the passage this way: "This story should not be taken to mean that the Saviour taught that a life of quiet worship and contemplation is the right form of religion and that an active Christian life is to be disapproved of. There is here no question of such a contrast. What we do learn here is that in our life's active service we must not be anxious and agitated, sulky and dissatisfied with our fellow-Christians or with our Master, and that we should not busy ourselves to such an extent with outward things that we neglect the quiet worship of the Lord. The most important part of our religion is the spiritual exercise of communion with our Redeemer" (Geldenhuys, 316).

The *upper* story of this narrative is about Jesus, who as Peter says, has "the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). The *lower* story is about his disciples' need to recognize that we do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD (Dt 8:3). Mary is an example of one who knows this while Martha is an example of one who busies herself with the food that perishes.

The Message of the Passage

It's more important for believers to hear and obey the words of Jesus than to be busy with other matters, even matters that may be commendable.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

- Write about how God revealed himself to you . . .

- Write about how God wants you to change you . . .

- Write about how God wants to use you to change your world . . .

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 38 **on their way** Cf., 9:51. "At 9:51 Jesus 'resolutely set out for Jerusalem.' As noted earlier, what follows is called the travel narrative, or the journey to Jerusalem, since for the next ten chapters Jesus is heading for Jerusalem to accomplish his messianic role. What is unusual about this 'journey' is that Jesus does not head straight for Jerusalem but wanders from place to place. Though notices in the text occasionally remind the reader that Jesus is traveling (9:57; 10:1, 38; 18:35; 19:1), or that he is heading for Jerusalem (9:51-56; 13:22, 33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28, 41; cf. 19:45), the bulk of the material is not a travel itinerary at all but the teaching of Jesus together with a few miracle stories. In short, the journey is not a straight-line trip to Jerusalem but a period of Jesus' heightened resolve to reach his Jerusalem goal. It expresses a changed emphasis in his ministry as he 'resolves' to go to Jerusalem to fulfill the role of the suffering Messiah. Here we see the key symbolic and theological role of Jerusalem in Luke's work. It is in Jerusalem the prophets were killed, and there God will accomplish his salvation (13:32-35)" (Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus*, 273).

v. 38 **opened her home** Cf., "welcomed him into her house" (ESV). The verb means "to receive or welcome as a guest" (Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 172). Most manuscripts have "into the house" or "into her house" at the end of the sentence, although some question the authenticity of these words (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 153; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC, 451-52). Whether authentic or not, the sense is practically the same.

v. 39 **sat** Lit., "seated herself" (Tannehill, 1:137); cf., "who sat down at the feet of the Lord" (GNT); "who was seated" (NASB). "This reflexive makes it clear that Mary took the initiative in sitting by Jesus" (the NET Bible, 131tn on Luke 10:39). "'Mary' (or Miriam, cf. 1:27; et al.) took the traditional place of a disciple, *seating herself* at Jesus' 'feet' to listen and learn (cf. Acts 22:3). Normally rabbis did not permit women to do this in Jesus' day" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Luke," 2013 ed., 152 italics added, www.soniclight.com).

v. 40 **distracted** "The verb [*perispaomai*] means in the passive 'to be pulled, dragged away', hence 'to become distracted, busy, overburdened', and is often constructed with [*peri*], as here (AG s.v.). The implication is that Martha wished to hear Jesus but was prevented from doing so by the pressure of providing hospitality (Luce, 208)" (Marshall, 452). "Martha also wanted to hear Jesus, but the tyranny of the urgent prevented her from doing this" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 321).

v. 40 **preparations** Lit., "with much serving;" cf., "to serve alone" (ESV). "The story of Mary and Martha (10:38-42) contrasts Martha, who represents the expected role of a woman in serving a dinner, with Mary, who neglects this responsibility in order to listen to Jesus' word. Martha's complaint raises the issue of whether Mary is right in neglecting her woman's duty and leaving her sister to work alone" (Tannehill, 136). "'In a Jewish context . . . women were not allowed to serve at meals if men were in attendance, unless there were no servants to perform the task." See *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, 101. Evidently there were no servants in this household, for Martha complains of being left 'alone' to serve. On the same page Witherington comments, 'Though . . . women could attend synagogue, learn, and even be learned if their husbands or masters were rabbis, for a rabbi to come into a woman's house and teach her specifically is unheard of. Further, being alone with two women who were not one's relatives was considered questionable behaviour by the rabbis. Thus, not only the role Mary assumes, but also the task Jesus performs in this story is in contrast to what was expected of a Jewish man and woman'" (136-37 footnote).

v. 40 **don't you care** The negative (*ou*) sometimes introduces questions to which an affirmative answer is expected (Eugene Van Ness Goetchius, *The Language of the New Testament*, 230). "The way the question is asked in Greek makes it clear that Martha anticipates a positive answer to her question. She expects Jesus to come to her aid" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 304).

v. 41 **Martha, Martha** The double vocative communicates emotion. "Jesus' emotion-filled reply to Martha, speaking her name twice, indicates just how appropriate it is for this sister to sit before him" (Bock, 304).

v. 41 **worried and upset** The meanings of the two words read together reinforce each other like "nervous and jerky."

v. 42 **one thing** The verse contains a difficult textual problem (see Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 8:945; Marshall, 452-53); most English versions reflect the reading followed by the NIV.

v. 42 **better** Lit., "good portion" (ESV); cf., "better part" (NRSV, NJB), "right thing" (GNT), "right choice" (HCSB). "'Better' is literally *good*, but in koine Greek the positive adjective (good) could be used for the comparative (better) or even the superlative (best; cf. Matt. 5:19; 22:36). Although there is a comparison between two things here, the superlative is to be preferred, for nothing is better than what Mary chose" (Stein, 321); cf., "best part" (NET).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Do the words in our text this week "distracted by all the preparations that had to be made" ring a bell with anyone but me? As we enter the holiday season I find myself a little overwhelmed with my to-do lists. By this time next week they will be in my notes app on my phone, on my refrigerator, on sticky notes on my dashboard and written in dry erase on my bathroom mirror. We are busy people! And busyness robs us of enjoying each moment. I envy Mary and her ability to sit attentively at Jesus' feet listening to what he said. Taking time to do this is an intentional act. "You are worried and upset about many things but only one thing is needed." I must deliberately choose to not do something else and sit quietly with my Savior. How I need this! And when I finally take the time to do it I am refreshed and invigorated by his Spirit for the tasks ahead. Let's pinky promise this holiday season to make time to sit with Jesus and read His love letter to us. Let's make a plan for our family to be still often and enjoy the goodness of God and each other. Plan for it and put it on a sticky note so you won't forget!

What Does The Bible Say

Read: Luke 10:38-42

1. What did Mary do when Jesus came to visit?
2. What did Martha do when Jesus came to visit?
3. Which one did Jesus say made a better choice?

What Do You Think

Martha was busy doing good things like making dinner and cleaning up but she missed the best thing - sitting and listening to Jesus. Name some things you do that are good but might get in the way of you spending time with Jesus.

What R U Going To Do

See how many times this week you can sit quietly with Jesus reading his Word and praying to him. Place a check mark beside the days you do: ___ Sunday ___ Monday ___ Tuesday ___ Wednesday ___ Thursday ___ Friday ___ Saturday

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Single-mindedness - I pay attention to the important things God has fro my life.

Memory Verse

John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse ____ . Family completed **Say** ____ **Think** ____ **Do** ____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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