

## **SMALL GROUP: MARY and MARTHA**

### **CATCH UP**

This section is designed for each person to share their experiences from last weeks' application. This should be an encouraging time and not a time to shame someone for not doing their assignment - simply let a couple of people share how their project went. Be sure to encourage the group to talk about their struggles, oppositions, and defeats as well as their successes.

### **WARM UP**

During this time of COVID-19, worry seems to be a common attitude among people across the globe. Share with your group some of your initial fears and worries when you first were quarantined? How has that worry changed over the past few months? What do you do to ease worry in your mind?

### **READ UP**

- Luke 10:38-42

We can all become anxious at times.

In this weeks' story about Mary and Martha, we not only get an accurate diagnosis of the problem of our anxiousness but also a quick remedy for our problem of worry.

Jesus got invited to the home of Mary and Martha to enjoy good conversation and, I expect, some great food. These ladies pulled out all the stops for their special guests. But, both ladies had different ideas about what "pulling out all the stops" meant, however. Mary chose to set aside her normal womanly duties and sit by Jesus' feet "listening to what he said" (v.39). Martha, on the other hand, chose to be more resourceful and responsible and dutiful by continuing with the preparations of having a guest in their home.

You gotta admire Martha. A man, who's quickly becoming a local celebrity, had come to visit. If a well-known person from my town stopped by for a visit, you can bet I would have whipped up some great food and picked up my dirty dishes and laundry! His comfort would have been at the forefront of my mind.

Mary, however, seemed passive about the responsibility of hosting a guest - lazy almost. You get the feeling that Mary was brown-nosing with the guest, trying to get in good with him. But scripture tells us that is not the case. We are told that Jesus affirmed Mary's choice as the better one.

We see the real truth of Martha's faith in her complaint to Jesus - "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" At the heart of Martha's anxiety was a selfish urge to appear clean, tidy, and responsible before Jesus. Jesus recognized this in Martha and corrected her. "You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed." (v. 41-42).

Pay close attention. Jesus is about to give us all a very important lesson - in the midst of our worry and anxious thoughts, there is only one thing to do. What's the "one thing?"

Being in the presence of Jesus to worship and listen is the “one thing” that cures our anxious hearts.

Like Martha, there are many things that are good to take care of and to do well. However, when we become so preoccupied with our To-Do list, we lose sight of the One we should be intent on.

Jesus said that what Mary has chosen “will not be taken away from her” (v.42). Being with Jesus as a friend and a disciple is not something earned, rather it is something given—and it can’t be revoked. This is grace. We don’t need to clean up our house like Martha before we sit down in front of Jesus and be with him like Mary. We can come to him just as we are - dirty and all.

Does this mean that we can now do whatever we want? Of course not. We can’t treat Jesus as Lord and keep chasing after our heart’s selfish desires. We have to remember - our obedience to Jesus comes out of a heart changed by the free gift of grace, not out of trying to earn grace in the first place.

Never forget - our relationship with Jesus and His presence in our lives are more important than anything we could do to impress Him. Jesus is most impressed by our willingness to sit at His feet in worship than He is about our acts of service for Him. Our acts flow out of our relationship - not the other way around.

### **TALK UP**

1. What does Mary put her faith in? What does Martha put her faith in?
2. How do you see your own faith described or not described in these passages?
3. Do you think there’s a balance to be had between meeting obligations and stopping to worship God? What does that look like in your life?

### **ACT UP**

Write down some areas in your life that are making you anxious - one piece of paper for each worrisome issue. Fold the paper up and write on the front “TRUST.” Use the prayer below to surrender these anxieties to Him. Once you are done praying, rip the paper into tiny pieces and throw them away.

### **PRAY UP**

“God, these are the things that are really stressing me out and causing me to worry. I know that you tell us to give you these things, so that’s what I’m doing today. Take each one of these things and give me peace about it. I surrender these to you and accept your peace and joy to replace them.”

### **GATHER UP**

Before everyone leaves, make sure you confirm next weeks’ meeting day and time – and confirm those who can make it.