

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ As they traveled along, Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet, listening to His message. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations to be made. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord replied, "you are worried and upset about many things. ⁴² But only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her."

Berean Study Bible

1

God must love different. Luke 10:38-42

We have different possessions. 38 "Martha welcomed Him into her home"

We each have external possessions.

We each have internal possession.

We have different personalities. 39-40 "Mary sat, listening... Martha was distracted"

We energise as extroverts or introverts.

We serve through tasks or people.

We have different perspectives. 40 "do You not care... serve alone... Tell her to help me"

We have expectations of ourselves.

We have expectations of others.

We have different priorities. 41-42 "chosen the good portion"

We all do what we think is best.

We sometimes get it right.

2

Make smarter choices. Luke 10:38-42

Smart choices are chosen. 42 "chosen the good portion"

Smart choices require information (content)

Smart choices require insight (consequences)

Smart choices are enduring. 42 "not be taken away"

Smart choices benefit me.

Smart choices benefit others.

Smart choices are deliberate. 40-41 cp "distracted... worried and upset"

Smart choices say 'no' to good options.

Smart choices say 'no' to bad outcomes.

3

How did I get here; and what comes next? Luke 10:38-42

I set my direction by my orientation

Oriented for others (Task / Give). Martha

Oriented from others (Take / Receive). Mary

I set my direction by my expectations

High expectations. What I expect others to expect from me. Martha

Low expectations. Mary

I set my direction by my actions

Take responsibility / Serve

Sit and enjoy

I set my direction by my attractions

Future focus / Preparations. Martha

Present focus / Here and now. Mary

I set my direction by my satisfaction

I can change my direction

I must set my redirection

4

All work and no play. Luke 10:38-42

I am capable. 38 "welcomed Him into her home"

I am concerned. 39-40 "all the preparations"

I am cranky. 41 "left me to serve alone"

I need conviction. 41 "the Lord replied"

I need choices. 42 "chosen the good"

5

Lights, camera, explosive action! Luke 10:38-42

Act 1: Location and setting.

Scene 1: Front door, Jesus arrives. 38 "Jesus entered... Martha welcomed Him"

Scene 2: Main room, Jesus preaching. 39 "listening to His message"

Scene 3: Kitchen, Hostess busy. 40 "all the preparations to be made"

Act 2: People and personal-setting.

Scene 4: Main room, Mary. 39 "Mary sat at the Lord's feet, listening"

Scene 5: Kitchen, Martha. 40a "Martha was distracted by all the preparations"

Act 3: Action and confrontation.

Scene 6: Main room, Martha storms in. 40b "She came to Jesus"

Scene 7: Close up, Martha, angry accusation. 40b "Lord, do You not care"

Scene 8: Close up, Martha, tears and woe. 40b "left me to serve alone"

Scene 9: Close up, Martha, strong and demanding. 40b "Tell her to help me!"

Act 4: Calm and resolution.

Scene 10: Close up, Jesus face-to-face with Martha. 41a "Martha, Martha"

Scene 11: Reverse close up, Martha with Jesus. 41b "worried and upset"

Scene 12: Main room, Mary in crowd. 42 "chosen the good portion"

Act 5: Pastoral reflection.

Scene 13: Close up, Jesus. 42b "good portion will not be taken away"

Idea: Storyboard the sermon. Set up an easel and a quick-sketch artist. Coloured sheets of cardboard with Act headings pre-written. White cardboard for each Scene with pencil lines of a lightly pre-sketched illustration. During each Scene the artist quickly goes over the pencil lines with a thick marker.

6

Christians in conflict. Luke 10:38-42

What all Christians have in common.

We share this broken global village. 38 "Jesus entered a village"

We share the same Lord. 38 "Jesus entered"

We see Jesus from different perspectives.

What each Christian has uniquely.

We each have unique possessions. 38

We each have unique SHAPE. 39-40 "Mary: sat, listened... Martha: preparations"

We fail to see others from their perspective. (take the log)

What triggers conflict between Christians.

Christians talk self-centred talk. (Martha talking to herself)

Christians work self-centred tasks. (Martha and Mary)

Christians feel self-centred emotions. (Martha angry and sad, Mary unaware)

Christians say self-centred complaints. "Don't You care?"

What resolves conflict between Christians.

Christians need God-centred viewpoint. 42 "the good portion"

Christians need to accept other Christians.

Christians need to support other Christians.

Labour of love; or Labour vs love. Luke 10:38-42

Love for the Lord. 38 “welcomed Him into her home”

Labour for the Lord. 39-40 “all the preparations”

Listening to the Lord. 39 “Mary sat at the Lord’s feet, listening”

Learning from the Lord. 42 “only one thing is necessary”

Smart choice! Luke 10:38-42

What hinders me from making good choices.

Unfulfilled expectations. 38 “Martha welcomed Him into her home”

Uncooperative people. 39 “a sister who sat at the Lord’s feet”

Unfinished actions. 40 “distracted by all the preparations”

Unsatisfied emotions. 40

Abandoned and isolated. 40 “do You not care?”

Overburdened. 40 “left me to serve alone”

Cross boundaries. 40 “Tell her to help me!”

Unhelpful expressions of emotions 41 “worried and upset”

What helps me into making good choices.

Make choices confidently. I am made in the image of God.

Make choices thoughtfully. 42 “only one thing is necessary”

Minimise. “only one thing” (one day/crisis at a time. Project management)

Prioritize. “necessary”

Make choices deliberately. 42 “has chosen the good portion”

“Choose this day... we will serve the Lord”

Make choices optimistically. 42 “will not be taken away”

Is this solution the solution, or is this solution just another problem? Luke 10:40

Telling God the solution, doesn’t solve the problem. 40 “Tell her to help me!”

Some other person is not God’s solution to my problem. “her”

Some other task is not God’s solution to my problem. “help me”

Telling God the problem, doesn’t give the solution. 40 “left me to serve alone”

I can see the problem is lack of resources. “left me”

I can see the problem is lack of personnel. “serve alone”

Asking God the question, may lead to the solution. 40 “do You not care?”

I know the answer to the question of God’s heart. “Do You care?”

I seek the answer to the question of my heart. "Do You care about me?"

Other possible titles

Does Jesus care?
M&Ms (Candy / Marthas and Marys)
Pushed and pulled
Boundaries. (also Luke 12:25)
Family Feud
Priorities and boundaries
Distracted and Devoted
A tale of two sisters (with apologies to Charles Dickens)
Labour of love
Hero or villain?
Worship vs. Service
Culture shock
Why won't anyone help me?
"Lord, don't You care?"
What would Jesus say to her?
Is that any way to treat a guest?
Distracted or devoted?
Gaining work-life balance.
Difficulties of being different
Telling Jesus what to do.
What's important, really.
At war with my worst enemy.
The oddities of anger.
Blame game.
Which portion of the jig-saw have you got?
Choices and consequences.
Awareness and anxiety.
Right question. Wrong answer.

Music and songs

Songs about family
 Thank You Lord for my special friends
 We are the Lord's own family

Songs about anxiety / peace
 I've got peace like a river
 When peace like a river attendeth my way

Songs about priorities
Believer indeed (item)
Seek ye first the Kingdom of God

Songs about awareness
I cannot tell
I know not why

Scriptural layout

Luke 10: 27	Lord your God with all your... and love your neighbour as yourself.
Luke 10:30-37	Love your neighbour – Good Samaritan
Luke 10:38-42	Lord your God – Martha and Mary
Luke 10:27-37	Testing the Lord – expert in the Law
Luke 10:38-42	Rebuking the Lord – Martha and Mary

Commentary and cross references

Martha was...

“distracted” v40 περισπᾶω [Strongs 4049] draw away, distract. only NT use

“worried” v41 μεριμνάω [Strongs 3309] to be divided, a part, as opposed to the whole, anxious, worried, go to pieces, fall apart, missing the whole. 19 NT occurrences, inc. Matthew 6:25,27,28,31,34,34, Philippians 4:6.

“upset” v41 θορυβέω [Strongs 2350] tumult, noisy upheaval, disturb greatly, panic, show agitation, uproar, turbulent, confusion, commotion, riot. 5 NT occurrences, inc. the commotion at the ‘death’ of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:39).

Regarding “a village where a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home” v38
At this time a man named Lazarus was sick. He **lived in Bethany, the village** of Mary and her sister Martha. John 11:1

Regarding “Lord” v40

Why do you call Me ‘**Lord, Lord,**’ but not do what I say? Luke 6:46

Not everyone who says to me, ‘**Lord, Lord,**’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 7:21

Regarding “anxious / troubled / worried / upset” v41

Therefore, I tell you, do not **worry** about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Matthew 6:25

Regarding “one” v42

One thing I have asked of the LORD, this is what I desire: to dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and seek Him in His temple. Psalm 27:4

Jesus told him, “You still lack **one** thing: Sell everything you own and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.” Luke 18:22

Regarding “good portion” v42 μερίς [Strong's 3310] a share, portion, a part as distinct from the whole. 5 NT occurrences.

The LORD is my chosen **portion** and my cup; You have made my lot secure. Psalm 16:5
I cry to You, O LORD: “You are my refuge, my **portion** in the land of the living.” Psalm 142:5

Regarding “taken” v42

Pay attention, therefore, to how you listen. Whoever has will be given more, but whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be **taken** away from him. Luke 8:18

Do not work for food that perishes, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on Him God the Father has placed His seal of approval. John 6:27

He who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the Word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and he becomes unfruitful. Matthew 13:22.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things. Philippians 4:8.

Examples and illustrations

Poem, If Jesus came to your house, by Lois Blanchard Eades, 1956.

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two -
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honoured Guest,
And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have him there -
That serving Him in your own home is joy beyond compare.

But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?

Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard?
And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder - if the Saviour spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing, and read the books you read?
And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go?
Or would you, maybe, change your plans for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends?
Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
If Jesus Christ in person came to spend some time with you.

Quotes about worry.

Worry is defined as, to think about problems or unpleasant things that might happen in a way that makes you feel unhappy and frightened.

Stop worrying about what can go wrong, and get excited about what can go right.

A day of worry is more exhausting than a week of work.

Worrying is using your imagination to create something you don't want.

99% of the things you worry about don't even happen.

The less you worry, the less complicated life becomes.

What worries you, masters you.

One day you'll look back and realize that you worried too much about things that didn't really matter.

Action is worry's worst enemy.

Worry gives a small thing a big shadow. Swedish Proverb

There is nothing that wastes the body like worry, and one who has any faith in God should be ashamed to worry about anything whatsoever. Mahatma Gandhi

If you want to test your memory, try to recall what you were worrying about one year ago today. Joseph Cossman

Worry implies that we don't trust that God is big enough, powerful enough or loving enough to take care of what's happening in our lives. Francis Chan

Sorrow looks back. Worry looks around. Faith looks up. Ralph Waldo Emerson

Urgent vs Important matrix

Not Urgent, but Important Forward planning	Urgent and Important Crisis
Not Urgent, not Important Trivia	Urgent, but not Important Someone else's problem

Mary was in the top left quadrant. Martha was in the bottom left quadrant, but thought she was in the top right quadrant.

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Are you more like Mary (sitting and listening) or Martha (busy in the kitchen)?
 2. What did each sister do right; and what did each do wrong?
 3. How did Martha feel (v40)? If the kitchen was her natural position why did she complain?
 4. How do you think Mary felt in v39; in v40; and in v42?
 5. Rank these by what has the least to most impact on what we do: Possessions, Personality, Perspective, Priorities.
 6. Analyse each part of Jesus' reply to Martha, v41-42. How did He defuse this explosive situation?
 7. Why is there no v43? What is your preferred ending?
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