

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: WEEK 3

**STRETCHED THIN
DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT
LUKE 10:38-42
10/02/2016**



MAIN POINT

When we are stretched too thin, one of the best things we can do is to disconnect from the pressures, connect with God, then reconnect with the tasks.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever been running late for an important meeting, but your family is requiring your time? How does it make you feel to be pulled between what is "important" and what is "essential"? How do you decide which to give priority?

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 10:38-42.

Why do you think that Martha felt so harried in her efforts to provide hospitality? Do you see the irony in Martha's request for Jesus to make Mary help her?

Can you relate to Martha's demand of Jesus? Have you ever been in a situation where you have had to choose a task or a deadline over people?

In this story, Martha is often portrayed as the 'villain' and Mary the 'hero'. What does Jesus say to Martha? What does Jesus not say?

When Martha welcomed Jesus into her home, she may have gotten a little more than she bargained for. We know that Jesus traveled with twelve other men, and we know that everywhere He went, Jesus drew a large crowd. Martha had her work cut out for her to provide refreshments and food for many people!

One of the reasons that Jesus stopped in people's homes was to take time to teach the people there. Mary, Martha's sister, decided to sit and listen to Jesus teach instead of assist Martha with the duties of hospitality. The irony of this is that Martha wound up being rude to the guest she invited into her own home. Because Martha was aggravated at Mary, she might have wound up aggravated at Jesus! Why would it have been Jesus' place to tell Mary what to do? He was a guest in their home.

Jesus does not say to Martha that she was wrong for getting the house and table ready for Jesus. He tells her that Mary had merely chosen "what is better" .

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some examples in your life of when you put God first and the result was increased productivity? What is the danger in not taking this approach?

What is one benefit of gaining 'godly wisdom' by spending time with God daily? What is the danger in not setting aside this time?

Describe a time in your life when you felt 'burned out'? What factors led up to feeling that way? What could you have done to prevent that feeling?

What is one area this week where you are going to disconnect in order to reconnect with God? With your spouse? With your children?

PRAY

In a time of group prayer, ask the Father to help us be faithful workers for the sake of Jesus. Pray that we will all be sensitive to the workload of others and ready to help others in their ministries as we are able. Pray that the gospel of Jesus' power over death and sin will spread through the testimony of willing workers throughout the earth.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 10:38-42

10:38. The long journey to Jerusalem continues. John 11:1 and 12:1-3 locate Mary and Martha in Bethany. Luke simply placed them in a village. Location was not important for him. Response to Jesus is. Martha responded in the typical homeowner's way: fulfilling the social obligations.

10:39. Sister Mary responded in a different way. The rabbis had taught people to listen to wise men or teachers but not to talk much with women. Jesus, the wisest of men, welcomed Mary to his audience of learners.

10:40. Social obligations finally got the best of Martha, especially when her sister proved to be of no help. Rather than inviting her sister to help, Martha went straight to Jesus for authority to force her sister to work.

10:41-42. For once a person in need did not receive Christ's blessing. The need was out of focus and misplaced. Martha was too stressed out about earthly things. Her life was out of focus, dedicated to fulfilling the world's expectations rather than Jesus'. Life has one essential need: to hear and obey the Word of God (see 8:18-20). Mary made the right choice. Jesus would not take away from her the blessing and opportunity. At the crossroads of decision making, Martha had opted for worldly expectation and social obligation; Mary, for hearing Christ's Word. Martha needed to change her priorities. When the Word is taught, listen. All else is secondary.