

APPLICATION

What part of the teaching did you find most challenging and why?

How do I apply the Word to my life?

- In what ways is it a sin to have a distracted heart? (Read Matthew 22:37)
- If it's a sin, what is the first step to take? (1 John 1:9)
- To be distracted means to be pulled away from something you are pursuing. What are the things you know God wants you to do that you have been pulled away from? (Is one of them sharing the gospel with someone on your Frontline? Or maybe starting a small group?)
- What are you going to do about it?

PRAYER

- Thank God for his patience with us! "Martha, Martha..." speaks of God's tenderness, even in rebuking Martha
- Ask God to help you to surrender to him, so that you would have a heart of devotion, not distraction
- Pray for the people on your Frontline, and pray that God would give you the love and courage to engage them with the gospel.

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WARM UP

What is the one thing that can get you completely distracted when you're trying to get some work done?

WORD

"She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made

Luke 10:38-42

Do you recall a time when you felt like someone wasn't pulling their weight and was leaving all the work to you? This must be how Martha felt the day Jesus visited their home. While she was busy with the meal preparations, her sister sat down listening to Jesus. Didn't she think that Martha also wanted to listen to him? – and surely Jesus would take her side and instruct her sister to go and help her? Not so. Jesus gently but firmly corrects Martha and tells her that her sister had made the right call. In a world (and city) where life is just so busy – where in fact busyness is worn as a badge of honour – what is the message of this story that Luke saw fit to include in his gospel? Is it that we should be less busy? Or perhaps that in our busyness we should remember to have our quiet times? Both are not bad suggestions, but Jesus' message is much deeper than that.

1. DISTRACTED

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made
Verse 40

The Bible teaches us that God looks not at outward appearances, but at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). Time and again when Jesus spoke to people, he didn't address their surface words or actions, but cut right through to the attitudes (and idols) of their hearts. So, it's likely that his issue with Martha wasn't that she just happened to get (momentarily) distracted, but rather that the very disposition or condition of her heart was that of distraction – and that what came out of her were the symptoms of a distracted heart; she couldn't see Mary as God saw her, she couldn't see Jesus for who he was (she wanted to feed him, but it was he who had "food" [John 6:35] that she needed), and she took it upon herself to instruct Jesus! "Tell her to help me!"

In our own Christian walks, it's easy to take the view that we're wholeheartedly following Jesus, but from time to time we get momentarily distracted. What if the problem was much deeper than that? What if the reality was that our hearts are in a "distracted" condition, and the symptoms of that condition are that we consistently fail to live up to love God and others as we ought? Like Martha, we fail to see people as God sees them; we fail to see that when God tells us to do something (pray, read the Bible, give etc) it is not he who needs something from us (like Martha thought), but us who need something from him (like Mary demonstrated); and finally, our prayers become little more than sugar-coated-instructions to God, rather than being still before him and listening for his instructions for us! Do you see any of these symptoms in your own life?

2. MAKE A CHOICE

Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her
Verse 36

So, how do we remedy the situation? Jesus' comment about Mary is very helpful here. He says "Mary has chosen [for herself]." Do you realise that you are where you are spiritually because you have chosen to be there? You and I are not helpless victims of opposing spiritual forces – we are creatures formed in the image of God, and if you are a Christian, you have the very presence of God dwelling in you! We are not powerless; we, like Mary, can make a choice to repent from a distracted heart, and instead, nurture a devoted heart – a heart that even through the busyness of life, is fixed on Jesus, and treasures his Words. What does this look like practically? An old Sunday School song comes to mind "Read your Bible, pray every day, and you'll grow, grow, grow!" That's right, life may get more complicated as we grow up, but the basics of Christianity do not change! When we spend time daily in the Word and prayer, the condition of our heart changes from distracted to devoted – and when we stop, it swings the other way. The human heart has no neutral gear – it's always engaged and always on the move! The only question is, "which direction is your heart going to go?" And it's a question only you can answer, by making a choice.