



## Daily Devotionals: With Jesus One-On-One | January 23, 2022

### Day One—Devotional

*As you begin reading today, take a few moments to check in. Where is your current level of distraction these days? How is your mind wandering? What emotions is your heart holding? What stress are you carrying? How is that stress showing up in your body? Take a few moments to slow down and be quiet. Share with God the state you find yourself in before you begin.*

**In the beginning, there was God.** Through Him all things were made. Light, sky, oceans, rivers, seas, mountains, plants, trees, stars, the moon, the sun. Every living creature. All moving in perfect rhythm to the heartbeat of God.

Somewhere in that rhythm, as time went on, **you were created.** At first, hearing God’s rhythm was easy, like breathing. But as you grew older and, as some say, wiser, more and more distractions entered the picture, covering up the rhythm of God’s heartbeat.

#### **Relationships**

With our parents, our siblings, our extended family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and even strangers.

#### **Goals, Dreams, and Expectations**

All the questions we began to ask, “What do I want to be when I grow up? What will my life be like? What could be in store for me?” Wonderful dreams of the possibilities of a hopeful future.

And then reality hit us with...

#### **Responsibility**

Work, deadlines, bills, chores, more work, alarm clocks, endless lists. You know, the churning of life all around us. Pulling us in every direction.

Over time, these begin to drown out the rhythm of the heartbeat of God—sometimes so much that it becomes a faint whisper. Maybe even to the point where we can barely hear it at all. And in the middle of the chaos those distractions bring, God’s voice says, *Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly (Matthew 11:28-30 MSG).*



Be still.

Listen to My voice.

Hold fast to me.

Sit at My feet.

Be still and know that I am God.

Reflection Questions:

- What is your current level of distraction when it comes to your relationship with God? What is distracting you from Jesus? How present have you been with Him lately?
- What would it be like for you to carve out time to sit at the feet of Jesus? Does that seem appealing to you?
- Read through **Matthew 11:28-30** in the Message translation above. What invitations that Jesus gives in this passage resonate with you? Write a prayer in response to God, asking Him to show you how to say yes to that invitation.
- Is being still in God's presence easy or hard for you? What fruit comes from spending time at the feet of Jesus? How have you seen this in your life?



## Day Two—Bible Study Breakdown

*As you begin reading today, take a few moments to check in. Where is your current level of distraction today? How is your mind wandering? What emotions is your heart holding? What stress are you carrying? How is that stress showing up in your body?*

*Take a few moments to slow down and be quiet. Share with God the state you find yourself in before you begin.*

Genetics is an interesting thing. You can have two siblings who grow up in the same family, share the same biological parents, and are nothing alike. Today we're going to dig deeper into this week's Scripture as we look at the responses of two sisters to the presence of Jesus in their home. While our focus this week is on Mary's encounter with Jesus, it's important to look through the lens of Martha's experience to fully understand how Mary was attentive to the presence of Christ.

Read through **Luke 10:38-42** in The Passion Translation below. Circle any words or phrases that stand out to you as you read.

*As Jesus and the disciples continued on their journey, they came to a village where a woman welcomed Jesus into her home. Her name was Martha and she had a sister named Mary. Mary sat down attentively before the Master, absorbing every revelation he shared. But Martha became exasperated with finishing the numerous household chores in preparation for her guests, so she interrupted Jesus and said, "Lord, don't you think it's unfair that my sister left me to do all the work by myself? You should tell her to get up and help me."*

*The Lord answered her, "Martha, my beloved Martha. Why are you upset and troubled, pulled away by all these many distractions? Mary has discovered the one thing most important by choosing to sit at my feet. She is undistracted, and I won't take this privilege from her."*

These two sisters were both in the presence of Jesus and responded very differently. Jesus found rest in the home of Mary and Martha. Martha was a hostess who was serving Jesus and his disciples. The ESV says,

*Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. **Luke 10:38-39** (ESV)*



**Martha experienced distraction.** The Greek word for “serving” in this passage is *latrīa*, meaning service or duties. It’s the same word for “ministry.” Martha was ministering to Jesus, which wasn’t a problem at all. The problem was that she was *distracted* in her serving.

The Greek word for “distracted” in this passage is *perispao*—“to be drawn off from around; to be so overburdened by various distractions as to be worried and anxious.”<sup>1</sup> Martha was distracted—drawn away—by doing actual ministry. She was *serving Jesus* and was *drawn away from him*. Martha was in the presence of Jesus and was drawn away from him. Her focus was on what she had to do instead of who she was doing it for.

Not only was Martha distracted, **Luke 10:40** also shows her discouragement and her doubt.

*And she went up to [Jesus] and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.”* **Luke 10:40** (ESV)

**Martha was discouraged.** Martha was also fixated on Mary’s lack of help. She had an agenda for how Mary should be operating in this moment. Darrel Bock puts it this way:

Part of Martha’s problem was that she worried too much about what others were doing. In asking Jesus to enter into her complaint, she assumed that her evaluation of Mary’s choice of priorities was right... We often spend too much time evaluating the walk of others and too little time being self-critical about our own actions for Jesus. Think of how more effective the church would be if we gave half the energy to assessing our own walk than we often do to assessing the walk of others. A community suffocates when all its energy is spent being an assessment agency for one another. What is really crucial for an effective community is for each member to take individual responsibility for his or her own walk and to allow the community to minister in a positive and encouraging way to each other.<sup>2</sup>

Her frustration and discouragement rose because she expected Mary to do what she had in mind for her, which led her to doubt.

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<sup>1</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition, V 1, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 313–314.

<sup>2</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 306.



**Martha doubted Jesus' care for her.** While going to Jesus with our frustrations and doubts *is* the exact right place to go, Martha allowed her discouragement with Mary to cloud her view of Jesus. She asks, “Lord, do you not care?” Of course, he cares. It’s why he came.

Meanwhile, Mary’s attention is fixed on Jesus. She chose to be still at his feet, listening to his voice. Jesus’ response to Martha shows us how much he delights in his sons and daughters choosing to live in his presence. We can bring our needs to Jesus anytime and anywhere. Jesus really cares about what concerns us. He also loves us enough to confront us when our attitude is wrong.

*He said, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:40-42 (ESV)*

Jesus truly is the good portion, and his presence cannot be taken away.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- As you read through the story of Mary and Martha, which character do you resonate with most? Are you more wired for action or for stillness?
- Have you ever been distracted by doing “ministry things” for Jesus and missed his presence altogether? What was that like?
- When have you been able to be with Jesus without distractions? What was that like for you?
- Take a few moments to list out what’s currently making you anxious, worried, or distracted. Spend some time being still and praying through your list, inviting God to speak. Ask him to slow you down enough to really be with him – to be still and know he is God.



### Day Three—Scripture Survey

This week, we're going to see how Jesus' invitation to abide in or dwell with him is found throughout Scripture. As you read through the passages today, take time to reflect on the specific questions and quotes for each one. Take your time as you read and reflect. See what God might want to show you about your relationship with him today. Slow down and savor his Word.

As you begin today, read through **Luke 10:38-42**.

Mary was abiding in Jesus. She took time to dwell in his presence and listen to his voice. Alan Fadling shares what happens as we do the same:

As I abide in Jesus, I have the same access to the Father's ear that he does. I am able to interact with the Father in prayer and seek the good of those I care about, knowing that my prayer mysteriously opens a door to a greater experience of God's measureless love...Jesus withdrew from the crowds for the sake of the crowds. When Jesus was in prayer, he remembered that the Father's words matter far more than the words of the crowds, whether they were shouting "Hosanna!" or "Crucify Him!" It was a though the father said to Jesus as he prayed, "When you are in the wilderness, you are my beloved Son. When the crowds cheer for you and praise you, you are my beloved Son. When the crowds turn on you and cry out for your execution, you are my beloved Son"...Prayer really is *someone we are with* more than *something we do*.<sup>3</sup>

As you read those words and think of this week's text from Luke 10:38-42, what do you notice? How does it feel to know you have access to the Father's words in the same way Jesus did? What would it look like to lean into that truth? How might your life be different if you did?

### Read Matthew 6:33.

- What does "seeking first the Kingdom of God" mean to you? How do you practically "seek first his kingdom"? How do you think that will bring righteousness (right standing with God) in your life?

Mary demonstrated what it looked like to seek first the kingdom of God by abiding and dwelling in Christ's presence.

Alan Fadling writes,

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<sup>3</sup> Fadling, 143.



Instead of living and serving in the presence of a God who is always at work and from whom flows abundance, we work almost violently, as though no work but our own would make a difference. We forget that God is already working and that we would be wise to simply join him in that work. And whatever work God is doing, he does so in a way that is keeping with who he is: gentle, kind, patient, peaceful. When we are working *with* God, we also will work with gentleness, kindness, patience, and peace.<sup>4</sup>

Read **John 15:1-10**.

Joanna Weaver writes,

It's the tree, not the branch, that determines the fruit. The tree is the life source. The branch has no power of its own. But once it gets connected, once that sap gets flowing and those leaves start growing, that insignificant little twig will find itself loaded with fruit. And it didn't have to do anything—except abide.<sup>5</sup>

- What connection do you see between this week's story of Mary and Martha and Jesus' words to his disciples in John? What does it mean to "abide" or to "remain" in his love? How did Mary demonstrate this? How might Martha have been different if she would have served with John 15 in mind? What does it look like to work *with* God?

Read **Psalm 84:1-12**.

Take a few moments to write a prayer in response to **Psalm 84**. Ask God to help you where you struggle to long for His presence. Be honest with him about where you are. Invite him to show you how to abide in Him.

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<sup>4</sup> Alan Fadling, *The Unhurried Leader*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2017), 37.

<sup>5</sup> Weaver, 77.



## Day Four—Story Work

In this series we're looking at people who were one-on-one with Jesus and how these interactions changed them and can change us. When we spend time one-on-one with Jesus, we are changed too. Today we'll look at how our own stories intersect with the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10.

### Read Luke 10:38-42 in the New Living Translation below:

*<sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. <sup>40</sup> 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."*

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

- Think of a time when you were distracted by serving God. What was that like? How did it affect your serving? How did it affect your relationship with God? How did it affect your relationship with others?
- Think of a time when you were focused solely on God's presence. What was that like? How did it affect your serving? How did it affect your relationship with God? How did it affect your relationship with others?
- What are the current distractions that keep you from God's presence? What would it look like to eliminate those?
- Think of the times you feel most connected to God. What does that look like? Where are you? What is needed for you to really be in his presence without distractions?
- If you struggle to stay at his feet, ask the Lord to reveal to what's hindering you. There is no need to lay aside your intellect or your personality when you sit at the feet of Jesus. Just come as you are as a child of God.





## Day Five—Application

As we wrap up this week’s look at the one-on-one relationship Mary had with Jesus, consider these words from Joanna Weaver:

Martha opened her home to Jesus, but that doesn’t automatically mean she opened her heart. In her eagerness to serve Jesus, she almost missed the opportunity to *know* Jesus... The kingdom of God, you see, is a paradox. While the world applauds achievement, God desires companionship. The world clamors, “Do more! Be all that you can be!” But our Father whispers, “Be still and know that I am God.” He isn’t looking as much for workers as he is looking for sons and daughters—a people to pour his life into... When we put work *before* worship, we put the cart before the horse. The cart is important; so is the horse. But the horse must come first, or we end up pulling the cart ourselves. Frustrated and weary, we can nearly break under the pressure of service, for there is always something that needs to be done. When we first spend time in his presence—when we take time to hear his voice—God provides the horsepower we need to pull the heaviest load. He saddles up Grace and invites us to take a ride.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus invites us to take the ride of a lifetime with him. He’s looking for sons and daughters to pour his love into.

Adele Calhoun writes, “We all live our lives in the presence of God. In fact, we cannot *not* live our lives in the presence of God... Yet we become so preoccupied with the to-do list and so overwhelmed by the pace of life that we forget to look for God sightings in our day.”<sup>7</sup> As you learn to live in the loving presence of God, like Mary did, consider these practices to help you intentionally live with a heart turned toward Jesus:

- In his book, *Sacred Pathways*, Gary Thomas writes about nine distinct sacred pathways to the presence of God. You can check out more information by scanning the QR code to take an assessment to see how you best connect with God. Once you’ve discovered your preferred pathway, schedule a specific time to connect with God in that way.

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<sup>6</sup> Weaver, 9-10.

<sup>7</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015), 72.



- Take some time to DTR (define the relationship) with Jesus. Take an honest assessment of the ways you've been spending time at his feet, in his Word, in prayer. Have you been operating more like Mary or more like Martha? Be honest and receive God's grace. Talk with God about what needs to change and what can be celebrated and then take the next step towards doing both.
- Decide to stop several times throughout the day to pay attention to God and practice being in his presence. Set an alarm to remind you. Spend five minutes reading Scripture, praying, or just simply being with Jesus. Pay attention to what it's like for you.