

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: The Subtle Danger of Distraction

Devotional

Have you ever found yourself so busy doing good things that you forgot why you were doing them in the first place? In our achievement-oriented culture, it's easy to fall into the trap of staying busy around Jesus without actually drawing near to Him. We can attend church, serve on committees, volunteer for causes, and check all the boxes of a 'good Christian life' while our hearts grow distant from the One we claim to follow.

This isn't about rebellion - it's about distraction. The enemy doesn't always need to pull us away from church or make us stop believing. Sometimes his most effective strategy is simply to keep us so occupied with Christian activities that we forget the relationship at the center of it all.

Think about your daily routine. How much of your time is spent doing things for Jesus versus being with Jesus? There's a profound difference between the two. When we're constantly moving, planning, and serving without pausing to connect with Christ, we risk becoming like Martha - frustrated, overwhelmed, and missing the very presence we're supposedly serving.

The beautiful truth is that Jesus doesn't want our busyness; He wants our hearts. He's not impressed by our packed schedules or endless to-do lists. What captures His attention is when we choose to sit at His feet, listen to His voice, and prioritize relationship over productivity. This doesn't mean we stop serving or caring for others, but it means we serve from a place of connection rather than obligation.

Bible Verse

'As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.' - Luke 10:38

Reflection Question

What activities or responsibilities in your life might be keeping you busy around Jesus rather than drawing you closer to Him?

Quote

For most of us in this room, the fact that we're even here this morning would tend to indicate that rebellion might not be the biggest issue. That for many of us, maybe the greatest threat to our relationship with Jesus isn't rebellion, it's distraction.

Prayer

Lord, help me recognize the difference between being busy for You and being close to You. Show me where I've allowed good things to distract me from the best thing - relationship with You. Give me wisdom to prioritize connection over productivity. Amen.

Day 2: Choosing What Matters Most

Devotional

Every day we face countless choices about how to spend our time, energy, and attention. In a world that celebrates multitasking and constant productivity, the simple act of sitting still and listening can feel almost revolutionary. Yet this is exactly what Mary chose to do when Jesus visited her home.

While Martha busied herself with preparations - legitimate, necessary, even loving tasks - Mary made a different choice. She positioned herself at Jesus' feet, ready to learn, ready to listen, ready to receive whatever He had to offer. This wasn't laziness or irresponsibility; it was a deliberate decision about priorities.

We live in a culture that tells us we can have it all, do it all, and be it all. But Jesus offers us a different perspective. He shows us that among all the many things competing for our attention, only one thing is truly essential. Not because other things don't matter, but because this one thing gives meaning and purpose to everything else.

When we choose to prioritize our relationship with Jesus, something beautiful happens. The other responsibilities don't disappear, but they find their proper place. We serve from overflow rather than obligation. We love from fullness rather than emptiness. We give from abundance rather than scarcity.

Mary's choice wasn't just about that moment in her living room - it was about establishing a pattern of putting first things first. It was about recognizing that no amount of activity can substitute for intimacy with Christ.

Bible Verse

'She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.' - Luke 10:39

Reflection Question

In what ways can you create space in your daily routine to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to what He has to say?

Quote

The answer is that Jesus has to unequivocally be the preeminent focus and priority of your life. And making Him a priority is the result of walking in a relationship with Him.

Prayer

Jesus, like Mary, I want to choose what matters most. Help me to prioritize time with You above all the urgent demands of life. Teach me to find my identity in being Your beloved rather than in what I accomplish. Amen.

Day 3: When Good Things Become Distractions

Devotional

Martha's frustration is so relatable it almost hurts. She was doing everything right - preparing food, managing hospitality, ensuring her guests were comfortable. These weren't selfish pursuits or worldly distractions; they were acts of service and love. Yet somehow, these good things had become barriers to the best thing.

This is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of spiritual growth: learning to discern between what's good and what's essential. It's easy to identify and avoid obviously harmful activities, but it's much harder to recognize when legitimate responsibilities begin to crowd out our relationship with Jesus.

Martha's complaint reveals what happens when we operate from a place of duty rather than devotion. She had become so focused on serving Jesus that she forgot to be with Jesus. Her service, though well-intentioned, had become disconnected from its source. Without the foundation of relationship, even our best efforts can lead to frustration and resentment.

Jesus' response to Martha is both gentle and firm. He doesn't condemn her service or tell her it's unnecessary. Instead, He helps her see that serving is secondary to relationship. When we get this order right - relationship first, service second - everything changes. Our service becomes an expression of love rather than a burden to bear.

The challenge for us is learning to hold our good works with open hands, always ready to set them aside when Jesus calls us to simply be with Him. This requires humility, trust, and the courage to believe that our worth isn't measured by our productivity.

Bible Verse

'But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" - Luke 10:40

Reflection Question

What good activities or responsibilities in your life might be distracting you from spending quality time with Jesus?

Quote

When activity replaces affection, it ultimately leads to frustration. And when relationship is absent assumption, an accusation filled a void.

Prayer

Father, help me recognize when good things become distractions from You. Give me wisdom to know when to serve and when to sit, when to work and when to worship. Let my service flow from relationship, not replace it. Amen.

Day 4: Jesus' Gentle Correction

Devotional

There's something beautiful about how Jesus responds to Martha's frustration. He doesn't shame her or dismiss her concerns. Instead, He speaks her name twice - "Martha, Martha" - with the tenderness of someone who truly sees and understands her heart. His correction comes wrapped in love, not condemnation.

Jesus acknowledges that Martha is worried and upset about many things. He doesn't minimize her feelings or tell her she shouldn't care about hospitality and service. But He does help her see the bigger picture. In the midst of all her legitimate concerns, she's missing the one thing that matters most.

This gentle correction is available to us today. When we find ourselves overwhelmed by responsibilities, frustrated by others who seem less committed, or exhausted from trying to do everything perfectly, Jesus speaks our name with the same tenderness. He sees our hearts, understands our motivations, and lovingly redirects our focus.

The phrase "worried and upset about many things" probably resonates with most of us. We live in a world of endless demands, constant notifications, and competing priorities. It's easy to become anxious about all the things we need to do, should do, or want to do. But Jesus offers us a different way - the way of choosing the one necessary thing.

This doesn't mean we become irresponsible or stop caring about important matters. It means we learn to approach life from a place of peace rather than anxiety, from relationship rather than obligation, from trust rather than worry.

Bible Verse

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things," - Luke 10:41

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life do you find yourself worried and upset about many things, and how might Jesus be gently calling you back to what matters most?

Quote

Jesus doesn't tell Martha that serving is unnecessary. He tells her that it's secondary.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your gentle correction when I get distracted by worry and busyness. Help me hear Your voice calling my name with love, not condemnation. Teach me to trust You with all my concerns and choose the one necessary thing. Amen.

Day 5: The One Necessary Thing

Devotional

In a world that tells us we need many things to be happy, successful, and fulfilled, Jesus offers a radically different perspective. He tells Martha - and us - that only one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen it. This one necessary thing isn't a task to complete or a goal to achieve; it's a relationship to cultivate.

What Mary chose can't be taken away from her because it's not dependent on circumstances, performance, or external validation. It's the choice to position herself as a learner at Jesus' feet, to prioritize His presence above all else, to value His words more than the world's demands.

This one necessary thing transforms everything else. When we choose relationship with Jesus as our foundation, it doesn't eliminate our responsibilities, but it reframes them. We serve from love, not duty. We work from rest, not anxiety. We give from abundance, not scarcity.

The beauty of this choice is that it's available to us every moment of every day. We don't need perfect circumstances, unlimited time, or ideal conditions. We simply need to recognize that in any situation, we can choose to be present with Jesus, to listen for His voice, to position our hearts toward Him.

Mary's choice wasn't just about that afternoon in her living room - it was about establishing a pattern of putting first things first. It was about recognizing that no amount of activity, no matter how good or necessary, can substitute for intimacy with Christ. This is the one thing that will never be taken away, the one investment that pays eternal dividends, the one choice that makes all other choices clearer.

Bible Verse

"but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." - Luke 10:42

Reflection Question

How can you make the choice to prioritize your relationship with Jesus the foundation from which all your other activities and responsibilities flow?

Quote

My fear as a pastor, it's not ever really that, you know, the people who come in these doors every week would somehow just, you know, stop believing in God or that they would stop coming to church, or that they would even stop living a decent life. My fear is that somehow we would be here and still accidentally allow other things to distract us from pursuing a real growing, daily relationship with Jesus.

Prayer

Jesus, I choose You as the one necessary thing in my life. Help me to build everything else on the foundation of relationship with You. May my love for You be the source from which all my service and responsibilities flow. Thank You that this choice can never be taken away from me. Amen.