

# The Heights Baptist Church

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS • INTIMACY OVER ACTIVITY • LUKE 10:1-11, 25-37, 38-42 •

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## MAIN POINT

Jesus warns us not to miss intimacy for activity.

## INTRODUCTION

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

**Is rest something you value? Why or why not?**

**Why is it so hard for us to take things off our plates and choose to spend time in rest and rejuvenation?**

**What is the biggest obstacle that keeps you from resting?**

The world we live in makes rest—especially spiritual rest—seem obsolete. Our culture rewards productivity and stress, often to the detriment of our health. We are overcommitted, strung-out, downright busy people who have a hard time saying “no.” Sometimes these pressures make their way into church life. But is this how God designed us—to live with full plates that leave little room for Him? Scripture encourages us that what matters most is being in the presence of Jesus. Jesus warns us not to miss intimacy for activity.

## UNDERSTANDING

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

Because Jesus’ ministry kept Him traveling, He often stayed in people’s homes for meals and for rest. Luke 10 describes one such visit. Jesus visited Martha, Mary, and Lazarus’s house. Bethany, a village near the base of the Mount of Olives and about two miles from Jerusalem, was a place of quiet solitude for Jesus.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 10:38-42.

**Compare and contrast the two sisters in this story. What stands out to you about each woman?**

**Which sister’s response to Jesus do you resonate with more, and why?**

Martha assumed the main role as hostess. In that day, a woman's home was often a mark of her identity. While Martha was fulfilling the role of busy hostess, Mary was the quiet, contemplative type and was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His every word. The custom in the first century was for disciples, typically men, to sit at their teacher's feet. Because preparing a meal entails much work, Martha naturally interpreted Mary's action as avoidance of work. Even though she was wrong, Martha's reaction was normal. Busy people doing godly activity often miss the better portion—intimacy with Jesus.

**Do you think Martha was justified in her attitude? Why or why not?**

**Why was it so difficult for Martha to stop and listen to Jesus? How are we like Martha today?**

**Why was Mary so focused on listening to Jesus?**

While Martha made the wrong choice, Mary made the right choice, for nothing is better than choosing to be in Jesus' presence. The choice she made kept her focused on the truth rather than on the trivial. Feeding one's soul is more important than feeding one's body.

**What do you learn from Jesus' reaction to Mary's listening to Him?**

**What do you think Jesus meant by His words in verse 42?**

What did Jesus mean by "only one thing is necessary"? The one necessary thing was to be ministered to by Jesus. Jesus knew that spiritual nourishment was far more important than physical nourishment. Jesus' commendation of Mary shows that He placed great value on quiet devotion and rest in His presence.

**What different forms of busyness take over in your life?**

We wake up most days not trying to serve, but to survive. Ours is an era of unprecedented complexity and opportunity, and the onslaught of things we face each day are potential barriers that keep us from being ministered to by Jesus. In order for us to really listen to God, we have to create margin in our lives that keeps us from being too busy, even when that means saying "no" to another ministry opportunity, as Martha needed to do.

Jesus had a busy ministry. From the start of His earthly ministry in Luke 4:14, He moved from town to town and kept busy teaching, healing, and performing miracles. He also kept His disciples busy. Earlier in Luke 10, we read about Jesus sending out 72 messengers to do His work and prepare towns to receive Him.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ LUKE 10:1-11 AND LUKE 10:25-37.

**Mary and Martha were with Jesus for much of His ministry. From the two additional passages in Luke 10 we just read, what are some things they might have concluded about Jesus' kingdom and what matters to Him?**

**How do the two previous accounts in Luke 10 compare to/contrast with Jesus' word to Martha in Luke 10:41-42?**

**What does this comparison teach you about your own busyness?**

It would have been easy for Mary and Martha to watch Jesus' ministry in action and listen to His teachings and think that Jesus expected busyness, urgency, and service in all they did. Neither Jesus' instructions to the 72 nor His parable of the Good Samaritan say anything about trusting God. In the context of His parable, Jesus said nothing about trusting God, but only about kingdom urgency and showing love to one's neighbor. However, Jesus' word to Martha helps us see that genuine faith will demonstrate itself in action. In order to serve others effectively, we must first receive from Christ, as demonstrated by Mary's eagerness to sit at Jesus' feet. Effective, active service first requires quiet devotion. Our love and service for others is to be an overflow of the intimate relationship we have with Jesus.

## APPLICATION

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

**How does busyness hinder your opportunity to rest in God? What will you "take off your plate" this week in order to spend intentional and intimate time with the Lord?**

**What kinds of things in your life—even seemingly "spiritual" things—might distract you from being like Mary and choosing intimacy with Jesus over activity? How can you proactively fight back against those tendencies?**

**Think about the statement, "Effective, active service first requires quiet devotion." How might spending time alone with the Lord prevent religious hypocrisy for when you go out and serve? Explain.**

## PRAYER

Thank God for the promise of rest and rejuvenation that He offers us in Christ. Ask God to help your group learn to say "no" to the things that clutter our lives and distract us from sitting at

Jesus' feet. Pray that God would provide opportunities to put into action what you have learned this week.

## COMMENTARY

### | LUKE 10:38-42

10:38-39 The village in v. 38 was Bethany, just over the Mount of Olives and two miles east of Jerusalem. Martha and Mary were the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead (Jn 11:1-44). Sat at the Lord's feet... listening was the posture of a committed disciple.

10:40-42 Martha was distracted from what should have been her highest priority—learning from Jesus. She was worried and upset about all the household chores that needed to be done and irritated with her sister Mary because it was the role of women to serve men in such a setting. Jesus indicated that Martha's exclusive focus should be the same as her sister's—discipleship, an eternally commendable choice (it will not be taken away from her).

### | LUKE 10:1-11

10:1 Though not mentioned in 9:1-6, Jesus had apparently sent out the apostles previously in pairs (see Mk 6:7). In this verse He sent out 70 other followers to cover Judea with the message of good news in advance of His coming.

10:2 Christ seems to be saying that, as abundant as the spiritual harvest was, the 70 whom He sent out to preach were not enough. There was need for many more to take the message, and prayers must be offered to meet this need.

10:3 Lambs among wolves was a common metaphor in Judaism for being in a dangerous situation.

10:5-6 Peace (Hb shalom) was a traditional Jewish greeting. But the word actually speaks of wholeness or well-being. Son of is a Jewish expression meaning "one characterized by" (Ac 4:36). In this context, "son of peace" and your peace appear to relate to the 70 followers who were offering the message of peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ (Rm 5:1).

10:7 The worker is worthy of his wages is a basic principle of fairness. This was quoted by the apostle Paul in making his case for ministers of God's Word being paid for their work (1Tim 5:17-18).

10:8-9 If the 70 disciples were made welcome in a town, it indicated that the hearts of the people were open to the gospel message. In some sense, the present tense aspects of the kingdom of God were present in the preaching of the gospel and the healing ministry delegated by Jesus to the 70.

## | LUKE 10:25-37

10:25 Expert in the law refers to a scribe (11:45-46,52-53), many of whom were also Pharisees. The question asked was a standard one in Judaism and was intended to test Jesus. To inherit (Gk kleronomeo; "to receive an allotted share") eternal life shows that many Jews thought their eternal destiny was based on their Jewish bloodline and their good deeds.

10:26-28 Jesus turned the tables on the scribe by asking him to answer his own question, then complimented the man on correctly citing Lv 19:18 and Dt 6:5. Jesus did not say that it is possible to earn eternal life by loving God and your neighbor. No human other than Jesus has been able to love perfectly in every situation. Since heart... soul, and mind are sometimes used interchangeably in Scripture, the terms here are not intended to speak of separate aspects of human existence. Rather, they describe the total person.

10:29 Having correctly answered the first question, this man asked for an important clarification. Certain kinds of neighbors are of course easy to love, while others, being argumentative or of different religious and moral persuasions, can be very hard to love. It seems that the man hoped Jesus would justify his bias against certain kinds of neighbors.

10:30-32 The road from Jerusalem to Jericho, a distance of 17 miles with a descent of more than 3,000 feet in elevation, was a dangerous route through desert country. It had many places where robbers could lie in wait. It is possible that the priest and the Levite... passed by on the other side of the road because they thought the wounded man was dead and they would become ritually unclean by touching him, but it is more likely that they were afraid of being attacked by the same robbers or simply did not want to be bothered with the inconvenience of helping the man.

10:33-35 The Jews considered the Samaritans to be physical half-breeds who had intermarried with foreigners and who were guilty of false worship. For such a sworn enemy of the Jews to show compassion on an injured Jew and pay the expenses of his recuperation, while two Jewish religious officials did not, would deeply humiliate a Jew.

10:36-37 Now Jesus got back to the question with which this story began: Who is my neighbor? His point was that the Samaritan proved he was a good neighbor by his gracious actions toward

the man who had been attacked by robbers. It was impossible for the scribe to avoid acknowledging that it was the Samaritan who showed mercy. Jesus' reply to go and do the same emphasized that Jews should love their Samaritan neighbors even as the good Samaritan in the story had acted in love toward a Jew.