

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Mary and Martha

Luke 10:38-42

### Opening

- Gathering: How easy is it to get so caught up in something that you forget its real purpose?
- Today's Focus: Mary's and Martha's love for Jesus gave both good and poor examples of how we are to express our love for Him.
- Key Verses: *"Martha, Martha, " the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed."* Luke 10:41-42
- Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.* Luke 4:8

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

When Did This Story Take Place? (*Luke 10:1-24*)

- After spending the bulk of His ministry in Galilee, where did Jesus focus His last half-year?  
Matthew 19:1 = In Judea and Perea (*other side of the Jordan*)
- What date did John give for when Jesus began focusing His ministry in Judea?  
John 7:1-3, 6, 14 = October, At the Feast of Tabernacles (Killed in following spring)
- What specific date is given in John that is understood to have been after today's story?  
John 10:22-23 = Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication) in December 29 – lesson 3 weeks ago
- How did Jesus show it was now time to reveal Himself in Judea as His brothers had suggested?  
Luke 10:1 = He sent out 72 in pairs to go ahead of Him throughout Judea
- How effective were these missionaries?  
Luke 10:17-19 = Tremendously, they even had power over Satan's legions

Where Did This Story Take Place? (*Luke 10:38*)

- What did Luke tell us about where today's story took place?  
Luke 10:38 = Just one of the villages Jesus traveled through - Martha's home
- What village did John tell us this was?  
John 11:1 = Bethany
- Was this the Bethany on the east side of the Jordan where John baptized (John 1:28)?  
John 11:18 = No, it was a suburb of Jerusalem
- Where did Jesus spend the night when He was in Jerusalem during His last week?  
Mark 11:11 = Bethany – In Martha's house

Jesus on the Mount (*Luke 21:37-38*)

- What separated Jerusalem from Bethany that became an important place for Jesus?  
Luke 19:29 = The Mount of Olives - Bethany was on eastern slope of Mt. of Olives
- How did Jesus spend His time during the last week of His life?  
Luke 21:37-38 = Days in temple teaching, evenings on Mount of Olives praying
- What happened to Jesus when He was praying on the Mount of Olives one evening?  
Luke 22:39, 47, 54 = He was betrayed by Judas and arrested
- What happened when Jesus visited the Mount of Olives for the last time? - Near Bethany  
Luke 24:50-51 = He ascended (Acts 1:12 tells us it was on the Mount of Olives)

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### Mary (Luke 10:39)

Who else did Jesus meet in Martha's home? = Only male disciples would sit at a teacher's feet

Luke 10:39 = Mary, Martha's sister

Where else do we see the worship-filled example of Mary? = Women never let hair down

John 12:1-3 = Anointed Jesus the week before He died; Not afraid to show her love

Did this also take place in Martha's house?

Mark 14:3 = Unsure, Yes if Martha was Simon's wife or widow

Did everyone recognize and appreciate Mary's pouring out of love for Jesus?

John 12:4-6 = Judas Iscariot, the treasurer, thought it was an expensive waste

How did Jesus feel about Mary pouring out this bottle of expensive perfume?

Mark 14:6-9 = She was unknowingly preparing His body for upcoming burial

Did Judas like Jesus' explanation and reasoning?

Mark 14:10-11 = No, he was so mad he went out and offered to betray Jesus for money

Where do we find Mary in each of the three times she appears in the Bible?

John 11:32 = At Jesus' feet

### Martha (John 11:17-30)

What does the story tell us about Martha?

Luke 10:38 = Had the gift of hospitality, Apparently affluent, Likely the oldest

How might this hospitality have been especially appreciated by Jesus?

Luke 9:57-58 = Jesus had no home and relied on loving hospitality of others

How did Jesus feel about Martha and her family?

John 11:5 = He loved them

How did Martha feel about Jesus? = Family members stayed inside mourning, friends came to them

John 11:17-20 = She loved Him and left her house to meet Him outside of town

Did Martha recognize that Jesus was from God?

John 11:21-22 = Yes, she had faith that God would give Him anything He asked

Did she recognize who Jesus really was?

John 11:23-27 = Yes, she confessed that He was the Messiah, the Son of God

How did Martha have one last chance to show her love for Jesus before His death?

John 12:1-2 = She hosted a banquet in Jesus' honor; The way she showed her love

### Martha's Response to Mary (Luke 10:40-42)

How did Martha feel about Mary neglecting the call to serve Jesus and His disciples?

Luke 10:39-40 = She felt Mary was wrong and needed correction - *Lord, don't you care?*

Why wasn't Martha able to recognize the value of what Mary was doing?

Luke 10:41 = She was distracted by worrying about other details

What details should Martha be concerned about at this time?

Luke 10:42 = Of all the needs in life, our only real need is to give ourselves fully to Jesus

Wiersbe: "What we do *with* Christ is far more important than what we do *for* Christ"

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Worship or Serve? (*Luke 4:8*)

Does this mean that God wants His faithful to live their lives worshipping instead of serving?

James 2:26 = No, our faith is to be revealed to others through service

So which should we do, worship or serve?

Luke 4:8 = Both - Worship and serve the Lord your God

Choosing between the Good and the Better

Should I study or should I pray? = Yes, to both

Should I witness to an unbeliever or should I care for a Christian brother in need? = Yes

Charles Wesley wrote in one of his hymns:

*Faithful to my Lord's commands,  
I still would choose the better part;  
Serve with careful Martha's hands,  
And loving Mary's heart.*

How do we know when and how to worship and to serve?

Matthew 22:35-40 = Put God first, others second, ourselves last

How Should We Serve? (*1 Peter 2:12*)

Don't we automatically put God first when we serve Him?

Philippians 1:15-17 = Our motives are important. Is it for God or for ourselves?

Will selfish motives prevent God from being glorified?

Philippians 1:18 = No, God can take what man intends for evil and turn it to good

What is the risk of keeping ourselves very busy in service?

Haggai 1:9 = We could get too busy to listen to God or to even serve Him

What should be our purpose in serving?

1 Peter 2:12 = Bring glory to God (not ourselves)

Martha's Problem (*Luke 12:22-34*)

How was Martha's problem with priorities made more difficult? = v22: *worry* - "torn apart"

Luke 12:22-23 = She was too worried about details of life

But didn't Martha have to make sure Jesus and His disciples had something to eat?

Luke 12:24 = If God takes care of His animals, He will certainly provide for His children

But we have bills to pay and retirement to save for and jobs to worry about and ...

Luke 12:25-26 = Worrying won't help any of these things

But what about our clothes? If we don't worry about them, we'll be naked and catch cold!

Luke 12:27-28 = God will clothe us more magnificently than we can imagine

But we need to eat! We'll die if we don't have something to eat or drink!

Luke 12:29-31 = God know you need these things; He'll provide them as we seek Him

Now we need to worry about seeking His kingdom! How do we do that?

Luke 12:32-34 = Don't worry, God brings His kingdom to us; Build your treasure there

So what should we do when we have worries, try to ignore them or try to solve them?

Philippians 4:6-7 = Neither. Take them to the Lord in prayer and He will give His peace

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Saul - The "Do It Yourself" Leader (1 Samuel 13:1-14)

What were Samuel's final instructions to Saul after he anointed him as king over Israel?

1 Samuel 10:1, 8 = Go to Gilgal and wait for Samuel to come to sacrifice offerings

What happened when Saul went to Gilgal as instructed?

1 Samuel 13:3-7 = The Philistines rallied thousands of troops, Saul's men were afraid

What did Saul do when he began worrying about his situation?

1 Samuel 13:8-9 = He took matters into his own hands and offered his own sacrifices

Saul had done the right thing by turning to the Lord, right? = Didn't trust God enough to wait

1 Samuel 13:10-13 = No, he had disobeyed God's simple command to wait for Samuel

How did God punish Saul for this misguided solution to worry?

1 Samuel 13:14 = His dynasty would end with him

What should we remember whenever we try to take matters into our own hands?

John 15:5 = Apart from God we can do nothing

From Warren Wiersbe:

*Unless we meet Christ personally and privately each day, we will soon end up like Martha: busy but not blessed. Often in my pastoral ministry, I have asked people with serious problems, "Tell me about your devotional life." The usual response has been an embarrassed look, a bowed head, and the quiet confession, "I stopped reading my Bible and praying a long time ago." And they wondered why they had problems!*

Closing Prayer

**Response** - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How regularly do I sit at Jesus' feet to learn from Him?  
(Luke 10:39; 12:11-12; Deuteronomy 4:5-14; 31:12-13; Psalm 32:8-9; 119:33-36; 143:10; Matthew 11:29; Romans 15:4; Philippians 4:9; 2 Timothy 3:14-17)
2. How have I poured out my love for Jesus in worship?  
(Mark 14:3-9; 2 Kings 17:36; Psalm 95:6; 100; John 4:21-24; 12:1-8; Romans 12:1)
3. When and how have I offered hospitality to Jesus?  
(Luke 10:38; Matthew 10:40-42; 25:31-46; John 12:1-2; Romans 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9-11)
4. When have I confessed my faith in Jesus to others?  
(John 11:21-27; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Colossians 4:6; 1 Peter 3:15)
5. When have I been so worried and upset about many things that I missed the one thing that was needed?  
(Luke 10:41-42; 12:22-34; Psalm 27:4; 37:4; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6-7)