

## INTRODUCTION



## THE SETTING



Jesus arrives at Mary, Martha and Lazarus' home to be ministered to. Jesus depended on this special family for nurturing, hospitality, friendship, companionship and respite. He stops over by their house just ahead of His triumphal entry. He often turns to this family for much needed comfort and to their home which was the gold standard of Jewish hospitality.

There is a reason Jesus shows up on Martha's doorstep six days before his fated Passover. Jesus always has a plan, and a purpose for where He goes and Mary and most crucially Martha is part of that plan

## THE PASSAGE

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- ▶ *Luke 10:38. Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.*
- ▶ *39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.*
- ▶ *40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."*
- ▶ *41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.*
- ▶ *42 "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her*

## Thinking about the "ONE THING" – WHAT DOES IT IMPLY?

Thinking about the "ONE THING" –  
**WHAT DOES IT IMPLY?**

RECEPTION

DEVOTION

SUBMISSION

**It implies RECEPTION.** In verse 38 we read that Martha received Jesus into her house, and Mary received Him also (verse 39). Before Mary could sit at the Saviour's feet she must have welcomed Him into her presence. To sit at His feet and listen to His words implies that this reception had taken place. Have you received the Lord Jesus into your heart and life as definitely and as truly as Martha and Mary received Him into their home? — look up John 1:12, and compare Revelation 3:20.

**It implies DEVOTION.** The fact that Mary was sitting at the Saviour's feet indicates that she loved Him very much. She loved Him because He first loved her (1 John 4:19); she loved Him for His own sake, for His teaching, but above all for what He was going to do for her upon Calvary's cross — Galatians 2:20; John 14:15. And in order that she might keep His words, she was listening to them and learning them.

**It implies SUBMISSION.** Mary did not stand, she sat down at His feet, indicating that she was submissive to Him and recognised Him as her Lord and Sovereign. She subjected herself to His authority, truth and teaching. She sat in the place of humility, took His yoke upon her and learned of Him — look up Matthew 11:29. She placed herself utterly under His sway. Have you done that

**WHY is the ONE THING most necessary?**

## WHY is the ONE THING most necessary?

- ▶ To experience a well balanced Christian life
- ▶ For growing in grace
- ▶ For clear guidance
- ▶ For overcoming self

**is absolutely necessary if we are to experience a well-balanced Christian life.** The two elements of a well-poised Christian life are sitting and serving — or, receiving and giving; but the first must always precede the second. Look up John 10:9, and notice — “in and out”; “in” first and *then* “out”; “in” for worship, “out” for witnessing; “in” to receive, “out” to serve. The Lord did not rebuke Martha for her active service; rather, He wanted to show her that sitting at His feet was necessary as the first requirement of successful service. How much time do we spend alone with Him, in comparison with the time we spend in His service?

**It is absolutely necessary for growth in grace.** Many Christians remain in a state of protracted infancy, not because they have not received Him into the house or are not in

love with Him, but because they neglect fellowship with Him through His Word. They do not learn of Him, and therefore they do not grow into spiritual maturity, for to sit at His feet and receive His Word will bring us to know the experience of 2 Peter 3:18 – look up 1 Peter 2:2, and compare Ephesians 4:13-15.

***It is absolutely necessary for clear guidance.*** The Lord longs to guide us in all the details of our daily lives, but we often fail to hear His “gentle whisper” (1 Kings 19:12) because we are not living in close enough touch with Him. It is sad when Christians repeatedly make wrong decisions – look up Proverbs 3:5-6; James 1:5. Surely it is only as we learn to spend time alone with Him that we shall get to know His will – look up Romans 12:2.

***It is absolutely necessary for overcoming self.*** Martha was irritated and distracted, and she complained – verse 40. Do you ever get irritated and distracted, and complain? Do you sometimes say rash, hurtful things? Why do we do these things? For the same reason that Martha failed? She allowed self to come on the throne, and this could have been prevented if she had known how to get low at the Saviour’s feet. Self is our greatest enemy; and one sure way of learning God’s method of overcoming the self-life is by regularly getting low at His feet – look up 1 Peter 3:4, and compare Matthew 11:29.

***It is absolutely necessary to gain His commendation.*** In verse 42 we are told of our Lord’s commendation to Mary. Nothing pleases Him more than when we go to His footstool and wait there in silent adoration and praise. He is pleased with our effort and our faithful service, but most of all He is pleased with our humble submission, when we sit and learn of Him and spend time alone with Him first for His own dear sake!

We shall only get this “one thing” by real determination and resolution. Notice that in verse 42 we are told that Mary chose to sit at Jesus’ feet. It was a matter of deliberate choice. How determined are you to please Him?

As women of all ages ( girls, adult women, mums, grandmums) we tend to think and ponder things in our hearts – remember Mary who kept things related to Jesus birth in her heart? We are just wired differently to men in that we constantly worry, we don’t really have to read men are from mars women from venus to prove that! I can relate to Martha as she was no different than many of us – she worried about her guest. I tend to be planning and organising for visitors long before they are scheduled to come so I can be on top of things and not hurrying around in the last minute because I tell myself I need to spend time with them!! But if all they are doing is coming to spend time with us surely will not other things take care of themselves? Especially if we have the most important visitor in our house that day? – I think now that its no wonder that Mary chose the better part – as she knew this man wouldn’t be available for too long and that she needed to make the most of His precious time. BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. Oftentimes in this busy world we keep running from one activity to another – and it becomes in vogue to say “im busy” – in my workplace there is a trend to come back from holiday and say “ I have 200 emails or 300 or 500 or how may ever emails to clear” – Im thinking of wow you are a very important person and we cant do without you. There is the false sense in the world today that the more we run – run after status/ run after money/ run after family and children/ run after possessions there is satisfaction, there is achievement – however only ONE THING really matters as we have just seen

## “ONE THING(S)” IN THE BIBLE

# “ONE THING(S)” IN THE BIBLE

- ▶ Psalm 27:4 - One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.  
**Prioritising "His Presence"**
- ▶ Mark 10:21 - Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."  
**Prioritising "Your STOREHOUSE"**
- ▶ John 9:25 - He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"  
**Prioritising "Your PAST AND REFLECT"**
- ▶ Luke 10:42 - but few things are needed—or indeed only one.<sup>14</sup> Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.  
**Prioritising "Your TIME"**
- ▶ Phil 3:13 - Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.  
**Prioritising "Your GOAL"**

The title was, 'The Five "One Things".' His talk highlighted five significant occurrences of the expression 'one thing' in the Bible (Psalm 27:4; Mark 10:21; Luke 10:42; John 9:25; Philippians 3:13).

## FOUND "LACKING" ... THE ONE THING



Let's look at Jesus' teaching to see how we can define this 'one thing.' A few chapters later in Luke, Luke 18:22, we find this term 'one thing' appearing again. This is the account of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus to ask a question in v. 18, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* Jesus said to him, 'You know the commandments.' The young man answered, 'Yes, I know them. I have kept them as best I know how.' Then notice Jesus' reply in v. 22. *Luke 18:22. You still lack **one thing**. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*

'One thing you still lack.' This person seems to have everything. He has money. He has religion. He is a nice guy who keeps the commandments. He has everything, except the 'one thing' that matters. How tragic it is to have all kinds of things but not the only thing that counts. The person who has the one thing that is necessary is truly rich, spiritually rich – even though he does not have anything else.

‘You still lack one thing, the one thing that is needful.’ What is it? *Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.* The ‘one thing’ here is to follow Christ. The call to discipleship is the call to the ‘one thing.’

The young man’s saying that he had kept all the commandments led Jesus to focus on his relationship to his material possessions and on his relationship to God. Jesus perceived that his wealth was an area of weakness and so told him that it was his money that was standing in the way of his reaching eternal life. He then asked him to sell everything he owned, give away his money to the poor, and then follow Him.

The task of selling everything would not, of itself, give eternal life. In this particular case, Jesus asked the man to give away his wealth because he was more concerned with his possessions than he was with following Jesus. Wealth, not God, occupies a central place in his life. What this person lacks therefore is an undivided loyalty to God.

Having money is not intrinsically bad. And Jesus does not ask all believers to give everything away. He does ask each person however to get rid of anything that has become or that can potentially become more important than God. He wants us to remain focused by removing from our life anything that could shift our attention away from Him. So in this passage, the ‘one thing’ that is lacking is the readiness to renounce, for the sake of the kingdom of God, whatever it should prove necessary to renounce.

#### APOSTLE PAUL



Notice the concentration and focus. ‘This one thing I do.’ The consuming passion of Paul’s life is summed up in this ‘one thing.’ He describes his Christian life as involving the continual forgetting of ‘what is behind,’ and the relentless centering of his energies and interests on the course that is ahead of him. ‘I have had a lot of things. I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. I had a wonderful education. I sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest teacher of my generation. I did everything right as far as the law is concerned. I have kept the law from my youth, like the rich young ruler.’ But unlike the rich young ruler, he forgot about all those things. He forgot his past with all its credentials and accomplishments (and shortcomings). And now, like a runner in a race, with his whole body reaching for the finish line, he is pressing on toward the goal.

Paul tells us in this passage that one goal absorbed all his energy. It was to gain full knowledge of Jesus Christ. He is an example of someone who has the ‘one thing.’ Learning from Paul, we should not let anything take our eyes off our goal – knowing Christ. With the single-mindedness of an athlete straining toward the finish line, we must lay aside anything that may be in the way of our fellowship with Jesus.

*Psalms 86:11. Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; **unite** my heart to fear Your name.*

'Unite my heart.' The idea is that of constituting one. Make my heart one. So here, it is the heart which is to become one. Make my heart so that it becomes concentrated, focused upon You. Unite my heart to honor Your name. Give me a heart that has a single vision of Your glory. The implication of course is that one can have a divided and distracted heart. And the request here is that the heart of the psalmist might be single in its purposes, that nothing may be allowed to interfere with the one supreme goal.

We just read Deuteronomy 6:4. Look at the next verse. *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength* (Deuteronomy 6:5). The various parts of the human being, the heart, the soul, the strength, are completely concentrated, united into one objective of loving God with the whole being. This kind of person has the 'one thing.' He is a focused person, a person whose eye is single.