

# One Thing

In the classic Billy Crystal movie "City Slickers," three long time friends face middle age. They all have lost their focus and in danger of losing their families. To reignite their lives they go to a dude ranch, where they help move cattle from the high hills to the valley. Curly, the grizzled old cowboy who leads them, seems to be the toughest, wisest person they ever met. Crystal asks Curly the secret to his confidence and contentment. Curly smiles, raises his grubby, gloved index finger and proclaims, "It is just one thing," then rides away.

It is dangerous to expect one person to provide all our emotional, intellectual and relational needs. We need a variety of relationships to meet all our relational needs. What might be true for our human relationships does not hold true for our spiritual needs. Spiritually we need one thing. That one thing is Jesus.

## Luke 10:38-42

### Martha

- Martha is really only concerned with her house, her food and her wine
- Martin Luther and John Calvin referred to Martha-type activity as "adiaphora", "things indifferent"
- Hospitality is not really about self. It is about your guests.
- Martha was stressed out! Stress is one of greatest contributors disease. Big White Rabbit in Alice in Wonderland always consults his gigantic watch and shouts, "I'm late, I'm late, or a very important date!" White Rabbit Syndrome always drives us down another rabbit hole to some more-important-than-here destination, always running to meet someone more important than the person in front of you.
- People today are overloaded and overwhelmed. We take pride in announcing how busy we are. Busy-itis spreads by word of mouth by everyone effected.
- Jesus is showing Martha the superiority of the Bread of Life over one more home cooked meal. Jesus offers all who will listen the invitation to partake o the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Mary was "slacking off" - "playing hooky." Play is what God intends for us. Play is the essence of creativity, of creation. Eden was stress free.
- The loss of innocence is the success of stress--the essence of The Fall. Yet, we still debate the virtues of Martha, known as the Protestant work ethic. In the Eastern Church, the original church, the contemplative role of Mary remains strong.

- **Both extremes** miss the mark. Jesus is not saying that activity is bad. Jesus is saying that loving God is what matters most; attending to our relationship with Christ is the first and the best thing we can do. Any love relationship means to embrace the theology of play.
- Jesus does not want most of us to work harder; he wants us to play harder. He wants us to revel in his presence, to relish the part of the kingdom that is present now among us, to use the gift of the Holy Spirit and go out and play and invite others to come and play.

## Mary

- Mary sat at Jesus' feet. She was busy being a disciple. Mary was a worshipper.
- Sitting at Jesus' feet is the first posture for disciples
- "Martha, Martha you are worried and upset about many things." Worry means to be torn in two directions, to be pulled apart. She was coming apart at the seams.
- **Philippians 4:6 "Be anxious for nothing..."**
- **1 Peter 5:7 "Cast all of your anxiety on him because he cares for you"**
- One thing is needed. Our one thing is Jesus.
- Christianity is based on a person, not principles or even values. We cannot be Christian Pharisees or the Christian Taliban.
- When we say "yes" to Jesus he becomes our one thing. We are welcomed into the most wonderful relationship possible.
- **Romans 8:17**
- A mom asked her son about Sunday school class. She asked the name of his teacher.  
     "I don't know her name."  
     "I think she was Jesus' grandma."  
     "All she did was hold up his picture and brag on him."
- If Jesus is our one thing we will be bragging on him to others.

## Softly and Tenderly

# One Thing Discussion Guide

Read Luke 10:38-42

- What are your initial thoughts about Martha's dialogue with Jesus?
- Do you identify more with Martha or Mary?
- What was Jesus' real criticism of Martha?
- Why do you believe people are so stressed out today?
- What is the "one thing" that Jesus said the Mary has chosen?
- What do we need to do to become more like Mary?
- Jesus is not saying that activity is bad. Jesus is saying that loving God is what matters most; attending to our relationship with Christ is the first and the best thing we can do.
- What does it mean to attend to your relationship with Christ first?

Read Philippians 4:6-7

- Worry means to be torn in two directions, to be pulled apart. Isn't that just what worry does to you?
- What does Paul tell the Philippians to do instead of worrying?
- How would your life change if you spent more time sitting at Jesus' feet praying and worshipping, studying the Bible and listening for the leadership of the Holy Spirit?