

The Way to Happiness

Seek Ye First

by Annette Gulick 10/1/2001

Lesson One

Lesson Objective: That students desire to make God the first priority in their lives.

Bible Passage: Luke 10: 38-42

Bible Truth: Jesus praised Mary for choosing to listen to Him instead of being distracted and worried with busyness like Martha

Memory Verse: Mt. 6: 33

Before You Begin:

- ◆ basket
- ◆ three "priorities" for each student
- ◆ assorted small candies in a paper bag (optional)
- ◆ paper and pencils
- ◆ Handout "Martha or Mary"
- ◆ handout "Sitting at Jesus' Feet"

Opening:

Ask the students to close their eyes and then, without opening them and without speaking to each other, to line up according to height. Ensure that none open their eyes or speak and make sure no one runs into the walls or gets hurt. If you have time, they can line up according to any or all of the following: age, birthday, shoe size. If you have a large group you may divide them into teams of 5 to 10 students and keep a running score for which team finishes first each time. Then ask:

- *How did you feel during this activity?*
- *What was the key to success?*

Even though we don't usually line ourselves up like we just did, we often compare ourselves to other people. We wonder who in our class is smarter than us and who is dumber, who is better looking and who isn't, who has more money and who has less. Many people spend their lives trying to "move up the line" by getting more money or a better job than those around them. Today we want to

spend some time thinking about our priorities, not just in comparison to the people around us, but in terms of what is really important in life.

Interactive Learning

Before class, prepare enough copies of the "priorities" listed at the end of the lesson so there are three for each person. (Feel free to take out or add any priorities to make them more applicable to your group, but notice that at this point we are not including spiritual priorities.)

Have each student draw three "priorities" out of the basket (if they have two alike they may replace one and choose a new "priority") and a piece of candy from the paper bag. Then explain that they should arrange the three items in order of importance to them. If they have a "priority" that they don't want or if they think there is another they prefer they can try to exchange with someone else, by trading their candy or their priorities. When the trading has finished, go around the room and have each student explain the order of their priorities and why they've ordered them that way.

A man once sat down to talk with his son and told him, "When I was your age I started to work. I had ambitions so I worked very hard, climbing the ladder of success. I had to make a lot of sacrifices but I kept climbing up the ladder, getting closer and closer to the top, to my goal of success. Finally near the end of my life I achieved my goal. But as I looked around and analyzed my life I realized I wasn't happy. I thought that financial success and power would bring me happiness. But, when I finally attained both of these I found that happiness was somewhere else. I was shocked to realize that all my life the ladder I was climbing was leaning against the wrong wall."

You are all at a scary, yet exciting, point in your lives; the decisions you make in the next few years--like if and what you study, who you date and marry-- will significantly impact the rest of your lives. Our goal in the next four weeks is to help you understand what will bring you happiness, what is the "right wall" to lean your ladder against as you strive to succeed in life.

Bible Application

Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil. Then have students "number off", the first person saying "Martha," the second "Mary," the third "Jesus," the fourth back to "Martha" and so on. Ask them to get into groups of three, where each group has a Martha, a Mary, and a Jesus. Ask students to turn to Luke 10:38-42 and follow along silently while you read the passage. Students should imagine that they have just lived through that day recorded in the scripture passage (they may decide to reread it individually or as a group) and now they are writing in their diaries or personal journals about the day's events. So one person from each group will write his or her feelings and impressions of the day -

one as Mary, one as Martha and one as Jesus. When they have finished have them share what they wrote with their group. Then come together as a large group and have several people share their thoughts as Mary, Martha and Jesus. Then ask:

- *Who invited Jesus to the house to eat? (Martha)*
- *How was Martha feeling when she asked Jesus for Mary's help?*
- *Jesus tells Martha that only "one thing is needed." (v. 42) What do you think is that "one thing"?*
- *Read Psalm 27:4. What is the one thing that David desires? (if they answer "dwell in the house of the Lord" help them understand that is another way of saying "being in God's presence" as seen by the reason he wants to be in the house of the Lord, "to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and seek him...")*

It is important to see that Jesus doesn't criticize Martha for her work. I'm sure He appreciated the food. What He does point out is that she is distracted, worried, and upset when she could be enjoying Him. He doesn't say that the preparations are bad, but there is something better - spending time with Him.

There is nothing wrong with the priorities we talked about earlier--education, a career, family, health--but we must always remember not to get so focused on these things that we forget about what is better: our relationship with God.

Our memory verse for this week is Matthew 6:33 (have the students look it up and read it out loud together) "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

- *What does this verse mean?*
- *What is God's righteousness?*
- *If you really believe this verse is true, what difference should it make in the way you live?*

Commitment

Give a pencil and a copy of the handout "Martha or Mary" to each student. Have them fill it in, then when you see that they have finished, discuss as a group what kinds of things make us feel distracted, worried, and upset and what we can do to have more peace in these areas. Then hear some of their ideas for ways to seek God's kingdom and righteousness.

Closing

Give each student a copy of the handout "Sitting at Jesus' Feet" and explain:

The best way to seek God's kingdom and righteousness is to do what Mary did, sit at Jesus feet listening to him. This handout will help you do just that as it guides you through parts of the Bible where Jesus is teaching the people around Him. There are only a few verses for each day so you can really think about the verses you read. I know you will learn a lot about Jesus' priorities if you spend just a few minutes a day reading the verses, noting what you learned from them, and then asking God to show you how he wants you to put what you have learned into practice.

**Graduate from High School
Graduate from College
Have lots of friends
Have other people think I'm a
success
Have a happy marriage
Have a happy family
Have healthy children
Be healthy
Make a positive difference in the
world
Make lots of money
Have a successful career
Be content with my life**

Martha or Mary

Things that make me distracted, worried, and upset

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ways I want to seek God's kingdom and righteousness

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Matthew 6: 33

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Martha or Mary

Things that make me distracted, worried, and upset

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ways I want to seek God's kingdom and righteousness

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Matthew 6: 33

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.*

*SITTING AT JESUS' FEET***A reading guide**

Verses		What I Learned
1	Matthew 5:1-9	
2	Matthew 5: 10-12	
3	Matthew 5: 13-16	
4	Matthew 5: 17-20	
5	Matthew 5: 21-26	
6	Matthew 5: 27-30	
7	Matthew 5: 31-37	
Verses		What I Learned
8	Matthew 5: 38-42	
9	Matthew 5: 43-48	
10	Matthew 6: 1-4	
11	Matthew 6: 5-18	
12	Matthew 6: 19-21	
13	Matthew 6: 22-24	

Verses		What I Learned
15	Matthew 7: 1-6	
16	Matthew 7: 7-12	
17	Matthew 7: 13-23	
18	Matthew 7: 24-29	
19	John 13: 1-17	
20	John 13: 31-35	
21	John 14: 1-6	
Verses		What I Learned
22	John 14: 25-27	
23	John 15: 1-8	
24	John 15: 9-14	
25	John 15: 15-17	
26	John 15:18-25	
27	John 15:25- 16:4	