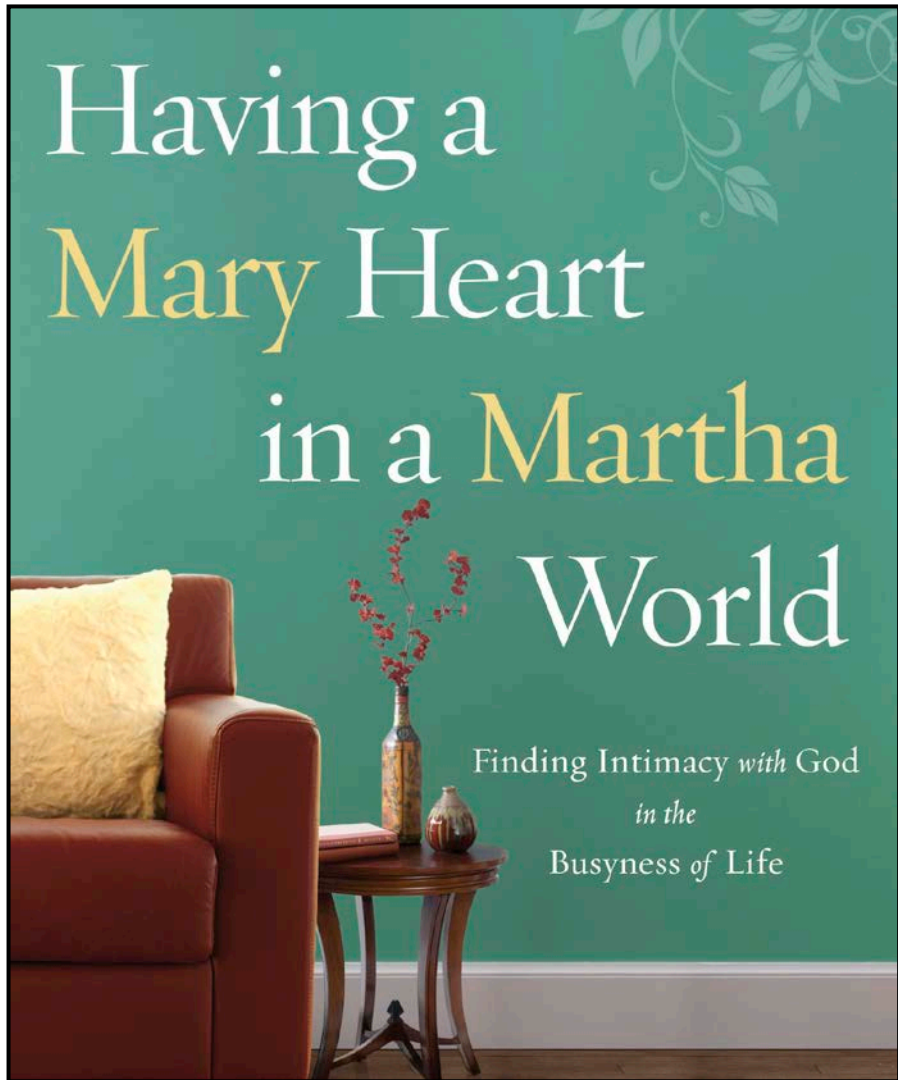


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BIBLE STUDY



BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Nothing has transformed my life like the study of God’s Word. Something powerful happens when we go beyond other people’s opinions and revelations and discover for ourselves what God has to say. I designed this twelve-week Bible study to help you do just that.

I recommend using a translation of the Bible that you enjoy and understand, as well as a notebook and a pen to record your answers. Before each lesson and as you read the corresponding chapter, ask the Holy Spirit to increase your understanding as you examine God’s Word and then help you apply the truths you discover.

Each lesson starts with questions for individual reflection or group discussion, then moves into a study of scriptural principles. At the end of the lesson, you’ll have an opportunity to write about what spoke most to you in that chapter. The stories, quotes and analogies within the chapters may provide further opportunities for discussion or reflection.

My prayer is that you will begin to experience the blessing God promises to those who look “intently into the perfect law that gives freedom ... not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it” (James 1:25). There is a holy makeover waiting for each one of us. It is found in God’s presence and within the pages of his Word. Dig in, ladies! You’ll be glad you did.



CHAPTER ONE: A TALE OF TWO SISTERS

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. What preconceived ideas did you have about Mary and Martha before reading this book? Which woman do you relate to most – Mary or Martha? Explain your answer.

2. One woman told me, “My life is like a blender – and it’s stuck on frappe!” What inanimate object best describes how your life currently feels? _____

Going Deeper

3. Read Luke 10:38-42. List at least two things you learn about Martha in this passage and at least two things you learn about Mary. How would you sum up Martha in one word? How would you sum up Mary? _____

4. A woman told me, “I guess I’m just a Martha and that I’ll always be a Martha.” Is it possible for our basic character to change, or are we destined to live our lives stuck in a pre-determined nature? Explain your answer. _____

5. What does the Bible say in the following verses about the potential for change?

Ezekiel 36:26-27 _____

2 Corinthians 5:17 _____

Philippians 1:6 _____

6. Have you seen God’s work of transformation in your own life or someone else’s?

How did you know it was a “holy makeover” and not just a temporary “facelift”?

7. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Circle key words and meditate on these verses – really think about what Jesus is saying. Then memorize this passage phrase by phrase. Write it on an index card, and refer to it frequently, repeating it until it becomes a part of you.

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER TWO: “LORD, DON’T YOU CARE?”

Question for Discussion or Reflection

1. The story of Mary and Martha stirs up memories of sibling rivalry for many of us. What battles with your siblings do you remember the most? What did you do to get your parents to notice you? _____

2. Read Luke 10:38-42. Have you ever asked Martha’s question, “Lord, don’t you care?” What was the situation? How did God answer your question? _____

Going Deeper

3. All of us have felt alone – even great heroes of the faith felt this way. Read 1 Kings 19:1-18. How did the “Deadly D’s” of distraction, discouragement and doubt attack Elijah after the great victory over the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18? I’ve completed the first one as an example:

DISTRACTION: *Jezebel’s anger made him run for his life.*

DISCOURAGEMENT: _____

DOUBT: _____

4. In this passage how did God minister to Elijah in the midst of his discouragement? How has God ministered to you when you felt alone and were hurting? _____

5. In Mark 4:35-41 the disciples echoed Martha's question: "Don't you care?" What does this portion of Scripture teach us about the difficult times in our lives? (Consider Isaiah 43:1-2) _____

6. Read Psalm 103. List at least five of the many ways God shows his love for us. (If you are struggling to know the Father's love, consider memorizing this chapter so you won't forget "all his benefits.")

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

7. Write Jesus a letter beginning with "Lord I know you love me because..." and list the ways he has shown his great love for you. _____

8. What spoke to you most in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER THREE: THE DIAGNOSIS

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Martha wanted Jesus to tell Mary to help out in the kitchen, but instead of giving her what she wanted, Dr. Jesus made a diagnosis: “Martha, Martha . . .you are worried and upset about many things.” If you had been Martha, how would Jesus’ words have made you feel? _____

2. According to Dr. Edward Hallowell, over half of us are what he calls chronic worriers. Which of the ten signs of a big worrier on page 33 do you struggle with? How do worry and anxiety spill over into your daily life and affect your behavior? your physical health? _____

Going Deeper

3. Fear not only affects us physically but spiritually. Read Luke 8:14. List three things that may choke the Word of God out of our lives. Which one do you struggle with most, and how does it choke you spiritually? _____

4. Look at the “Concern and Worry” diagram on page 38, and read the quote from Gary E. Gilley. What concerns are you currently facing? What worries? _____

5. What do the following passages tell us to do with our worries and concerns, and what will be the result?

Proverbs 3:5-6 COMMAND: _____

RESULT: _____

Philippians 4:6-7 COMMAND: _____

RESULT: _____

6. a. Rewrite Matthew 6:25-30 as if God were speaking directly to you and your current situation. *Therefore, I tell you, _____ (your name), do not worry about. . .* _____

b. Read Matthew 6:31-34. Respond to this passage in a prayer to the Lord.

Lord, I don't want to worry as the world does. Help me to . . . _____

7. According to 1 John 4:16-18, how can we respond to God's love, and what will happen to fear when we do? _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CURE

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Read the wagon and the rocks story on pages 48-51. Take a look in your wagon.

Which rocks has God asked you to carry? Which rocks have you unwisely and sometimes unconsciously volunteered to carry for someone else? _____

2. Do you ever feel the driven, perfectionistic, spiritual Martha Stewart coming out in you? What does she look like at home? What does she look like at church? _____

Going Deeper

3. What do you think Jesus meant in Luke 10:38-42 when he told Martha that only one thing was needed? _____

4. a. Turn a few pages, to Luke 18:18-25, to another exchange Jesus had. What qualifications did the rich young ruler give for entering the kingdom of God?

b. What was the “one thing” Jesus said he lacked? _____

c. Why do you think Christ focused on his wealth? _____

d. Why may the one thing God asks us to do be different from what he requires of someone else? (Consider 1 Corinthians 13:3 and Philippians 3:4-7.)

5. Perhaps like the rich young ruler you find yourself trying to perform for God, carrying more rocks in hopes of earning God’s love and favor? What do the following verses say about works-based Christianity?

Galatians 3:3 _____

Titus 3:5 _____

6. What did Paul say in Philippians 3:13-14 was his “one thing”? Why was forgetting what was behind him so important for Paul? (Consider Acts 26:9-15.) What things in your past hold you back from experiencing all God has for you? _____

Take a moment and ask the Lord to help you let go of anything that is holding you back.

7. Using the guidelines on page 55, sit down this week and begin “dumping rocks.” But before you start, ask the Lord for wisdom (James 1:4). He loves to give it, and he wants to set us free! _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER FIVE: LIVING ROOM INTIMACY

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Someone has said that each of us were created “with a God-shaped hole” and that we will never be truly satisfied until we fill that space with him. Unfortunately many of us, as Teri described on page 69, fill up on spiritual Snicker Bars. What do you turn to instead of God when you’re feeling empty? _____

2. I’ve written that intimacy with God comes through Prayer + the Word + Time. Which of these three disciplines is most difficult for you? Which comes easiest?

Going Deeper

3. We all face barriers to intimacy with God. Put a check by the one or two you struggle with most, then look up the verses next to that barrier. Circle the verse that is most meaningful to you.

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ___ | Unworthiness | (Isaiah 41:9-10; Ephesians 2:13-14) |
| ___ | Busyness | (Psalms 90:12; Isaiah 40:29-31) |
| ___ | Guilt / Shame | (Psalm 32:5; 1 John 1:9) |
| ___ | Pride | (Psalm 10:4; James 4:6-7) |
| ___ | Depression | (Psalm 42:11; John 14:1) |
| ___ | Trials / Hardships | (Hebrews 13:6; 2 Corinthians 4:7-10) |

4. Meditate on the verse you circled, then personalize it in the form of a prayer to God. Here is an example based on 1 John 1:9.

God, thank you for the forgiveness that comes when I admit my sin rather than

*deny it. I'm so glad I don't have to clean up my act before I come to you.
All I have to do is come. You promise to do the cleaning.*

Your prayer: _____

5. I've written that before we become Christians, Satan tells us we don't need a Savior. After we become Christians, he tells us we don't deserve a Savior. How have these lies affected your walk with God? _____

6. God longs to have fellowship with us. Read the following verses, and describe the metaphor Scripture uses to describe the intimate relationship we can have with God.

John 15:5 _____
Romans 8:15-16 _____
2 Corinthians 11:2 _____

7. Read the excerpt from "My Heart Christ's Home" (pages 72-73). How does it make you feel to think that Jesus longs to have time alone with you – to be at home in you? How could this realization turn your devotional life from a duty to a delight?

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER SIX: KITCHEN SERVICE

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Dwight L. Moody said, “Of one hundred men, one will read the Bible; the ninety-nine will read the Christian.” Who was the first Christian in your life to live in such a way that you could clearly see Christ? How did this person affect your life? _____

2. Read the story of the little boy and the evangelist on page 97. How would you like Jesus to “stick out all over” in your life – that is, what attitudes and characteristics of the Savior would you like God to develop in your life? _____

Going Deeper

3. Read John 13:1-17. Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet was a totally unexpected example of what true Christian love should look like. According to page 82, why was it so shocking? _____

4. J. Oswald Sanders said, “It is noteworthy that only once did Jesus say that he was leaving his disciples an example, and that was when he washed their feet.” In what unexpected ways could we wash the feet of those around us? _____

5. Place one (or more) of the following letters beside each verse that follows. In this passage Jesus ministered (a) as he went *on his way*; (b) as he went *out of his way*; (c) in *all kinds of ways*.

_____ Mark 1:29-34

_____ Mark 6:30-34

_____ Mark 7:31-35

6. How could you practically administer Christ's love in each of these ways? I've completed the first one as an example.

As I go on my way: *I thank the school crossing guard for keeping my kids safe.*

As I go out of my way: _____

In all kinds of ways: _____

7. Read Acts 3:1-10. What can we learn from this passage about how to actively show God's love to those around us? _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE BETTER PART

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Read the “hoopy birthday” story on page 99-100. Name the Hula-Hoop responsibilities you have in your life. Which one is the most difficult to keep in motion?

2. Consider Wilbur Rees’ thought-provoking words:

I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please, not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don’t want enough of Him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.

In all honesty, how much of God do you want? What keeps you from wanting more?

Going Deeper

3. We live with so much less than God intended us to have. Ask God to illuminate your understanding as you read Paul’s prayer for believers in Ephesians 3:16-19. Then list three truths from this passage you’d like God to make real in your life.

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. How does Matthew 6:33 relate to Stephen Covey’s “First Things First” principle (page 103) – that is, putting in the big rocks first? Give an example of a time you found this principle true in your life. _____

5. Read on pages 107-108 about Sidlow Baxter’s personal struggle to develop a devotional time. How important is our will in this process of seeking God? How important are our emotions? _____

6. Explain how the following Bible characters chose to put God first despite overwhelming emotions or circumstances.

David (2 Samuel 12:13-23) _____

Daniel (Daniel 6:3-10) _____

Jesus (Matthew 26:36-39) _____

7. Use the “Journal the Journey” outline in the back of this study and follow the instructions to mediate on and write about one of the following passages.

Psalm 139

Romans 8

Ephesians 4

Isaiah 55

1 Corinthians 13

James 1

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER EIGHT: LESSONS FROM LAZARUS

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. What is your favorite kind of story and why?

- | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Romance | Mystery | Biography |
| Adventure | Sci-Fi | Fantasy |

2. Which of the following lessons from Lazarus have you found most true in your life?

Explain the circumstance involved and what you learned.

- God’s will does not always proceed in a straight line.
- God’s love sometimes tarries for our good and his glory.
- God’s ways are not our ways, but his character is still dependable.
- God’s plan is released when we believe and obey.
- The “end” is never the end; it is only the beginning.

Going Deeper

3. Read John 11:1-6. Circle key words, and think about this family’s situation and Jesus’ response. When you face difficulties, which of these verses might comfort you most and why? _____

4. Because time and space confine us, we can't always see what is really happening. What do the following verses say about this in-between time we find ourselves in?

John 16:33 _____

Hebrews 11:13-16 _____

James 1:2-4 _____

5. Martha Tennison says, "We only trust people we know. If you're struggling to trust God, it may be because you don't really know God." We come to know God better through his Word. What do the following verses reveal about our heavenly Father?

Psalm 27:1 "The Lord is _____."

Psalm 34:18 "The Lord is _____."

Psalm 100:5 "The Lord is _____."

Psalm 145:8 "The Lord is _____."

6. Look up the word *trust* in a Bible concordance. Find two phrases that speak to you, and write out the corresponding verses. _____

7. Laura Barker Snow writes about the difficult times we all face and how we need to view such times through the sovereignty and goodness of God, to live as if God is saying:

My child, I have a message for you today; let me whisper it in your ear, that it may gild with glory any storm clouds which may arise, and smooth the rough places upon which you have to tread. It is short, only five words, but let them sink into your inmost soul; use them as a pillow upon which to rest your weary head This thing is from ME.

How would your life be different if you could receive these words as truth and not only truth but as an evidence of God's love in your life? _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER NINE: MARTHA’S TEACHABLE HEART

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Which of the following best describes the kind of student you were in school?

- Intellectual Absent-Though-Present Teacher’s Pet
- Procrastinator Party Animal High Achiever

What did you like most about school? What did you like least? How have you carried those likes and dislikes into adulthood? _____

2. Think of someone you consider teachable. What character qualities make you view him or her that way? _____

Going Deeper

3. Fill out the “Are You Teachable?” questionnaire on page 139. What did you discover about yourself? _____

4. We have to accept the diagnosis if we’re ever going to experience the cure. I believe Martha did just that. Read Luke 10:38-42. Now read John 11:17-28. What differences do you see in Martha from these two stories? _____

5. Read Hebrews 12:5-11, and then list four reasons why God disciplines us and four results of that discipline.

REASONS	RESULTS
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. The Bible is filled with if-then propositions. *If we will . . . then God will . . .* What do the following verses promise us if we obey? I've filled out the first verse for you.

Joshua 1:8	If . . . then . . .	<i>I meditate on God's Word and do it, I will be prosperous and successful.</i>
John 8:31-32	If . . . then . . .	_____ _____
James 1:25	If . . . then . . .	_____ _____

7. God is willing to forgive and change us – even at our very worst. Consider the prayer David prayed in Psalm 51:10-12 after his murderous, adulterous affair with Bathsheba. Rewrite this cry for transformation in your own words. Then read it aloud to the Lord.

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER TEN: MARY'S EXTRAVAGANT LOVE

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Describe a time you expressed love and concern for others and were misunderstood. How did it make you feel? Did you pull back or press in closer? _____

2. Consider the differences between Mary and Judas' love for Christ:

MARY . . .

- had a heart of gratitude
- came with abandon
- heard what Jesus said & responded
- held nothing back

JUDAS. . .

- had a heart of greed
- came with agenda
- heard but did not understand
- gave nothing up

Which aspect of Mary's love comes easiest to you? Which aspect is most difficult?

Going Deeper

3. Read John 12:1-11. What was Judas' response to Mary's extravagant love? What did John say was the motivation behind his response? (vs. 6) _____

4. Read Matthew 16:21-23. What was Peter's response to Jesus explanation that he must die? What did Jesus say was the motivation behind his response? (vs.23) _____

5. Read another account of Mary’s anointing Jesus in Mark 14:6-9. Finish the following four statements Jesus made about her extravagant love.

“She has done a _____ thing to me.”

“She did what she _____.”

“She poured perfume . . . to prepare for my _____.”

“Wherever the gospel is preached . . . what she has _____ will also be told.”

Meditate on one of these statements. Ask the Lord to show you practical ways you could love him more beautifully and sacrificially.

6. Matthew and Mark both place Judas’s dark change of heart as happening immediately after Mary’s extravagant act of love. According to the following verses, why are greed and the love of money so dangerous?

Matthew 6:24 _____

1 Timothy 6:9-10 _____

James 4:1-4 _____

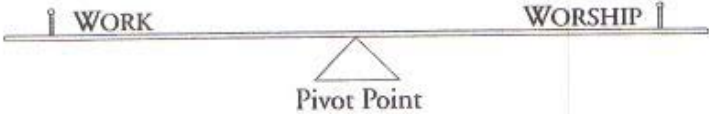
7. Mary loved extravagantly because she had experienced firsthand the extravagant love of God. Read 1 John 3:1 and Romans 8:31-30. Write a love letter back to God expressing your gratitude for his lavish love and extravagant grace. _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER ELEVEN: BALANCING WORK & WORSHIP

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. What does your teeter-totter look like when it comes to balancing work and worship? Draw a line to show which way it tends to tilt (if it does).



2. Read the “Listening to Your Soul” checklist on pages 182-183. According to the checklist, do you need to spend more time in the Living Room or the Kitchen? What are some practical ways you could lean into your weak side to bring balance to your Christian walk? _____

Going Deeper

3. On one side of the teeter-totter we find the importance of loving people. Read the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. Describe how the Samaritan fulfilled the following statements:

- He took NOTICE* _____
- He took ACTION* _____
- He took RESPONSIBILITY* _____

Which of these three qualities comes easiest to you? Which is the hardest for you? _____

4. On the other side of Mary and Martha’s story we find Christ’s teaching on prayer. What does Luke 11:1-13 show about our part in prayer and God’s promised response?

OUR PART

GOD'S RESPONSE

5. According to the following verses, why is it dangerous to spend all our time on one end of the teeter-totter?

Matthew 7:21-23 _____

James 2:14-17 _____

1 John 3:16-18 _____

6. We all need time to let our souls catch up. From Isaiah 58:13-14, list three ways we can “keep the Sabbath” and also three blessings we will receive from honoring the “Lord’s holy day.” _____

7. According to the following verses, what blessings do we receive from hospitality?

Isaiah 58:6-8 _____

Matthew 25:34-36 _____

Hebrews 13:2 _____

8. What spoke most to you from this chapter? _____

CHAPTER TWELVE: HAVING A MARY HEART IN A MARTHA WORLD

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Have you ever heard a great Christian testimony and wished you could have the faith of that person or live as he or she lived? What was the process that gave them the product? _____

2. When you face difficulties in life, which approach do you usually take? Explain.

The All-Star Wrestling Approach: “God! I’m doing this for you –howsaboutta little help here?”

The Job Approach: “Where are you –and why don’t you care?”

The Jonah Approach: “Forget Nineveh –I’m headed for the Bahamas.”

Going Deeper

3. Read John 12:1-3. Knowing what you now know about these sisters, what two things could you surmise about Martha and about Mary from this passage? How would you sum up Martha in one word? How would you sum up Mary? How does this differ from how you described them in the study for chapter 1 (question 3)? _____

4. Read the following verses. Describe the process God uses and the purpose he intends.

Deuteronomy 8:2	PROCESS	_____
	PURPOSE	_____
Romans 8:28-29	PROCESS	_____
	PURPOSE	_____
2 Corinthians 4:17	PROCESS	_____
	PURPOSE	_____

5. How do we partner in this process according to Philippians 2:12-13?

We do . . . _____

God does . . . _____

6. Read Philippians 1:6 and Hebrews 10:35-36, then look up the following words in the dictionary, and write their definitions.

Confident: _____

Perseverance: _____

Completion: _____

Which of these words mean the most to you and why? _____

7. Read Philippians 3:12-14. Circle key words, and then rewrite this passage in your own words. Read it out loud as a prayer, a declaration of faith, and/or a personal mission statement. Ask God to keep it ever before you as you run the race for the prize.

8. What spoke most to you from this chapter? _____

JOURNAL THE JOURNEY

While many people keep journals of daily events and feelings, a Bible Reading Highlights Journal records what God is saying to us through his Word and our response to him. Here is the format that I've found works well for me.

Date _____ What I read today _____

Best thing I marked today: *Reference:* _____

Thought: _____

How it impressed me: _____
