

OVERVIEW

Today's students are busier than ever before. They are expected to keep up with their peers and ever-raising standards of "success." It's all too common for Jesus to get pushed down the ladder of priorities so we can attend to "more pressing" responsibilities. This lesson is about our busy lives and looking at how Jesus should take priority—always. We choose what we prioritize, and when our relationship with Jesus comes in second place to all that other stuff, it's up to us to take a long, hard look at what's important in life. Students will understand that being busy isn't a bad thing, but we do have to be careful about chasing what really matters: our relationship with Jesus.

TEACHING

OPENING QUESTION

- Tell about a time when you were exceptionally busy. How did you feel?

WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT

Busyness is something of an epidemic among students today. You're overloaded with schoolwork and extracurricular activities—at the minimum. Unfortunately, a busy schedule has become a cultural expectation. Maybe you feel like if you're not busy, then you're not trying hard enough. If you're not busy, then your future as a successful adult is at stake. Yes, it's good to be active and to use your God-given gifts to the fullest, but what happens when your busyness pushes out your time with God?

Read Luke 10:38–42.

You choose where to invest your time. Martha bustles about taking care of this and that for the comfort of her guests. She feels anxious and troubled. She chose to prioritize tasks and worries over her Lord, believing her duties as host were more important. On the other hand, Mary sits at the feet of Jesus and prioritizes spending time with him. You always have a choice to either embrace your worries and to-do lists or to learn to sit at Jesus' feet, rest in his presence, and listen to his teaching. Of course your to-do lists need to get done, but at the end of the day, those things shouldn't be elevated to a more important status than spending time with Jesus.

Read Psalm 127:1–2.

The LORD makes things happen, not you. You can work from sunup to sundown, seven days a week, all year round and still find your efforts aren't producing the results you expected or wanted. Remember God is the one who builds, sustains, and even provides you with adequate rest! If we are not working *with* the Lord in everything, our labor is in vain. Spend time seeking him, and he will provide everything you need to succeed according to his will.

A SECOND LOOK

Pick one of these illustrations to bring the topic to life:

Option 1: Balancing Act

Sometimes your busy life feels like trying to balance a stack of books on your open palms. Each time another responsibility is added, another book is added on top. At first, there are only a few books, so it isn't too hard to keep track of what's in your hands or hold up the weight without it toppling over. But as the stack grows, it becomes harder to remember which books you have, and the weight quickly tests the strength of your arms. And then, finally, when the stack is towering well above your head, a big, thick book is dropped on top, and the weight becomes too much to hold. The stack crashes to the ground. There's a limit to how much you can carry.

DISCUSS:

- How many "books" are you trying to hold up right now? How close are you to dropping them all?
- If your life is stacked high with activities, commitments, and responsibilities, how much attention can you realistically give to each one?
- How do you decide what to prioritize?

Option 2: One Thing at a Time

We are all guilty of trying to do too much at once. Have you ever tried to hit targets at a shooting range? It would look really cool if you could rapid-fire and hit the bullseye of each target, like they do in the movies, but most shooters can't even get close to such a goal. When we try and hit all the targets at once, we'll miss most of them. But if we steady ourselves and aim at one target at a time, then we have a much better chance of success. Busy lives are kind of the same way. You don't do yourself or anyone else any favors by trying to do too much at once. You'll have more success if you slow down, prioritize, and then focus on one thing at a time.

DISCUSS:

- What are some of the different "targets" you're focusing on in your life right now?
- Do you prefer the rapid-fire, try-and-hit-all-the-targets-at-once method, or do you go slow and steady? What does that look like practically in your life?
- How often do you intentionally slow down and focus first on your relationship with Jesus?

FACILITATOR'S NOTE: Take an honest, hard look at your own life. How often does "busyness" come before your time with God? This is a struggle you can share with your students! Talk to them about your own efforts to sit still at the feet of Jesus, and they might be more willing to open up about their busy lives.

THE TAKEAWAY

Busyness can cause us to miss out on a real relationship with God.

APPLICATION

DISCOVER

- When have you successfully prioritized Jesus over all the other things vying for your time and attention?

THE BIBLE IN YOUR LIFE

Busyness is kind of a cultural expectation: max out your class schedule, participate in extracurricular activities, show up to church, complete your chores, spend time with your family, and hang out with your friends. It's easy to be busy, but it can be hard to find time to sit still at the feet of Jesus.

Read Luke 10:38–42 and Psalm 127:1–2, then answer the following questions.

DISCUSS:

- On a scale of 1–4 (4=extremely busy), how would you rate your level of busyness?
- How does your busyness affect your relationship with Jesus?
- In Luke 10:42, Jesus says, "one thing is necessary." What is that one thing?
- If you could cut out one or two things from your life, what would they be and why?

APPLY IT

Busyness is a choice. Whenever your busy life comes between you and Jesus, it's up to you to set your priorities and follow through. This week, try and identify the busy things in your life that push out Jesus. How can you adapt your schedule and responsibilities to better prioritize your faith?

BE SPECIFIC:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

PRAYER

Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks.

A QUOTE TO THINK ABOUT

"However, if I were to let my life be taken over by what is urgent, I might very well never get around to what is essential. It's so easy to spend your whole time being preoccupied with urgent matters and never starting to live, really live."
– Henri Nouwen¹

THE TAKEAWAY

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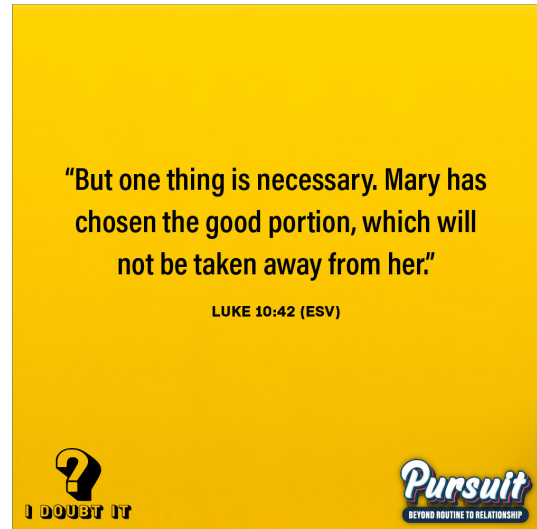
WAYS TO FOLLOW UP

Here are some tools that you can use to follow up with your students throughout the week. For example, send any of the graphics included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.

MEMORY VERSE

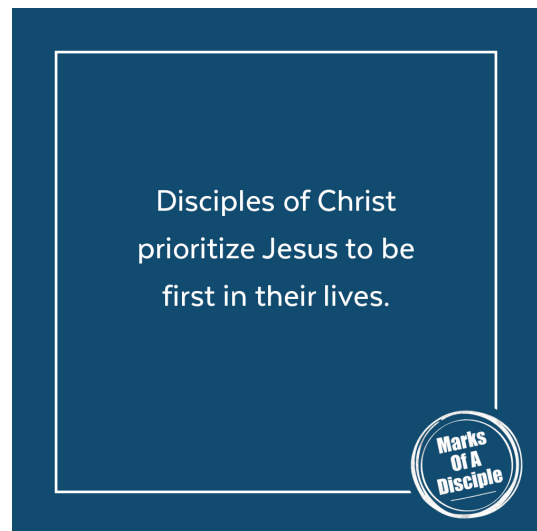
"But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:42 (ESV)



MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Marks of a Disciple are a great way to figure out whether your students are growing in their understanding of God's story and how to connect it to their daily lives. As Scripture impacts your students' hearts, they'll begin to live differently and these Marks of a Disciple are a great guidepost to help them grow more Christ-like. Periodically check in with your students about one or two of these Marks of a Disciple that seem to be speaking to them specifically in this season.



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¹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Letters to Marc About Jesus: Living a Spiritual Life in a Material World* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 3.