

Examples

Lesson 4—Mary’s Example

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Luke 10:38-42, John 11:32, John 12:1-8

Key Verse: Psalm 37:7a—“Be silent before the Lord and wait expectantly for Him...” (HSCB)

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- Consider what kind of example that you are.
- How often do you find yourself at the feet of Jesus?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.

OPENING ACTIVITY

As students enter tell them that they can be a part of a game but they don’t have to if they don’t want to. The game is a simple version of “Let’s Make a Deal.” Your students get to choose a number between 1 and 7, they have no idea what they are choosing, and they have to do whatever answer they get. Let the students who want to participate choose numbers from the list below without letting them see the answers. More than one student can choose the same number once all the numbers are used. Write down their names next to the numbers below and once everyone has chosen, then tell them the results.

(NOTE: Some of the positions below are odd but don’t worry, they won’t sit like this the whole lesson.)

- (1) You have to stand on a chair today with your arms raised.*
- (2) You have to sit in front of the door with your hand on the doorknob.*

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CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.” Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

- (3) *You get to sit on (name the place in the room that seems to be everyone's favorite spot.)*
(4) *You have to sit on the floor at my feet.*
(5) *You have to sit with your back to me.*
(6) *You have to stand in a corner with your nose to the wall.*
(7) *You get to sit in the place of your choice. If someone else is already sitting there, then they can move to any other open spot in the room.*

(NOTE: Have students stay in their positions while you have the following discussion. Then let them all have a seat so that they can listen without distraction.)

Discussion Questions

SAY: Each of these positions, even those of you who didn't participate, represents different aspects of where people are spiritually in their relationship with God.

- *What attitudes or lifestyles do you think these positions represent? (There are no right and wrong answers here and some people might interpret the same position in totally different ways—i.e., the person in front of the door holding the doorknob: Are they blocking the door so that they are a stumbling block for those who might come to Christ or are they ready to open the door to welcome others in.)*
- *Which one of these position do you feel best represents your walk with Christ? (Go around the room and let each student answer.)*

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: Recently we've been taking a look at "Examples" from the Bible.

- *A few weeks ago, what did we learn from Barzillai's example? (He was an example of giving but not going.)*
- *Two weeks ago what was Andrew an example of? (Bringing people to Jesus.)*
- *Last week what was Joshua an example of? (A godly life in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.)*

SAY: We are getting ready to read a story about a lady named Mary. There are several Mary's in the Bible, but this is NOT Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Luke 10:38-42

- *What was the difference between Martha and Mary? (The difference lies in what was important to them. Martha's priority was to get things done, to make sure that everything was ready. Mary's priority was to sit at Jesus' feet and to learn about Him.)*

Martha was worried and bothered / Mary was at the feet of Jesus.
Martha was distracted / Mary was delighted

Martha was focused on feeding / Mary was focused on being fed.
Martha was coming apart / Mary was pulling apart.

- Finally Martha stomps in to Jesus to demand that Jesus send Mary in to help her.
How do you think Martha felt and what do you think she thought when Jesus gave His answer?
- *What is the one thing that Jesus was talking about, the one thing that really matters in life?* (The one thing that matters is what Mary had chosen—Him. The most important thing in your life is your relationship with Jesus.)
- *Who are you more like—Martha or Mary? Are you worried and bothered about so many things or do you find yourself being caught up and still at the feet of Jesus?*

SAY: Let's take another look at a story from Mary's life...Her brother Lazarus became sick. Word came to Jesus that he was ill and yet Jesus remained where He was for two days instead of leaving to heal him. Before leaving he told His disciples that Lazarus was dead. As Jesus approached the town, Martha came out to meet Him saying, "*Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died...*" (John 11: 21). But Mary stayed at the house. Jesus comforted Martha and told her that He is the "*resurrection and the life*" (v. 25). Then Martha went back to the house to tell Mary that Jesus wanted to see her. Mary quickly arose and went out to meet Him. Listen to their encounter.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read John 11:32-43

SAY: Mary was hurting. Her brother was dead. She was confused. Why hadn't Jesus come sooner? Why hadn't He been there to stop it? So what does she do—She falls at Jesus' feet (v. 32).

- *What was Jesus' response to Mary and the others? What does this show about God's heart?*
- *What can you learn from Mary in this story? (When she was hurt and confused she found herself at Jesus' feet.)*

SAY: Let's read the last story about Mary...It's happens not long after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read John 12: 1-8

SAY: Jews had a custom of reclining at the table, instead of sitting at the table, to eat. Guest usually reclined on divans with their heads near the table. They leaned on cushions with one arm and ate with the other. Their feet would project at the end of the divan away from the table (for obvious reasons). Mary could have easily slipped from her place, walked around the others, and reached down to pour the perfume on Jesus' feet.

SAY: Perfume was very costly in Jesus' day because it had to be imported. In fact it was one of the ways of that people made investments because it occupied a small place, was portable, and was easily negotiable in the open market. The cost of Mary's perfume was three hundred denarii, approximately a year's salary for the average worker. Today it would be the equivalent of \$30-\$50,000. She presented it as an offering of love and gratitude, prompted by the restoration of her brother. Then she wiped his feet with her hair. This was a gesture of the utmost devotion and reverence.

- *What do you think about what Mary did?*
- *What have you learned about Mary in the stories today?*
- *Of what do you think Mary would be an example?*
- *In all three of these stories, what do you find Mary doing?*

SAY: In every story about Mary, we find her at the feet of Jesus:

In the first story, she sits at the feet of Jesus to learn—Her heart says, “I want You.”

In the second story, she falls at the feet of Jesus in grief—Her heart says, “I need You.”

In the third story, she bows at His feet in adoration—Her heart says, “I love You.”

- *How would you say that your heart and life compare to Mary's?*
- *How often do you find yourself at the feet of Jesus and with what attitude to you come to Him—Is it, “I want this,” or “I want You. I need You. I love You.”?*
- *What can we learn from Mary's example?*

KEY VERSE

SAY: Martha, in the first story, was worried and distracted but Mary was always at Jesus' feet. This week try not to be like Martha—too busy, distracted and worried about so much. Instead, remember the “one thing” that Jesus said really matters, which is being with Him, the part that Mary had chosen.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read the first phrase of Psalm 37:7 (Psalm 37:7a)

- *What do you think stops people in our culture from being silent or being still?*
- *What would you define as your greatest distraction against being still before God?*

WRAP IT UP

SAY: This week I want to challenge you to be still and to wait patiently and expectantly at the feet of Jesus. Take time this week to sit at His feet, fall at His feet, and bow at His feet to adore Him.

Prayer Time

Pray specifically today that your students will take time to be with Jesus this week.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

Prayer Requests

