

# Session 3: Priorities

## SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** Knowing God should be our priority more than all the good works we do to serve him.

**Head Change:** To know that our first priority is our relationship with God more than our acts of service for him.

**Heart Change:** To feel peace about prioritizing God above everything else in our lives.

**Life Change:** To remind ourselves that, while serving the Lord is a high calling, he ultimately desires our worship and company.

Each session in *Table Talks* corresponds to a video segment featuring a recipe. Feel free to watch the video as a group, make the recipe together, and use the icebreaker question below to spark conversation while you eat.

## OPEN

**Imagine you are asked to host an elaborate dinner party. Would you be excited about it or filled with dread? Why? What would be your priority in preparing for the party?**

Everyone thinks of hosting differently, and it's not everyone's cup of tea. Even among the naturally gifted hosts, no two are alike. Some love to make intricate meals, others prefer to have a spotless home, while others focus on the guest list.

In this session, Bianca will introduce us to Mary and Martha, two sisters with vastly different approaches to having Jesus in their home. Jesus's response to their dispute gives us a glimpse into how we should prioritize our time and efforts.

## VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Bianca Juárez Olthoff's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to the following questions.

## How did Jesus respond to Martha's complaint about Mary?

## What was the point of the gathering in the sisters' home?

## Why was Mary's the better choice?

### Show Session Three: *Priorities* (9 minutes).

## REVIEW

Hosting a gathering can be both a delight and stress for those responsible. Bianca told a story of when she allowed the pressure of perfection to override her enjoyment of the event. She had lost sight of her purpose for hosting. **In what ways can you relate to her situation?**

Bianca told a story from Luke that shows what can happen when we misplace our priorities. Read Luke 10:38–42.

Following the social norms of her society, Martha opened her home to Jesus when he came to town. But Martha, Mary, and Jesus were already friends. **When you welcome friends to visit, what does your preparation look like? What are your priorities as you get ready?**

Martha busied herself with preparations but her sister didn't. Martha's issue with Mary seems reasonable—it's not out of the question to need help hosting. **If you have a roommate or spouse, what expectations do you have for them to help with hosting duties during a dinner party? If help fails to materialize, how do you react?**

Bianca explained the phrase “sat at the Lord’s feet” as the action of a disciple or student, which was rarely—if ever—described of women in Jesus’s day. Allowing Mary to learn from him made Jesus a unique teacher. **In what ways does the context Bianca provided shape the way you view this story?**

Bianca noted that Martha's work was necessary: "candles need to be lit, the table has to be set, and the floor has to be swept." Such chores are part of what makes a place welcoming to visitors and able to be used for great purposes. But Jesus corrected Martha's attitude. **What was wrong with her attitude? How did Jesus point her toward better priorities?**

Jesus didn't reprimand Martha for her being a hostess, but rather for her attitude while serving her guests. In her zeal to serve, she had forgotten the reason for the gathering. Mary's focus was on soaking in Jesus's teaching. He was the reason they were all together, after all. **How did Jesus**

**describe her actions in verse 42? What would having a mindset like Mary's look like in your life?**

## BIBLE EXPLORATION

In the Gospel of Luke, Martha and Mary welcomed Jesus to their home in distinctly different ways that revealed different priorities. Their story reminds us that following and knowing Jesus are the most important things we can do with our lives. Jesus also talked about how we should prioritize our lives in his longest recorded sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, which we find in Matthew.

Read Matthew 6:19–24.

This section of the sermon focuses on our relationship with possessions and money—which can both easily distract us from God and other people. **What do these verses tell us about the durability of our possessions or finances? Why shouldn't we place our hope in them?**

Our world brims with plenty of “treasures” we can store up for ourselves—from the latest tech to cute clothes to social-media-worthy experiences.

**What “treasures” compete for your attention?**

**What’s appealing about them?**

## **In what ways have the “treasures” of the world let you down?**

The passage encourages us in verse 20 to "store up treasures in heaven." In other words, we should treasure God, his kingdom, his ways, and his people, which will endure eternally. **What does it look like to "store up treasures in heaven," practically speaking?**

As we see in verse 21, our misplaced priorities reveal our hearts. Verses 22–24 reemphasize that what we focus on will affect our inner selves, which affect the people around us. In the video, Bianca talked about a dinner party she threw where she was so preoccupied with preparations that she wasn't loving the people around her.

**When have your actions shown misplaced priorities at work, at home, or in your church community? How did your actions affect other people?**

Bianca's husband reminded her that they were opening their home to serve people—to extend the love of God to them. Preparing her home wasn't wrong. But in worrying about getting ready for the party, Bianca forgot what truly mattered. Worry is often the root issue behind our misplaced priorities.

Read Matthew 6:25–34.

Jesus knows us well—he recognizes that our wrongly ordered priorities are often influenced by worry, so he tackles the issue head-on in this passage by reminding us of who God is and what he thinks of us. **What illustrations does Jesus use to explain God's character? What is God capable of according to these verses?**

Worry can blind us to the strength, power, and faithfulness of God. When we worry, we view the world as if God were absent or uncaring. But Jesus reminds us of the truth: God loves us. He loves you. Just as he cares for birds and flowers, he sees you, knows what you need, and is powerful to provide for you. **In what ways do God's love, power, and sovereignty help you put your worry into perspective?**

Believing God loves us can be one of the most difficult truths to grasp, especially if we are stressed, enduring hardship, or grappling with grief. **When is it difficult for you to set aside worry and remember God's character and love for you?**

**In what ways have you experienced God's care? What could it look like to remember those moments when you're faced with worry?**

Worry affects our relationship with God, and it can spill over into our relationships with other people. **What are you worried about right now? How might worry be affecting your priorities? The people in your life?**

## What could it look like to hand over your worries to God?

Jesus commands us in verse 33 to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." In other words, Jesus calls us to pursue him and his ways above all else. It all comes back to Bianca's point in the video: our priorities matter. **How would you assess your priorities right now? What's competing for your attention?**

Pursing God first often plays out in small, simple ways in our lives—like Mary choosing to sit at Jesus's feet or Bianca loving her friends at a dinner party. But small steps of obedience can make a tremendous impact on our lives, our hearts, and our relationships. **What could it look like for you to pursue God's kingdom and righteousness this week?**

Note: If you struggle with anxiety, depression, or any other mental health issue, seek help from a

professional. Also consider talking to a trusted Christian friend or pastor about your struggles—you are not alone.

## LAST WORD

Jesus wants us to focus on him more than any other distraction. He commands us to seek him and his kingdom first. He can handle our worries, our needs, our desires. This week, take some time to consider your priorities. Are you more preoccupied with the worries in your life? What do you value most? What could seeking after God and his kingdom look like in your life?

As we encounter opportunities to serve Jesus,  
let's keep the main thing the main thing.

## DEEPER WALK

**Reflect:** Spend time in the Gospels exploring Jesus's interactions with Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38–42; John 11; 12:1–7). Martha is usually written off as a workaholic, but her response to Jesus in John 11 gives us insight into her character. What can you learn from her?

**Prepare:** Using the recipe from Bianca in this session, keep your preparations simple for your next gathering. Instead of planning a complicated spread, be intentional at setting up so that you are freed up to enjoy your guests' company more.

**Memorize:** Spend time repeating, writing, and committing to memory Jesus's statement in Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

**Pray:** Ask God to help you prioritize what is truly meaningful as you find opportunities to serve him.

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