

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PRAY TOGETHER

Lord Jesus, help us quiet the many distractions competing for our attention and fix our eyes on You, the one thing that matters most. Holy Spirit, speak honestly and gently to each of us, showing us where good things may have become ultimate things in our hearts. Give us courage to be convicted, not just informed, and to take a faithful next step in following You. Shape our adventures and stories for Your glory as we learn to trust You more fully. Amen.

ICE BREAKER

If you were unexpectedly invited on an adventure like Bilbo, what “comfort” from home would be hardest for you to leave behind?

SERMON OVERVIEW



SCAN FOR
SERMON CLIP



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This week we are joined by our Spiritual Formation Pastor, Todd Faulkner, who asks us all to consider a profound question: What if the very things we do for God could quietly pull us away from God? That unsettling, deeply honest question is at the heart of this message. We look at the familiar story of Martha in Luke 10 as we sit with a truth that cuts closer than we might expect. Martha was not doing something wrong. She was serving, preparing, working hard to honor Jesus. But she was distracted by it all. The original Greek word used is diakonia, meaning service or ministry. Even ministry can become a distraction from the One the ministry is meant to honor. From there, the message draws a striking parallel between Martha and two unforgettable characters from J.R.R. Tolkien's world of Middle-earth. Bilbo Baggins, who clung to the comfort of his perfectly ordered life, and Thorin Oakenshield, who began his journey with a noble purpose but was slowly consumed by the treasure he sought to reclaim. We are invited to look into it and ask ourselves honestly: what has our attention? What good thing has quietly moved from blessing to obsession, from gift to god? The message does not leave us in conviction without hope. Jesus does not shame Martha. He calls her by name and draws her back to what matters most. That same invitation is extended to us today.

READ SCRIPTURE

LUKE 10:38-42, JOHN 15:1-4, JEREMIAH 2:11-13, HEBREWS 12:1-2

CONNECT RELATIONALLY

1) Pastor Todd said, "Distraction doesn't always pull us toward something bad. Sometimes it pulls us away from what is best by making good things ultimate things." Where do you see this pattern most clearly in your own life right now?

2) Bilbo's comfort was not wrong in itself, but it almost kept him from stepping into the adventure of a lifetime. How might your desire for a predictable and comfortable life be keeping you from following Jesus into something greater?

3) Thorin Oakenshield could not see what he was becoming until it was almost too late. What habits, relationships, or voices in your life help you recognize when you are drifting from your primary devotion to Jesus?

GROW SPIRITUALLY

4) Jesus calls Martha by name and invites her back to what matters most rather than shaming her. How does the way Jesus responds to Martha shape the way you understand his response to your own distractions?

5) John 15 teaches that fruitfulness comes not from increased activity but from remaining connected to Jesus as the vine. How does this challenge the way you typically measure your spiritual effectiveness or contribution to God's kingdom?

6) The sermon pointed out that the original Greek word for what distracted Martha was "diakonia," which typically means service or ministry. Why is it significant that Martha was distracted by something that sounds so honorable and good?

LIVE GENEROUSLY

7) Gandalf tells Bilbo that if he comes back he will not be the same, and Jesus tells Martha that Mary has chosen what cannot be taken from her. What does it look like practically for you to choose the one thing that is most needed in your daily life? How will your actions show what is truly your priority?

8) Jeremiah 2 describes God's people as having forsaken the spring of living water and dug broken cisterns of their own. What broken cisterns have you returned to repeatedly, expecting them to satisfy a thirst that only Jesus can quench? How can your community support you and help point you to Jesus?

9) Thorin's final words to Bilbo reveal that at the end of life, relationship mattered far more than treasure or title. How does the prospect of that kind of clarity at the end of life change the priorities you are living by right now?

TAKE ACTION

Based on our conversation today, how do you sense the Holy Spirit inviting you to take a next step in practical application? Please complete this statement, I am feeling convicted to take the following action (keep it simple):

Please invite each group member to share their action step, if they have one.

PRAY TOGETHER

Take a few minutes for each person to share a recent joy or praise, as well as something that's weighing on their heart and in need of intercession. Invite someone to pray over these requests. Be sure to share them with everyone in the group so you can continue praying for one another throughout the week.

ENGAGE TOGETHER



Valor and Abide Monthly Gatherings - This month, across all our campuses, we will launch our Men's and Women's Monthly Gatherings, Valor and Abide. These ministries are great opportunities to invite friends, neighbors, and co-workers to experience Christian fellowship at Northview. They're also a great way to meet prospective new members who are looking to join a Life Group. We offer these Gatherings across all our campuses, so take a look at when your next monthly Gathering is taking place!