



Leadership Training Class

CLASS ONE: A LIFE OF DEVOTION

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- 1) When you hear the word “devotion,” what comes to mind? What does it mean to be devoted to someone or something? Share about a friend or family member whose devotion to their faith, family, or other cause you admire.
- 2) We live in a pluralistic and secular culture where religious devotion is often frowned upon. Friends and even parents can discourage “getting carried away” with one’s religion. What fears do people have about those who are too committed to their religious or spiritual beliefs?

SCRIPTURE - LUKE 10:38-42

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Have you ever heard a sermon or read a book related to this passage of Scripture? What is typically focused on as the main point of the passage? Why do we most often affirm Mary’s actions over Martha’s?
- 2) Read the following information about the cultural context and treatment of women in Jesus’s day:
 - *A common Jewish prayer from the Talmud that men prayed was: “Blessed are you, O God, that I am not a brute creature, nor a Gentile, nor a woman.”*
 - *A man could divorce his wife for almost any reason at all, leaving her with no home and no source of income, and often forcing her into prostitution.*
 - *Women did not eat meals in the same room as men. In a Jewish home there was space for men and there was space for women. The only time they mixed was when little children played outside or in the marriage bedroom.*
 - *Jewish women were not educated, and certainly were not taught as disciples of rabbis.*
 - *To sit at the feet of a rabbi meant being a disciple of that rabbi and one day becoming a rabbi yourself.*

In light of this background cultural information, why do you think Martha was so upset about her sister’s actions?



- 3) What are some of the cultural taboos or social boundaries that Mary is crossing by sitting at the feet of Jesus? Why is this a socially and spiritually risky action? What could be some of the consequences for her?
- 4) How would you describe Jesus's response to Martha's concerns? How might his words have been received and understood by those in the room? If you were Martha, what might you have thought and felt about Jesus's response? If you were Mary?
- 5) What is "the better thing" that Mary has chosen?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) There are risks involved with being devoted to Jesus today. What are some of the social, cultural, and familial pressures we might face when deciding to sit at the feet of Jesus and be a disciple? How can following Jesus be counter-cultural and risky in our context as students at UVM?
- 2) In John's Gospel, Jesus talks about the importance of abiding in him. He describes himself as a vine and his followers as branches. Fruitfulness is dependent on remaining attached to him. Why is spending time at the feet of Jesus so essential for life as his disciple?
- 3) What are your favorite ways to spend time with God? What does it look like for you to listen and hear His voice? What are some challenges you face in living a life of devotion at UVM?
- 4) Share one or two ways you want to grow in your life of devotion. Are there cultural expectations that are hindering your discipleship? Do you need to create more time to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn? What are one or two specific goals you can set for the coming week?