

Study Guide: One Thing Is Necessary

This study guide is designed for individuals, families, and Bible study groups seeking to deepen their understanding of spiritual priorities, regular communion with God, and the life-altering impact of abiding in Christ.

Executive Summary & Core Concepts

The foundational premise of the source text is that **a personal, intimate relationship with God—spending time with Him, learning from Him, and growing closer to Him—is the single most necessary element of human life.** Everything else in life springs from this central relationship. When this relationship is neglected, every other dimension of life suffers, including personal growth, family, friendships, health, work, ministry, and finances.

Key themes addressed in this guide include:

- **The "One Thing Necessary":** Distinguishing between worldly busyness or legitimate responsibilities and the vital priority of abiding in God's presence.
- **The Principle of Source and Flow:** Understanding God as the sole source of all goodness and life. Every aspect of human existence is nourished and sustained by personal communion with Him.
- **Jesus' Personal Example:** How Jesus prioritized early morning, solitary prayer with the Father despite overwhelming crowds and intense ministerial demands.
- **The Analogy of the Vine and Foundations:** Examining the spiritual dynamics of remaining connected to Christ (John 15) and building one's life upon the rock of hearing and doing His words (Luke 6).
- **The Trajectory of Divine Friendship:** How ongoing intimacy, shared experience, and demonstrated trustworthiness transform believers from mere servants to friends of God who receive divine secrets and higher wisdom.

Part 1: Guided Group Discussion & Study Modules

Module 1: The "One Thing" vs. Life's Distractions

Scripture Focus: Luke 10:38–42; Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 13 / Mark 4 / Luke

Overview

When Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary, Martha was consumed with household responsibilities and worried about all that had to be done. Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to His teaching. When Martha asked Jesus to instruct Mary to help her, Jesus gently corrected her: *"Martha, Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."*

Discussion Questions

1. **Reflecting on Martha's Dilemma:** Martha was engaged in practical, necessary tasks (hospitality and work). Why did Jesus identify Mary's choice as "what is best" and the "only one thing necessary"?
2. **Identifying Modern Thorns:** In the Parable of the Sower (recorded in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8), Jesus speaks of thorns choking the growth of God's Word. What specific "thorns" or cares of life threaten to choke God's Word in your daily routine?
3. **Daily Sustenance:** Deuteronomy 8:3 notes that God allowed the Israelites to experience hunger and fed them with manna to teach them that *"man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord."* How does viewing God's Word as spiritual sustenance alter the way you schedule time with Him?

Module 2: The Pattern of Jesus and Abiding in the Vine

Scripture Focus: Mark 1:35–37; Mark 3:20; John 15:4–6; Colossians 3:3

Overview

Despite being continually pulled upon by crowds seeking help—to the point where He and His disciples could not even take time to eat (Mark 3:20)—Jesus intentionally set a priority on solitary prayer with the Father. He modeled what it means to *abide* in God rather than checking in occasionally.

Discussion Questions

1. **Analyzing Jesus' Priorities:** In Mark 1:35–37, Jesus woke up early in the morning, well before sunrise, to pray in a deserted place. When Simon tracked Him down saying, "Everyone's looking for you!", Jesus maintained

His boundaries. What does Jesus' behavior teach us about managing external pressures vs. prioritizing God?

2. **The Dynamic of Abiding:** John 15:4–6 compares believers to branches and Jesus to the vine. What are the specific consequences outlined in text for a branch that fails to abide in the vine?
3. **Insights from Spiritual Leaders:** Christian leader Heidi Baker shared that God asked for more of her morning time with the prompt: *"If you give me your mornings, I will give you a nation."* How does this quote reflect the principle that natural productivity flows out of solitary communion?

Module 3: Foundations, First Love, and Consequences of Neglect

Scripture Focus: Luke 6:47–49; Revelation 2:4–5; Luke 14:26

Overview

Neglecting one's primary love for God leads to structural collapse in life's storms and the loss of spiritual position. Even churches that display outstanding works, such as the church in Ephesus, face severe warnings if they lose their "first love."

Discussion Questions

1. **Building on the Rock:** According to Luke 6:47–49, what is the key difference between the person whose house withstands the flood and the person whose house collapses? (Note the specific condition regarding hearing and *doing*).
2. **The Ephesian Warning:** Revelation 2:4–5 praises the church in Ephesus for many achievements, yet warns that their lampstand will be removed unless they repent of leaving their first love. Why is living a clean, moral life or serving faithfully in church insufficient if first love is absent?
3. **The Cost of Discipleship:** In Luke 14:26, Jesus states that one cannot be His disciple unless they love Him more than their family members and even their own life. How does prioritizing love for Christ actually protect and benefit family relationships rather than harming them?

Module 4: Divine Friendship and the Greatest Payoff

Scripture Focus: John 15:14–16; 1 Corinthians 2:5–9; 2 Peter 1:3–5; Romans 8:1–3

Overview

Cultivating an intimate relationship with God yields the highest payoff: it enables believers to transcend natural world limitations, walk according to the Spirit, and receive divine secrets reserved for God's friends.

Discussion Questions

1. **Servants vs. Friends:** According to John 15:14–16, what marks the transition from being a servant of God to being a *friend* of God?
2. **Transcending Natural Laws:** How do 2 Peter 1:3–5 and Romans 8:1–3 describe the believers' ability to escape world corruption and live on a higher plane?
3. **The Businessman and Athlete Analogies:** The source context presents two cautionary analogies: an athlete neglecting nourishment, and a businessman losing his family while working for them. How do these illustrations capture the tragic outcome of losing sight of one's central purpose?

Part 2: Key Illustrative Figures & Analogies

The table below summarizes the key biblical figures, historical leaders, and illustrative analogies highlighted in the source context:

Figure / Analogy	Context / Source	Central Lesson / Principle
Martha & Mary	Luke 10:38–42	Busy service without focused listening creates worry and upset; sitting at Jesus' feet is the "one thing necessary."
Jesus in Ministry	Mark 1:35–37; Mark 3:20	Even under overwhelming crowd demands and lack of time to eat, spending solitary time with the Father remains the top priority.
Ephesian Church	Revelation 2:4–5	Outstanding works and doctrinal purity cannot substitute for "first love." Losing first love risks the removal of one's lampstand.

Heidi Baker	<i>Living Under Water</i>	Relational priority: God asked for her mornings, promising: " <i>If you give me your mornings, I will give you a nation.</i> "
George Müller	<i>The George Muller Collection</i>	35+ years of experience showed that the supreme business of life and secret of all true service is making one's soul "truly happy in God Himself."
The Athlete Analogy	Source Context Teaching	Focusing only on performance while neglecting physical nourishment leads to loss of strength and eventual failure.
The Businessman Analogy	Source Context Teaching	Throwing one's life into work while neglecting family leads to losing the very reason for working, leaving work empty and meaningless.
The Two Builders	Luke 6:47–49	Hearing and practicing Jesus' words builds a deep foundation on rock; hearing without doing leads to total ruin during life's torrents.

Part 3: Comprehensive Quiz

Test your comprehension of the source text using the following quiz.

Section A: Multiple Choice

- In Luke 10:38–42, what was Martha's primary complaint to Jesus regarding her sister Mary?
 - A) Mary was eating food before the guests were served.
 - B) Mary had left her to do all the work by herself.
 - C) Mary was arguing with the disciples.
 - D) Mary refused to enter the house.

2. In which Gospels is the Parable of the Sower included?
- A) Matthew, Mark, and Luke
 - B) Matthew, Mark, and John
 - C) Mark, Luke, and John
 - D) Luke and John only
3. According to Deuteronomy 8:3, why did God humble the Israelites and feed them with manna?
- A) To punish them for complaining in the wilderness.
 - B) To prove that Moses was a true prophet.
 - C) To make them understand that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word from the mouth of the Lord.
 - D) To show them how to farm in arid climates.
4. What warning was given to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:4–5?
- A) They were being condemned for false doctrine.
 - B) Their lampstand would be removed unless they repented of leaving their first love.
 - C) They were paying too much attention to their finances.
 - D) They would suffer immediate physical famine.
5. How long had George Müller held the firm conviction that the most important business of life is to have one's soul happy in the Lord?
- A) 5 years
 - B) 12 years
 - C) 35 years
 - D) 50 years

Section B: Short Answer & Fill-in-the-Blank

1. **Fill in the Blank:** In Mark 1:35, Jesus rose early in the morning, well before sunrise, and went to a _____ place to pray.

2. **Fill in the Blank:** According to John 15:5, Jesus declared, "I am the vine, you are the branches. The one who abides in me while I abide in him produces much fruit, because apart from me you can do _____."
3. According to the text, why did God establish the greatest commandment as loving Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, rather than simply commanding us to live morally or work hard?
4. Based on John 15:14–16, what is the primary difference between how a master treats a servant versus how Jesus treats a *friend*?
5. Describe the outcome of the house built on the ground without a foundation when the torrent burst against it in Luke 6:49.

Section C: True or False

1. **True or False:** If your relationship with God is lacking, other areas of life such as health, finances, personal growth, and relationships will still reach their full potential as long as you work hard.
2. **True or False:** Heidi Baker wrote that God promised to give her a nation if she gave Him her mornings.
3. **True or False:** Becoming a friend of God is an effortless process that requires no testing, sacrifices, or high costs.
4. **True or False:** According to 1 Corinthians 2:9, human eyes, ears, and minds have already fully comprehended everything God has prepared for those who love Him.

Part 4: Quiz Answer Key

1. **B — Mary had left her to do all the work by herself.**
 - *Detail:* Luke 10:40 records Martha saying, "Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"
2. **A — Matthew, Mark, and Luke**
 - *Detail:* The source context notes that the Parable of the Sower is so vital to understand that it is recorded in three Gospels: Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8.

3. **C — To make them understand that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word from the mouth of the Lord.**
 - *Detail:* Deuteronomy 8:3 explicitly states this was done so they would learn by personal experience that man lives by God's Word.
4. **B — Their lampstand would be removed unless they repented of leaving their first love.**
 - *Detail:* Revelation 2:4–5 warns that leaving their first love requires repentance, or Jesus will quickly come and remove their lampstand from its place.
5. **C — 35 years**
 - *Detail:* George Müller stated: "This has been my firm and settled condition for the last five and thirty years."
6. **deserted (or solitary)**
 - *Detail:* Mark 1:35 states He "went to a deserted place where he could be alone in prayer."
7. **nothing**
 - *Detail:* John 15:5 concludes, "...because apart from me you can do nothing."
8. **God established this commandment because loving Him first produces the greatest payoff, blessings, and good for us and our families.**
 - *Detail:* The text explains that God is not an egomaniac; rather, He commands this because every aspect of our life springs from and is nourished by this primary relationship.
9. **A servant does not know what his master is doing, whereas Jesus shares His secrets, divine plans, and insights with His friends.**
 - *Detail:* John 15:15 notes: "the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have revealed to you everything that I have heard from My Father."

10. It collapsed immediately, and the breaking and ruin of that house was great.

- *Detail:* Luke 6:49 notes the torrent burst against it, "and immediately it collapsed and fell, and the breaking and ruin of that house was great."

11. False.

- *Detail:* The text stresses that if your relationship with God is lacking, everything else will be lacking and will fail to live up to its full potential.

12. True.

- *Detail:* In *Living Under Water*, Heidi Baker wrote that God told her: "If you give me your mornings, I will give you a nation."

13. False.

- *Detail:* The text explicitly states: "Becoming a friend of God is a journey that comes with many tests and high costs, but for those who are willing to pay the price, it is well worth the sacrifices."

14. False.

- *Detail:* 1 Corinthians 2:9 states: "No one has ever seen, no one has ever heard, no one has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."

Part 5: Glossary of Key Terms

- **Abide:** To maintain a continuous, permanent connection with Jesus Christ—as a branch remains attached to a vine—receiving life, nourishment, and spiritual vitality directly from Him (John 15:4–6).
- **First Love:** The primary, ultimate priority of loving Jesus Christ above all earthly relationships, achievements, or ministry obligations (Revelation 2:4; Luke 14:26).
- **Friend of God:** A level of intimacy with the Lord developed through continuous time, shared experiences, trust, and obedience, wherein God reveals His secrets, insights, and hidden wisdom (John 15:14–16).

- **Higher Wisdom:** The divine plan and knowledge hidden from worldly leaders and the present age, revealed by God to spiritually mature Christians for their glorification (1 Corinthians 2:5–7).
- **Lampstand (Removal of):** The spiritual consequence warned in Revelation 2:5 where a church or believer risks losing their place, function, or authority in God's kingdom if they abandon their first love and refuse to repent.
- **Manna:** The miraculous substance God provided to the Israelites in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:3) to teach them that physical food alone cannot sustain true life, but every word proceeding from God's mouth is necessary.
- **Thorns:** The cares, distractions, worries, and competing demands of life mentioned in the Parable of the Sower that choke the growth of God's Word, preventing believers from bearing fruit.