

# THE HEIGHTS

## CHURCH

LIFE GROUP TEACHING PLANS  
THE SIMPLEST WAY TO CHANGE THE WORLD  
LESSON 2

# THE SIMPLEST WAY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

FROM BARRIER TO BENEFIT

LESSON 2

TEACHING PLAN

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## PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying Luke 10:38-42. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- > **Series Theme Aim:** Loving our neighbors means choosing to engage rather than unplug, open rather than close, and initiate rather than sit idly by.
- > **Biblical Emphasis:** God has given us the time we have as a gift, not to fill up with activity that has no eternal effect, but to use for His kingdom purposes.
- > **Teaching Aim:** Loving our neighbors means moving our calendars from barrier to benefit.
- > **Memorize:** Luke 10:41-42

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

**DO NOT SKIP THESE**

1 Provide a blank block map for any group member who was not present last week (found on pg. 10). Explain the map and the coding system—"S" for stranger, "A" for acquaintance, or "F" for friend.

2 Invite members to share their maps and any progress they made this week learning names and filling in blank spaces.

3 On a scale of 1 to 10, how hectic is life right now? How much of a factor is busyness in preventing you from getting to know your neighbors?

4 Do you find it difficult to take things off your plate and choose to spend unhurried time with other people? Why or why not?

Notes:

The world we live in makes rest, especially spiritual rest, seem obsolete. Our culture rewards productivity and stress, often to the detriment of our health. We are over-committed, strung-out people who have a hard time saying no. We live in tension between the urgent and the important. When our priorities are determined by the urgent, our lives won't match up with our intentions. Jesus got a lot done, but His life was never hurried. He had time for people. In order to take the call to love our neighbors seriously, we must create space in our lives to build relationships.

John Ortberg states, “Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day.” He uses the phrase “Hurry Sickness,” and he goes on to say that the reason hurrying is so dangerous is because love and hurry are not at all compatible. Love always takes time, and time is the one thing that hurried people don’t have.

Notes:

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> Ask a volunteer to read Luke 10:38-40.

- Compare and contrast the two sisters in this story. What stands out to you about each?
- Which sister’s activity do you resonate with more, and why?

Martha allowed the task of hosting to consume her identity. In contrast, Mary was the quiet, contemplative type and was seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His Word. The custom in the first century was for disciples, typically men, to sit at their teacher’s feet. Because preparing a meal entailed much work, Martha naturally interpreted Mary’s action as avoidance of work and a breach of cultural norms. Even though Martha was wrong, her reaction was normal. Busy people doing godly activity often miss the better portion—relationship with God and people.

- What are some positive things we can glean about Martha from these two verses? Why do you think she welcomed Jesus into her home?

- Do you think Martha was justified in her attitude? Why or why not?

Notes:

- Why was it so difficult for Martha to stop and listen to Jesus?

- What impact did Martha's attitude have on her relationships with Jesus and with Mary in this moment? What is the warning for us?

Martha's busyness led her to aggravation. First, she spoke harshly to her own guest. A guest she invited herself: "Lord, do you not care . . . ?" Second, she became angry with her sister, even referring to Mary as if she wasn't in the room. Mary made the right choice, prioritizing the Person of Jesus over the program her sister had put in place.

> Ask a volunteer to read Luke 10:41-42.

- What do you learn from Jesus' reaction to Mary's posture?

We will not be fit to serve in any ministry if that ministry takes us away from the priority of loving God and people. Like Martha, we will begin to resent that others aren't working as hard as we are. It is a terrible thing to host a party but miss out on the happiness of your own guests.

- What different forms of busyness take over in your life? How does busyness hinder your opportunity to love your actual neighbors?

We wake up most days not trying to serve, just trying to survive. Ours is an era of unprecedented complexity and opportunity, and the onslaught of things we face each day are potential barriers that keep us from being ministered to by Jesus. In order for us to really love God and people, we have to create margin in our lives that keeps us from being too busy, even when that means saying no to another ministry opportunity, just as Martha needed to do.

Notes:

- What lesson can we learn about making time for others? Where are you filling your life with “many things” when you should be filling it with time well spent with Jesus and others?
- What breach of cultural norms will be necessary for you to prioritize relationships?

## NEXT STEPS

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

Notes:

### DO NOT SKIP THESE

- 1 Provide a blank Time Assessment Inventory for each group member (found on page 9). Consider how you have spent your time over the past week. In the boxes that show the previous 7 days, draw an “x” over each day where you’ve been too busy to be present in your neighborhood.
- 2 How might God be challenging you to adjust your time this week in order to prioritize loving your neighbors?
- 3 For one of the days where you marked an “X,” choose one corresponding day in the week ahead. Write one way you can create margin to be present in your neighborhood (i.e. give up a leisure activity or a busy Martha-like activity.)
- 4 Encourage members to use the time assessment inventory as a reminder to create margin this week so that they might better love their neighbors. Challenge group members to find ten minutes of one day to prayer walk through their neighborhood or pray for a neighbor.

## P R A Y

Thank God for the unhurried example of Christ. Ask Him to show you where you need to create margin in your life so that you might love your actual neighbors in the way He has called you.

Notes:

## F O R N E X T W E E K

- > **REMINDE**: Before you dismiss, remind group members to read Romans 12:1-2; John 4:9,27-35; and Joshua 1:9.
- > **EMAIL**: Midway through the week, send a reminder email with the following information:
  - Read Romans 12:1-2; John 4:9,27-35; and Joshua 1:9.
  - Think through these questions before we get together again: 1) Have you taken steps to create margin in your life to love your neighbors? 2) Have you taken ten minutes to prayer walk through your neighborhood or pray for a neighbor?

# Time Assessment Inventory

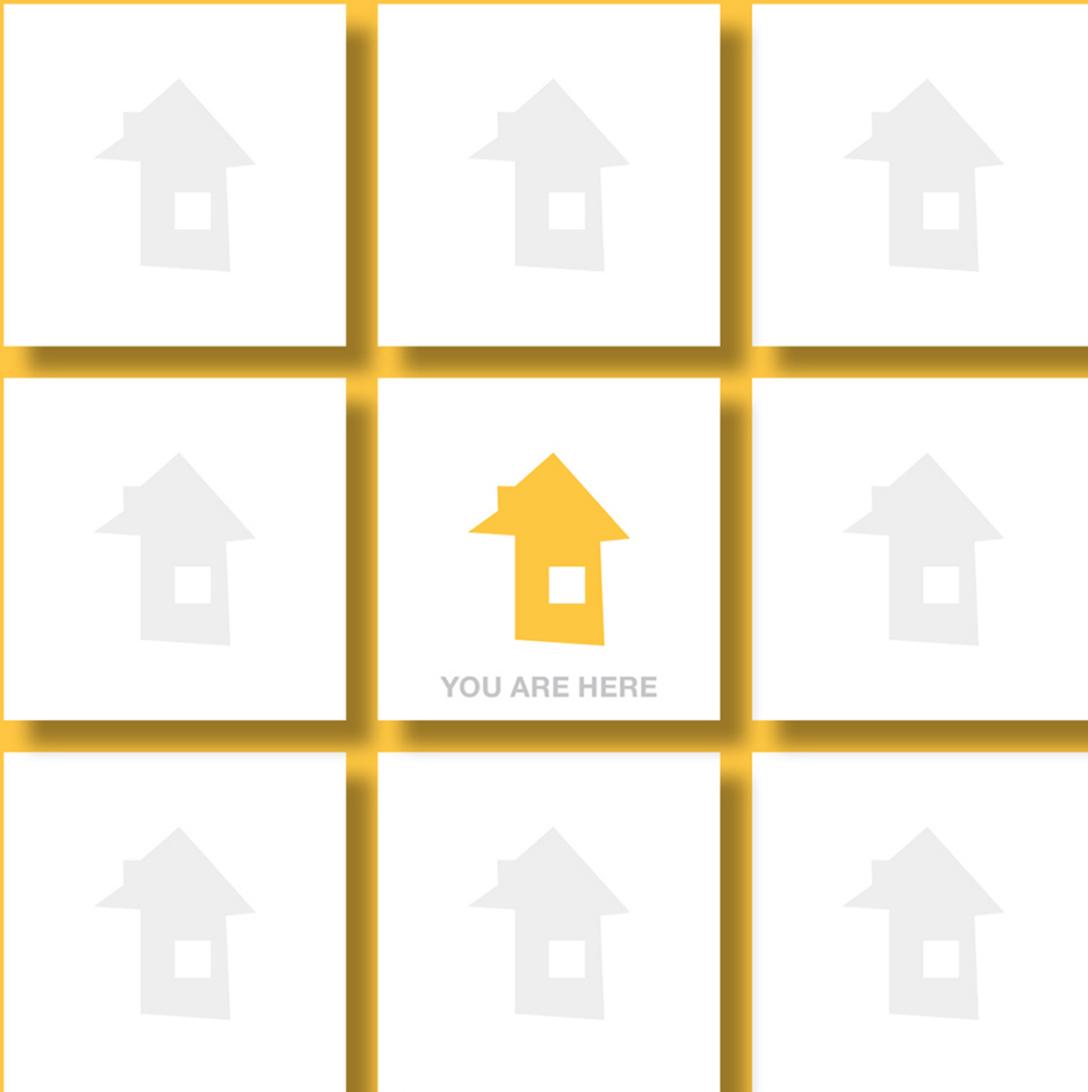
## PREVIOUS 7 DAYS

Day 1: Date _____ How I Spent My Time:
Day 2: Date _____ How I Spent My Time:
Day 3: Date _____ How I Spent My Time:
Day 4: Date _____ How I Spent My Time:
Day 5: Date _____ How I Spent My Time:
Day 6: Date _____ How I Spent My Time:
Day 7: Date _____ How I Spent My Time:

## UPCOMING 7 DAYS

Day 1: Date _____ How I Will Spend My Time:
Day 2: Date _____ How I Will Spend My Time:
Day 3: Date _____ How I Will Spend My Time:
Day 4: Date _____ How I Will Spend My Time:
Day 5: Date _____ How I Will Spend My Time:
Day 6: Date _____ How I Will Spend My Time:
Day 7: Date _____ How I Will Spend My Time:

# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



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## LUKE 10:38-42

10:38-39. The village in verse 38 was Bethany, just over the Mount of Olives and two miles east of Jerusalem. Martha and Mary were the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11:1-44). Sat at the Lord's feet . . . listening was the posture of a committed disciple.

Notes:

10:40-42. Martha was distracted from what should have been her highest priority—learning from Jesus. She was worried and upset about all the household chores that needed to be done and irritated with her sister Mary because it was the role of women to serve men in such a setting. Jesus indicated that Martha's exclusive focus should be the same as her sister's—discipleship, an eternally commendable choice (it will not be taken away from her).