



Outward Group Discussion Guide

August 9, 2026

SUMMARY

Drawing from 1 Timothy 5:1-16, this sermon examines the various distractions that can pull individuals and the church away from its core mission of the gospel. The pastor uses the context of the early church in Ephesus, where Timothy was sent to correct doctrinal drift, to illustrate how even good things, such as serving widows, can become distractions when they replace the main thing. Using the contrast between Mary and Martha from Luke 10, the sermon calls believers to sit at the feet of Jesus, grounded in doctrine and grace, rather than being consumed by doing. The sermon concludes with a call to receive the finished work of Christ on the cross, recognizing that true mission flows from a heart transformed by the gospel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The sermon describes how 'doing' can become more comfortable than 'doctrine' -- in what ways have you seen good works or ministry activities quietly replace a focus on the truth of the gospel in your own life or in a church community you have been part of?
2. C.S. Lewis wrote through Screwtape that the safest road to hell is the gradual one -- what seemingly innocent or even righteous habits or pursuits in your life might be slowly edging you away from a deeper walk with Christ?
3. The sermon contrasts Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus with Martha being distracted by much serving -- which posture more accurately describes your current spiritual life, and what would it practically look like for you to choose the better portion?
4. Paul instructs Timothy to approach older men as fathers and younger men as brothers, emphasizing that the method of delivering a hard message matters as much as the message itself -- how does the way you confront or correct others either open or close the door to genuine change?

5. The sermon argues that the church has a responsibility to wisely determine who is truly in need rather than enabling dependency -- how do you personally navigate the tension between generosity and what the book 'When Helping Hurts' calls unintentionally harming those you want to help?
6. Scripture in 1 Timothy 5 states that a person who does not provide for their own household has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever -- how does this strong language challenge or reshape your understanding of what faithfulness looks like within the home?
7. The sermon places gossip alongside murder, envy, and sexual immorality in the list found in Romans 1 -- does the weight you personally assign to gossip in your own life reflect the seriousness with which Scripture treats it, and why or why not?
8. Paul warns that the passions of younger widows could draw them away from Christ into ungodly relationships -- in what ways can romantic desire or the longing for companionship become a distraction from your primary identity and mission as a follower of Jesus?

9. The sermon suggests that idleness creates fertile ground for gossip, division, and spiritual drift -- how intentional are you about filling your time with purposes that align with God's mission, and where might unhealthy idleness be creeping into your life?
10. The pastor closes by saying that sitting at the feet of Jesus means understanding that his work on the cross is already done for you -- how does resting in the finished work of Christ, rather than striving to earn acceptance, actually motivate rather than diminish a life of righteousness and mission?