

# The Last Mile Begins

## Matthew 26:1-30

### I. Go Forth's Presentation

### II. Introduction

1. During His three-year public ministry it is estimated that Jesus walked 3,125 miles. Both the urgency and importance of His ministry led Him to go the “extra mile” time and time again. Mile-after-mile of dusty trails, difficult slopes, miracles, teachings, and rejections all spoke volumes of His faithfulness, endurance, and selflessness in sharing the Good News with both Jew and Gentile.
2. Here we are with both distance and all eternity converging at the cross of Calvary. Jesus' dedicated followers are few, His enemies are many and powerful, those willing to take what they can get make another large group, and much of the world is ambivalent or doesn't even know the Messiah has come.
3. Jerusalem was teeming with as many as 3 million people according to the church father Josephus along with 256k lambs and other sacrificial animals. It was a time of renewal, hope, and celebration. It was also a time of remembrance of their bondage in Egypt, the bondage of Rome, and the promise of a Messiah.
4. Finally, in our passage today, we see the poetic justice of God Israel could not seemingly grasp – Jesus, the son of God, came into Jerusalem at Passover to be their (and our) Passover. I pray any hearing this message will NOT miss this Good News!!!

### III. **Matthew 26:1-5: Planning the End**

1. The words of **Proverbs 16:9** with man making plans, but God determining his steps are very much in evidence today. The Sanhedrin are planning to take enemy #1 out, but Matthew makes

it very clear that it is the Lord ordering all steps all the way to the cross of Calvary.

2. We open up these verses with the fourth time Jesus has prophesied of his death here in the book of Matthew. The first of these themes is the people and plot to destroy Him (Jesus). Next, we have an deeply moving act of worship. Third and fourth, we see Jesus is the Passover and the hand of evil in betrayal.

*[For notetakers, the other three times Jesus shared the outcome we have arrived at here in Matthew 26-27 can be found in **Matthew 16:21, 17:22, and 20:18.**]*

3. In verse 2, Jesus sets a timeline of 2 days for His crucifixion on the Passover. Yet, we know from Mark's parallel account the religious leaders were planning to wait until after both the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (**Exodus 12**). They had witnessed the crowds flocking, shouting, and singing as Jesus descended into the Kidron valley and back up to the temple complex. While He had to be stopped, it had to be done in a way to NOT turn the people against the religious leaders.

As we have traveled through Matthew, we have witnessed all the ways Jesus has offended the religious leaders including<sup>1</sup>:

- A. His claim to a greater authority than them; (**Jn 7:48-49**)
- B. The miracles and signs He did; (**Mt 12:23-24**)
- C. He was a threat to the religious system driven lifestyle they wanted (**Jn 2:13-17**)
- D. His heart for sinners and Gentiles; (**Lk 7:39**)
- E. His calling out their hypocrisy when their traditions turned the law into what it was not; (**Mark 3:4-6**) and
- F. He offended them because His righteousness revealed their unrighteousness; (**Mt 23**)

This day was the culmination of what Caiaphas, the High Priest, so aptly said **in John 11:49-50**:..." You know nothing at all, nor do

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/don\\_stewart\\_248.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_248.cfm)

you consider that it is expedient **for us** that one man should die...**for the people and not that the whole nation should perish**".

4. *One last note about these opening verses. Matthew made a point to put a name as the face of the Jewish opposition...the name of the High Priest, Caiaphas. This name will appear again and again in these, Jesus final hours.*

*Caiaphas served as high priest for 18 years. One commentator (Boice) noted that between 37BC and 67AD, the Romans appointed and deposed no less than 28 high-priests. For him to have served so long, we can know he was powerful, shrewd, and politically savvy - he was used to having his way and was quite the enemy for any Jew to have.*

#### IV. **Matthew 26:6-16: A Memorial for the Ages**

1. From Matthew we learn Jesus went to Simon the leper's house. From John's account of this story, we learn that Jesus' old friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were His fellowship group. This was a time for old friends to cherish one another, give thanks, and as only Mary seemed to grasp, say good bye.
2. As the story unfolds, we see Mary pouring the equivalent of a year's wages of the fragrant oil spikenard on Jesus head and feet. Mary's **extravagance** did not go unnoticed by Jesus nor the disciples. The disciples called Mary to task for wasting money that could have been used to benefit the poor; a central part of their shared ministry. Yet, we see that Jesus was honored by Mary's act of moving worship and anointing His body in preparation for burial.
3. In the first of several things God wants us to see here, we have an absolutely stunning contrast. Mary's sweet worship in contrast with Judas' harsh betrayal. Let's consider these both for a moment.
  - A. Mary's Sweet Worship – In **Luke 10**, Mary was found at Jesus feet earlier in His ministry. Martha was preparing the food and complained about Mary slacking rather than helping her. In the story of their brother Lazarus' death, **John 11:32** reports that

Mary fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died”.

- i. In Mary, we get the sense of a woman that both knew and loved Jesus as her Lord; a woman that hung on and found life in His word. Whether she fully understood the timing and implication of Jesus words is unknown. What is undisputable is she had counted the cost and determined to withhold nothing in her worship of Him. Her action begs a hard question for you and me...what would Jesus say is rightfully His that you and I are withholding from Him?
- ii. You see Jesus was not applauding the use of oil to make Himself smell good. He had come and was about to die for the prized possession of her heart AND she gave it to Him. He wants yours and mine, but where does He find us? Are we at His feet or about our worldly checklist?

B. Next, we see the contrast of Mary’s love, devotion, and worship against Judas’ coldness, selfishness, and pride. From John, we learn that the leader of the indignant disciples Matthew refers to was Judas Iscariot. This is the very same Judas Jesus Himself refers to in **John 17:12** as the son of perdition (or destruction). This is the same Judas of whom **John, in 12:6**, said “This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.” This is the same Judas of whom we will read in a few verses that it would have been better if he had never been born.

- i. It seems that Judas was the kind of treasurer that believed in helping himself. It also seems abundantly clear that while the disciples had not known this, God did; He, in fact, used Judas as an instrument of completing Jesus final steps to the cross.
- ii. The contrast between Judas and Mary could NOT have been greater! Judas chose himself. Mary chose Jesus.

Judas loved himself. Mary loved Jesus. Judas was willing to sacrifice others. Mary sacrificed herself to please and honor Jesus. Judas chose the darkness of deceit. Mary chose the light of righteousness.

4. *There are two other points I want to draw your attention to.*

A. *First, in some sense the disciples weren't much different than the religious leaders. Both had majored in the minors. Both focused the hearts on something other than Jesus. Yes, we can say the disciples were far more noble inasmuch as they wanted to physically help the poor while the religious leaders openly warred against Christ. But being more noble than the next person is not the standard Jesus sets for us. His standard is to be like Him and He gives us His word and the very Spirit of God to walk us down the victorious path.*

B. *Second, Jesus knows what the next few hours will bring into His life. Yet, here He is having a sweet, intimate time with some of His closest friends. He is NOT full of fear and worry for He is about His and our Heavenly Father's business.*

## V. **Matthew 26:17-30: The Gospel as Passover**

1. The foundation for this section of our passage today is found in **Exodus 12 and 13** so I encourage you to study these, especially chapter 12.

The Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were the first of the festivals commanded by God for Israel observance.

- A. Passover originated when God promised to redeem His people from Pharaoh's bondage. When Pharaoh refused to let Israel go, God brought 10 plagues on Egypt with the last one being the death of all the first born children. All of Israel was told to slaughter a spotless lamb and mark their doorposts and lintels with its blood (**Exodus 12:21-22**) so when the Lord passed through Egypt, He would "pass over" those households, leaving their firstborn alive.

B. The 7-day Feast of the Unleavened Bread immediately follows Passover in commemorating the Israel's speedy exit from Egypt. So quick that they could only have unleavened bread which also reflected spiritual purity (**1 Corinthians 5:7**) along with their humility and dependence on God (**2 Chronicles 7:14**).<sup>2</sup>

2. While **Matthew 26:17-19** certainly serves as an introduction to the weightier passages forthcoming, I want to point you to a less obvious nugget of gold. Keeping in mind that even hours from His arrest, crucifixion, and death, the disciples still did not grasp what was about to happen. Yet, despite NOT understanding, they obeyed. This was and is a great mark of faith.
3. In **Matthew 26:20-25**, as they had gathered to celebrate God's providential hand in protecting and providing for Israel, the Lord simply and matter-of-factly states that among them is one that will betray Him. [*For notetakers, in **Jn 6:70** Jesus prophesied that one of the 12 was a "devil" (an adversary, evil).*]

Judas does NOT know Jesus knows of his coming betrayal (see John 6:70). To betray Jesus is to be of the same cloth of the religious leaders that Jesus condemned in **chapter 23 of Matthew**. Betrayal is built on a foundation of abusing trust and fracturing relationships. It is to, on one hand play the dutiful follower, while on the other hand doing so only for one's own benefit. It is to have a faith of convenience based on "me" and "my will, my plan, and my wants". It is to love "me" more than Jesus and to be other's focused, not because of Biblical commands and Biblical love, but because it forwards my cause.

- A. What about us folks? How do you relate to Jesus? As a distant deity to worship, but not really to know? As a rule-maker to follow for your own good? As wish fulfiller? As personal friend and master? As one worthy to worship extravagantly as did

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Feast-of-Unleavened-Bread.html>

Mary? As one worthy to lay down your stuff and your life no matter the personal cost?

- B. The “Is it I?” in verses 22 & 25 hangs in the air for all seated at Jesus’ table. While John’s account suggests that the disciples may not have then known Jesus had fingered Judas as the culprit, we cannot say the same. We know that betrayal of Messiah is NOT simply a statement of evil, it’s now the face of evil and it has a name - Judas. They had asked the same question as did Judas – “Is it I?”. They too were confronted with their own selfishness, pride, brokenness, fears, inadequacies, doubts, and worries in light of Jesus’ clear statement of judgment upon those betraying Him.

4. In Matthew 26:26-30, Jesus gives the New Covenant.

- A. Whether physically or spiritually, Jesus neither cut himself up into little bite-sized morsels nor cut Himself and poured the blood into cups. He used common elements of that day and culture (and every time and culture since), to proclaim and represent the new covenant between him and mankind. In a few hours hence, His body would be torn and His blood shed in fulfillment of **Jeremiah 31:33-34** which ends with “For I (God) will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more”. At the end of the Tribulation period, when He returns, He will drink of the fruit of the vine with His chosen people and all those who believe on Him.
- B. For 1,500 years the blood of lambs had been shed as a covering for Israel’s sin. Now, as John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said in **John 1:29**; “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” And now, just a few years later, Jesus has come into Jerusalem to (1) receive the fulness of the rejection of His people and (2) to make the path of reconciliation to Himself known.

The Lamb had come and in just a few short hours, after giving thanks with His disciples (v27), those feet that had traveled



thousands of miles would take their last steps and be staked to the cross of Calvary.

In just a few short hours, as the blood of hundreds of thousands of sacrificial animals would run red through the Kidron Valley outside of the temple, the Lamb of God was to present Himself as the once and forever perfect sacrifice; He would not simply “cover” their sins as had all the animal sacrifices, but He both forgives and satisfies the penalty of sin for all those receiving Him as Lord.

This new covenant is the Gospel. The most costly free gift in history. It cost Him separation from His Father. The wrath of the Father was poured out on Him instead of its rightful recipients – you and me. The torment, anguish, pain, His flesh torn. Yet, He gave thanks!

**Roman’s 10:9** teaches us that if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and we believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved...restored in relationship with our Creator for all eternity. Our victory is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **THE LORD, JESUS CHRIST CAME TO BE OUR PASSEOVER!**

5. [Worship Team] In a moment, those who have made this profession of faith are going to share the bread and cup as an act of worship, obedience, faith, and love as we remember Jesus’ free gift of salvation cost Him His life.

If you have never received Jesus, but want to now, I invite you to join me in this prayer right where you sit.

## **VI. Communion**

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same manner *He*



also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.<sup>1</sup> - 1 Corinthians 11:23–26

In proclaiming your death Lord, we give thanks for our victory as we pray  
“Lord Jesus come”.

## Matthew 26:1-30 The Last Mile

### I. Introduction

- Miles Jesus walked \_\_\_\_\_
- # People in Jerusalem at this Passover \_\_\_\_\_
- # Lambs sacrificed \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Matthew 26:1-5: Planning the End

- # times Jesus prophesied His death to this point in Matthew \_\_\_\_\_
- How Jesus offended the religious leaders.

Additional Scripture References: Pr 16:9; Jn 11:49-50

### III. Matthew 26:6-16: A Memorial for the Ages

Additional Scripture References: Lk 10, Jn 11:32, 17:12, 12:6

### IV. Matthew 26:17-30: The Gospel as Passover

- Passover and The Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Jesus is our Passover

Additional Scripture References: Ex 12,13, 12:21-22; 1 Cor 5:7; 2 Chron 7:14; Jn 6:70; Mt 23; Jer 31:33-34; Jn 1:29; Ro 10:9

## **5-Day Devotional**

### **Matthew 26:1-30**

### **The Last Mile**

#### **Day 1: The Extravagance of Worship**

**Reading: Mt 26:6-13**

**Devotional:** Mary's act of pouring expensive perfume on Jesus exemplifies true worship - holding nothing back from our Lord. Her extravagance wasn't about the monetary value, but the heart behind it.

Today, reflect on what you might be withholding from God. Is it your time, talents, or treasures? Remember, Jesus doesn't desire our leftovers, but our best. He gave His all for us; how can we respond with anything less? Consider one area of your life where you can "break your alabaster jar" and offer it fully to God today.

#### **Day 2: Obedience in Uncertainty**

**Reading: Mt 26:17-19**

**Devotional:** The disciples' obedience in preparing for the Passover, even when they didn't fully understand Jesus' plan, teaches us a valuable lesson about faith. Often, God calls us to step out without revealing the entire picture. Our human nature craves control and understanding, but true faith is exercised when we obey despite our uncertainties.

Reflect on a time when God asked you to trust Him without knowing the outcome. How did that strengthen your faith? Today, pray for the courage to say "yes" to God's leading, even when the path ahead seems unclear.

#### **Day 3: The New Covenant of Grace**

**Reading: Mt 26:26-30, Je 31:31-34**

**Devotional:** Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper marks the transition from the old covenant to the new - from the law to grace. This new covenant, prophesied by Jeremiah, promises forgiveness and intimate relationship with God.

As you meditate on these passages, consider the profound implications of this new covenant in your life. How does knowing that your sins are not just covered, but completely forgiven, change your approach to God? Take time to thank Jesus for becoming the ultimate Passover Lamb, securing your eternal redemption.

**Day 4: Betrayal and God's Sovereignty****Reading: Mt 26:20-25, Jn 13:18-30**

**Devotional**: The account of Judas' betrayal is a sobering reminder of human frailty and the depths of sin. Yet, it also showcases God's sovereignty - how He can use even the darkest acts to fulfill His purposes.

Reflect on times when you've felt betrayed or when you've failed God. Remember that no sin is beyond His redemptive power, and no circumstance can thwart His ultimate plan. Pray for those who have hurt you, asking God to give you His perspective and the strength to forgive as Christ forgives us.

**Day 5: Enduring to the End****Reading: Mt 26:36-46**

**Devotional**: In Gethsemane, we see Jesus' humanity and divinity on full display. He agonizes over His impending crucifixion yet submits to the Father's will. This poignant scene reminds us that following God doesn't exempt us from suffering, but it does promise us His presence in our pain.

What "cup" are you facing today? Like Jesus, bring your honest emotions to the Father, but also pray for the strength to say, "Not my will, but Yours be done." Remember, just as Jesus' suffering led to our salvation, God can use our trials for greater purposes we may not yet see.

## Small Group Guide

### Matthew 26:1-30

### The Last Mile

**Opening Prayer:** Pray that God will give us hearts of extravagance worship of Him.

**Key Takeaways:** *Query the group for takeaways first; you may stay with one or more of those:*

1. Jesus' ministry was marked by faithfulness, endurance, and selflessness.
2. The religious leaders plotted against Jesus, but God was in control of the timeline.
3. Mary's act of worship contrasts sharply with Judas' betrayal.
4. Jesus instituted the New Covenant through the Last Supper, fulfilling the Passover.

**Discussion Questions:** *Start with any questions prompted by the Holy Spirit. Then consider the following:*

1. The sermon mentions that Jesus walked an estimated 3,125 miles during His ministry. How does this physical journey reflect His spiritual mission?
2. Discuss the various reasons why the religious leaders opposed Jesus. How do these reasons relate to opposition we might face when following Christ today?
3. Compare and contrast Mary's act of worship with Judas' betrayal. What can we learn from each of these responses to Jesus?
4. The disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions for preparing the Passover meal, even though they didn't fully understand what was happening. How can we cultivate this kind of obedience in our own lives?
5. Reflect on Jesus' statement, "One of you will betray me." How might this have affected the disciples? How does it challenge us to examine our own hearts?
6. How does understanding Jesus as our Passover Lamb deepen our appreciation for the Gospel?

**Practical Applications:** *Query the group for personal applications first; then explore one or more of the following:*

1. Self-reflection: Take time this week to honestly examine your heart. Are there areas where you're withholding something from Jesus that He rightfully deserves?
2. Extravagant worship: Plan an act of worship that goes beyond your normal routine, inspired by Mary's example.
3. Obedience practice: Identify an area where God is calling you to obey, even if you don't fully understand. Take a step of faith in that direction.
4. Communion meditation: Before your next communion, spend time meditating on Jesus as the Passover Lamb and what that means for your salvation.
5. Gospel sharing: Practice explaining to someone how Jesus fulfills the Passover and what that means for our relationship with God.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank God for sending Jesus as our Passover Lamb. Ask for help in living lives of extravagant worship and faithful obedience.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Matthew 26:1-30**

### **The Last Mile**

1. How does Jesus' willingness to walk thousands of miles during His ministry reflect His character and commitment to His mission? What can we learn from His example about perseverance and dedication in our own spiritual journeys?
2. In what ways do we sometimes, like the religious leaders, 'major in the minors' and miss the true significance of Christ's message and sacrifice?
3. How does Mary's act of extravagant worship contrast with Judas' betrayal, and what does this teach us about the nature of true devotion to Christ?
4. What are some areas in our lives where we might be withholding from Jesus what is rightfully His, as Mary did not?
5. How can we cultivate a spirit of obedience even when we don't fully understand God's plan, as the disciples demonstrated in preparing for the Passover?
6. In what ways might we be at risk of 'betraying' Jesus in our daily lives, perhaps unknowingly?
7. How does understanding Jesus as our Passover Lamb deepen our appreciation for the significance of communion and the new covenant?
8. What does it mean for us today to live in light of the 'new covenant' established by Jesus' sacrifice?
9. How can we ensure that our faith is not one of mere convenience, but rather a transformative relationship with Jesus that impacts every aspect of our lives?
10. In what ways can we, like Jesus, give thanks and maintain a spirit of forgiveness even in the face of immense suffering or betrayal?



# **Dinner Conversation Starters**

## **Matthew 26:1-30**

### **The Last Mile**

#### **1. Passover and The Last Supper**

The sermon draws parallels between the Jewish Passover and Jesus' Last Supper. How might understanding these traditions help us appreciate the significance of Jesus' sacrifice?

#### **2. Mary's Act of Worship**

Mary poured expensive oil on Jesus, symbolizing her deep love and worship. What are some ways we can show our devotion and appreciation for important people or beliefs in our lives?

#### **3. Obedience in Uncertainty**

The disciples followed Jesus' commands even without fully understanding what was happening. Can you think of a time when you had to trust and follow directions, even when the outcome was unclear?

#### **4. Judas vs Mary - Choices and Consequences**

The sermon contrasts Judas' betrayal with Mary's devotion. How do our daily choices reflect what we truly value, and how can we ensure that our choices align with our values?

#### **5. The New Covenant's Impact**

The New Covenant that Jesus introduced radically changed the relationship between humanity and God. How do you think this new relationship can influence the way we interact with others and navigate challenges in today's world?

# Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

## Matthew 26:1-30

### The Last Mile

#### FOR KIDS AGES 5-7

1. **Application**: Simple Acts of Kindness

Application Point: Just like Mary showed love to Jesus with her special gift, we can show love through kindness to our family and friends by sharing and helping each other.

Discussion Question: What is one kind thing you can do for someone in our family or a friend this week to show them love?

2. **Application**: Following Directions

Application Point: The disciples followed Jesus' directions even when they weren't sure why. We can practice listening and following instructions from parents and teachers.

Discussion Questions: Can you remember a time when you listened to someone's instructions and it turned out to be a good thing? What happened?

3. **Application**: Sharing is Caring

Application Point: Mary shared something very special with Jesus. Sharing toys and taking turns are great ways to show that we care.

Discussion Questions: How do you feel when someone shares with you? How can we make sure everyone gets a turn during playtime?

#### FOR KIDS AGES 8-12

1. **Application**: True Friendship

Application Point: Mary showed she was a true friend to Jesus by valuing Him more than her possessions. We can be true friends by supporting and encouraging each other.

Discussion Question: What are some ways you can support your friends when they need help or are feeling down?

2. **Application**: Making Wise Choices

Application Point: Judas made a choice to betray, while Mary chose to honor Jesus. Making good choices involves thinking about the consequences and how they affect others.

Discussion Question: When you make a decision, what steps can you take to make sure it's the right one for you and those around you?

3. **Application**: Obeying Even When It's Hard

Application Point: The disciples obeyed Jesus even when they didn't understand everything. Obeying parents and teachers can help us learn and grow, even if we don't understand why right away.

Discussion Questions: Can you think of a time when you didn't agree with a rule or instruction but followed it anyway? What did you learn from that experience?

**FOR TEENS AGES 11-15**

1. **Application**: Digital Integrity

Application Point: In digital spaces, like on social media, it's important to make choices that reflect honesty and kindness, just as Mary made choices that reflected her love for Jesus.

Discussion Question: How can we make sure our online actions and posts reflect the values we believe in and want to live by?

2. **Application**: Leadership and Influence

Application Point: Just as Jesus demonstrated leadership through service and sacrifice, we can lead by example in our schools and social groups by valuing others and putting their needs first.

Discussion Question: What are some ways you can be a positive leader or influence among your friends or in your community?

3. **Application**: Handling Betrayal and Trust

Application Point: Jesus experienced betrayal but continued to fulfill His purpose. In relationships, when trust is broken, it's important to handle it with maturity and forgiveness.

Discussion Question: How can you rebuild trust after a conflict with a friend, and what steps can you take to avoid future misunderstandings?

**Tips for Parents**

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

# Family Conversation Guide for GenZ

## Matthew 26:1-30

### The Last Mile

Apply the lessons learned from this teaching to the prominent relationships in your life.

#### 1. AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY IN DIGITAL SPACES

**Application Point:** The contrast between Mary's genuine devotion and Judas' betrayal highlights the importance of authenticity. In digital spaces, like social media and chats, being true to your values and maintaining integrity is crucial. Reflect Christ-like behavior by posting with honesty and kindness, rather than partaking in gossip or negative interactions.

**Bible Reference:** Proverbs 11:3 - "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity."

**Scenario Discussion:** How can you make sure your online presence reflects your beliefs and values? What steps can you take to prevent falling into the trap of portraying a false image online?

#### 2. VALUING COMMUNITY OVER COMPETITION

**Application Point:** Like Mary valued Jesus over material wealth, valuing community over competition is important. In group settings, strive to encourage and uplift rather than compete or compare. Celebrate others' achievements and look for ways to contribute positively.

**Bible Reference:** Philippians 2:3-4 - "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

**Scenario Discussion:** Have you ever felt the pressure to compete with friends in a harmful way? How can you shift your focus to build others up and create a supportive community?

#### 3. BUILDING TRUST AND HANDLING BETRAYAL

**Application Point:** Jesus' awareness of Judas' betrayal before it happened teaches the importance of trust and handling betrayal with grace. In relationships, prioritize building trust and resolve conflicts through communication and forgiveness rather than retaliation.

**Bible Reference:** Ephesians 4:32 - "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

**Scenario Discussion:** When a friend breaks your trust, what Christian principles can guide your response towards healing and resolution? How do you ensure that forgiveness is genuine and contributes to a healthier relationship?

#### **4. PRIORITIZING REAL-LIFE CONNECTIONS OVER DIGITAL ONES**

**Application Point:** Mary's act of worship was personal and direct. Prioritize face-to-face interactions and meaningful relationships over digital connections, mirroring Jesus' value for personal relationships.

**Bible Reference:** Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another."

**Scenario Discussion:** How do you balance time spent on social media with nurturing real-life relationships? What are some ways to pursue more in-person interactions and strengthen friendships?

#### **5. OBEDIENCE AND TRUST IN GOD'S PLAN**

**Application Point:** Just as the disciples followed Jesus' directions without knowing the full picture, trust in God's plan even when the path isn't clear. In school or career decisions, rely on prayer and scripture for guidance.

**Bible Reference:** Proverbs 3:5-6 - "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."

**Scenario Discussion:** What current challenges require trust in God rather than your own understanding? How do you practically apply trusting God into your daily decision-making process?

These application points aim to help Gen Z navigate their daily environments while faithfully following Jesus' teachings with Biblical integrity and living out the gospel.