

Leader's Guide

Following Jesus

Giving Our All

John 12:1-11

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Conversation Goal

To help group members honestly consider where they are in their relationship with Jesus (Observing who He is? Embracing Him personally? Increasingly becoming like Him?) and identify a concrete way their faith can move from belief into action.

Synopsis

As John 12 begins, Jesus is sharing a meal with some of the people closest to Him just days before His death. Around the table are people whose lives have been profoundly touched by Jesus: Simon, who had been healed; Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead; Martha, who was serving; the disciples; and Mary, whose gratitude and devotion overflowed in an extravagant act of worship. She poured expensive perfume, worth roughly a year's wages, on Jesus, holding nothing back.

Through Mary's response, Sebastiano gave us three words for thinking about our own relationship with Jesus: **Observe. Embrace. Become.** We can know about Jesus, we can personally embrace His grace and salvation, but Jesus ultimately invites us to become more like Him - to allow what has moved from our **head to our heart** to become visible through our **hands and lives**.

1. OBSERVE: Is knowing about Jesus the same as knowing Jesus?

Discussion Question

What is the difference between knowing a lot about Jesus and actually knowing Jesus, and how can we recognize when our faith has become more about information than relationship?

Teaching Point

Knowing Scripture and understanding who Jesus is are important parts of discipleship. But knowledge was never intended to be the destination.

It's possible to know the stories, understand Christian beliefs, attend church, and still keep Jesus at a comfortable distance. **Observation gives us information about Jesus; relationship requires us to respond to Him.**

The question isn't simply, "*How much do I know about Jesus?*" but "**How is what I know drawing me into deeper relationship with Him?**"

Follow-Up Prompts

- How can familiarity with Scripture sometimes cause us to stop being amazed by Jesus?
- What are some signs that we're learning *about* Jesus without actually growing closer to Him?
- Where do you currently sense curiosity or hunger to know Jesus more deeply?
- What would it look like to approach Scripture this week not simply asking, "*What can I learn?*" but "*Jesus, what are You showing me about Yourself?*"

Additional Scripture

John 5:39-40 — Knowing Scripture without coming to Jesus.

Philippians 3:7-10 — Paul's desire to *know Christ*.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 — Our greatest boast is knowing the Lord.

2. EMBRACE: What has Jesus done for you?

Discussion Question

As you consider the people gathered around the table in John 12, each had a story of what Jesus had done. What has Jesus done in your life that you don't want to take for granted?

Teaching Point

This table was filled with testimonies. Simon was known by what Jesus had delivered him from. Lazarus was sitting there alive because Jesus had called him out of a tomb. Mary and Martha had experienced Jesus' love personally.

Embracing Jesus begins when the truth about Him becomes personal: **He has loved me. He has forgiven me. He has rescued me. He is changing me.**

Remembering what Jesus has done keeps grace from becoming ordinary. And gratitude for His grace becomes powerful fuel for transformation.

Follow-Up Prompts

- If you introduced yourself the way Simon was identified, what part of your story would point to what Jesus has done?
- Where can you see evidence of God's grace in the person you are today?
- What has Jesus brought you through, freed you from, taught you, or changed in you?
- Why do we sometimes lose our gratitude for things God has done in the past?
- How might regularly remembering God's faithfulness change the way you live today?
- What would you most want someone else to know about what Jesus has done for you?

Additional Scripture

Psalm 103:1-5 — Forget not all His benefits.

Ephesians 2:1-10 — Remembering what we were and what grace has done.

Psalm 40:1-3 — God's rescue becomes a testimony others can see.

Mark 5:18-20 — "Tell them how much the Lord has done for you."

3. BECOME: Is our relationship with Jesus changing the way we live?

Discussion Question

Mary's love for Jesus became visible through what she did. If someone watched the way you live, and not simply what you say you believe, where would they see evidence that Jesus is changing you?

Teaching Point

Mary didn't simply feel grateful toward Jesus; **her gratitude took action**. She gave something costly, personal, and extravagant. She held nothing back.

Becoming like Jesus is where what we **know in our heads and embrace in our hearts begins showing up in our lives**. Our time, priorities, relationships, generosity, forgiveness, kindness, and willingness to serve increasingly reflect the One we're following.

Spiritual maturity isn't simply knowing more about Jesus. **It's increasingly becoming like the Jesus we know**.

Follow-Up Prompts

- What makes Mary's act such a powerful expression of her devotion?

- Why do you think genuine gratitude often produces action?
- Where have you noticed Jesus changing the way you respond to people?
- What area of your life looks different today because you're following Jesus?
- Where is there still a gap between what you believe and how you're living?
- What might following Jesus cost you in this season (comfort, time, money, reputation, control, etc.)?
- If someone observed your life for a week, what might they conclude matters most to you?

Additional Scripture

Romans 12:1-2 — Offering our lives as worship.

2 Corinthians 3:18 — Being transformed into Christ's image.

James 1:22-25 — Don't merely listen; do what the Word says.

Galatians 2:20 — Christ increasingly living through us.

4. ACT: What would "giving your all" look like this week?

Discussion Question

Where might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to move from good intentions to concrete action?

Teaching Point

Following Jesus eventually requires action. Sometimes that action is dramatic; often it's remarkably ordinary.

It might mean slowing down enough to be present with someone, showing unexpected kindness, forgiving, serving, encouraging, sharing your faith, changing a priority, giving generously, or moving toward someone you've been avoiding.

We don't act to earn Jesus' love. **We act because we've received it.** The grace we've experienced becomes grace extended to others.

Follow-Up Prompts

- Is there something you've sensed God asking you to do that you've been putting off?
- Who might God be asking you to notice?
- What act of kindness could communicate the love of Jesus to someone this week?

- Is there a relationship where becoming more like Jesus would require forgiveness, patience, humility, or initiative?
- What might you need to reprioritize to make room for obedience?
- What fear could keep you from acting?
- What is one specific thing you will do and when will you do it?
- How can this group help you follow through?

Additional Scripture

1 John 3:16-18 — Love with actions and truth.

Galatians 5:6 — Faith expressing itself through love.

Ephesians 2:10 — Created in Christ to do good works.

Matthew 5:14-16 — Let others see your good works and glorify your Father.