

# BE WITH JESUS

## REDUCE DISTRACTIONS

**Identifying, balancing, or eliminating things that distance me from Jesus and steal my heart and affections.**

- Welcome, Review
- Group Check-In
- Message
- Group Study
- Practice the Practice
- Closing Prayer

This Week's Key Verse to Think About, Soak in, and Memorize:

*Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. **Colossians 3:2***

More Resources to Explore!

See the Spiritual Growth Section of the Twin Cities Church website:

[www.twincities.church/spiritual-growth-be4](http://www.twincities.church/spiritual-growth-be4)

Click on the “Reduce Distractions” picture to find many helpful resources.

# REDUCE DISTRACTIONS

One of the most common experiences in life is the feeling of being busy, hurried, and constantly in motion. Schedules fill up, responsibilities multiply, and life becomes a steady stream of activity, information, and noise. Over time, busyness can begin to feel normal - even necessary - and can subtly shape our identity and value.

Yet beneath the surface, this pace often leads to something deeper: distraction. When life becomes crowded with “more” - more activity, more consumption, more commitments - it becomes increasingly difficult to remain present with God and attentive to what matters most. Jesus invites His followers into a different way of living.

Reducing Distractions is the practice of identifying and removing things that pull our heart away from God so that our attention, affection, and energy can be re-centered on Him. It is not about doing nothing, but about making space for what matters most.

## What the Bible Says About Reducing Distractions

Scripture consistently calls us to examine what we are pursuing and to prioritize what truly matters.

**Matthew 16:26** *What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?*

Jesus reminds us that gathering up worldly things is of little value if you end up losing your soul.

**Mark 12:30–31** *Love the Lord your God... and love your neighbor as yourself.*

God clarifies that the highest priorities in life are loving Him fully and loving others well.

**Matthew 6:33** *Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness...*

When we put God and His Kingdom first, everything else falls into its right place.

**1 Corinthians 14:1** *Let love be your highest goal.*

Love - not achievement, accumulation, or activity - is meant to guide and shape how life is lived.

## A Biblical Example - Mary and Martha

A clear picture of distraction and focus is seen in the story of Mary and Martha. These two sisters were friends of Jesus. Both were devoted, but one was distracted. Martha was consumed with responsibilities and distracted by her overwhelming tasks. Mary, however, chose to sit with Jesus, giving Him her full attention.

**Luke 10:41–42** *“Martha, Martha... you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed - or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better...”*

Jesus did not rebuke Martha for serving, but for being distracted and anxious by too many things. Mary recognized what mattered most - being present with Jesus - and Jesus affirmed her choice. This reveals how it’s possible to be busy doing good things and still miss what’s most important.

## Why Reducing Distractions Matters

We don't just live in a busy world - we live in a *relentlessly noisy* one. Most of us wake up and within minutes we're scrolling. Notifications, emails, headlines, group texts... before our feet even hit the floor, our attention is already divided. And it doesn't really stop. We move from screen to screen, task to task, conversation to conversation - rarely fully present anywhere.

And here's the thing: distraction doesn't just fill our time... it forms our lives. We assume it's harmless - just checking something, just staying informed. But over time, all that noise begins to shape what we love, what we think about, and what we give our attention to. And more and more, it becomes harder to hear anything *beneath* the noise. Including God. It's not that God has stopped speaking - it's that our lives have become so full, so loud, and so fragmented that we have crowded out God. And we start to feel the effects of this:

- We feel it in our relationships - when we're physically there but mentally somewhere else.
- We feel it in our souls - like a low-grade restlessness that we can't ever quite settle.
- We feel it in that constant sense that we're behind, or missing out, or needing *more*.

And then we fill the emptiness with more entertainment, more productivity, more information. But instead of satisfying us, it just makes us more tired... more distracted... and more empty. Because the things we're turning to were never meant to satisfy the deepest longing of our heart.

And if we're not careful, we don't just *have* distractions - we live distracted. We become people who can't slow down, can't focus, can't be still... and eventually, God's voice gets drowned out by all the noise. That's why reducing distractions matters. Not because activity is bad - but because a distracted life rules over our heart and pulls us away from God.

## What It Looks Like to Practice Reducing Distractions

Imagine a life where you're not constantly reaching for your phone whenever there's a quiet moment. Imagine being fully present in a conversation - actually listening, not half-distracted, not thinking about what's next. This kind of life might feel foreign... but it's also deeply human.

Reducing distractions starts with small, intentional choices. It might look like turning off notifications that nag at you. It might look like setting aside specific times to step away from screens. It might look like creating quiet moments with no music, no podcasts - just space.

At first, this space can feel uncomfortable. Because we're so used to filling every gap. But over time, something begins to shift. Your mind feels less scattered. You become more present with people. Your soul feels less rushed. And moments with God are no longer squeezed into the margins - they begin to move toward the center... because there's finally room.

This week, as we practice "**Reduce Distractions**", it may feel like we're giving things up. But we're actually making room - Room for peace. Room for clarity. Room for connection with God. We're not losing life... we're stepping into it.

# GROUP STUDY: Reduce Distractions

## Begin with Prayer and Silence

*Gather as a group and say a quick prayer to invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time together. Then spend a moment in silence, expressing a desire to hear from God.*

## Explore the Scriptures

1. Let's read Luke 10:38-42. Here we see sisters Mary and Martha hosting Jesus and His disciples in their home. Martha prepares the meal, cleans the house, and takes care of the needs of the group while Mary sits listening at Jesus' feet. How does Martha feel? What does Jesus say about this? What are the signs of a distracted and hurried heart?
2. In Matthew 6:31-33 Jesus tells us not to worry but to seek God's kingdom first and He will take care of the rest. How does making God our first priority help order the rest of our lives?
3. Let's read through 1 Timothy 6:6-8. The Apostle Paul says that simplicity is a path to contentment. How can having too much make us desire more? Can you think of ways that simplicity might help us spiritually?

## Read Through the Practice Together

Read through the practice on the next page together, and then answer these questions:

- Do you feel you understand the practice? Do you have any questions about it?
- How do you feel about practicing this, any concerns?

## Share Your Personal Action Plan with the Group

*Jesus replied, "...blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." - Luke 11:28*

I will practice Reduce Distractions on (day and time) \_\_\_\_\_

in this place (location) \_\_\_\_\_

## Close in Prayer

## PRACTICE: Reduce Distractions

Our Practice for this week is to Reduce Distractions. We reduce distractions when we simplify our life according to our values.

### Let's examine and prioritize our values:

What would you say are your top personal values? See below for ideas and add what is missing:

- Helping others
- Honesty
- Family
- Physical fitness
- Learning
- Adventure
- Time with God
- Hospitality
- Generosity
- Wealth
- Accomplishment
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Ask someone close to you. Ask the people closest to you what they would say are your core values based on how you actually live. Choose someone you trust who is honest and kind.

Examine your budget. Look at how you spend your money in your banking app, budget, or bank statement. What does your spending tell you about what you value most?

Examine your schedule. Look back over your calendar or think about how you spent your time the last few weeks. What did you do? How much time did it take? What does this say?

When you compare what you *say* you value with how you *actually use* your time, money, and resources, does it all match up? Begin to write out your desired top values and make a *specific plan* to prioritize those values in your schedule and budget.

**NEXT**, what are the things you need to **reduce** or **eliminate** from your life so you can simplify it and make space for God? What tends to rob your time with God and others?

Cut 1-3 things out of your schedule. Which activities do you realize you need to cut for a season? (TV, social media, YouTube, video games, other? \_\_\_\_\_)

What are things that seem to dominate or control you in some way?

After you work through the withdrawals, notice what effect this has on you.

Control your phone. Think of ways that your phone controls your life and attention.

How can you reduce or minimize this? Can you limit notifications? How can you limit how often you reach for your phone? Are there periods of time when you can turn off your phone?

Minimize your stuff. Go through your stuff and give away or get rid of things you don't need or use. Less stuff equals less concern, clutter, and mess. Embrace the beauty of simplicity.

Intentionally slow your life. See your life as a movie and dial it back 10-20%. Walk slower, breathe slower, talk a bit slower (think about your words), do less. Free yourself from feeling like you must always accomplish something and take time to be. Notice life and God all around you.

