

THIS ONE THING

This One thing

At one point or the other I think all of us will ask ourselves the question ,

“What is that one thing or few things that I am supposed to pursue in this life?”

- You might have already asked yourself that question or you are still to ask that question, but I believe that at some point you will need to answer it.
- This question does not only apply to young people only, but it applies to people of different ages.
- Don't disqualify yourself from asking this question when you are old as well because as long as there is breath in your lungs and you are still alive, there is that one thing or a few things that you will need to pursue.
- If we are to look at an example, we can see that someone like Nelson Mandela had to leave everything behind and pursue that one goal which was to help to liberate South Africa from Apartheid, by leaving all else behind and fighting the system he had to give up his career as a lawyer and be separated from his family in order to help South Africa be liberated from Apartheid.
- As Christians and with our walk with the Lord we also have to ask ourselves the question which is **what is it that I should pursue in my Christian walk.**
- As we are about to end a year and start a new year, it is important that you sit down and reflect on how you have pursued God in this current year and how you can improve in your pursuit of God in the coming year.
- This sermon will try to help you answer that question of what you should be pursuing as a believer. What is that one thing that should be important to you.
- **My sermon title is, “This One thing”.**

Our main scripture reading is found in the book of

Luke 10:38-42 (NLT)

³⁸ As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her

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home. ³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

⁴¹ But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

- In v.41-42 we read the Lord Jesus telling Martha that she was worried about the preparations for the dinner, but then Jesus says to her that **one thing is necessary**, or worth being concerned about or in another translation a **few things are necessary to be concerned about**
- Jesus goes on to tell Martha that Mary had discovered what that important thing was, and it would not be taken away from her.

What is that one thing that Mary had discovered that should have been of concern to Martha as well?

Let's read v39 again.

Luke 18:39 (NLT)

³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught.

- We can see from v.39 that Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, and **she paid attention to what she was being taught.**
- Why was Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus?
- Why was she doing this?
- Was it important for her to do so?
- The reason why Mary sat at the feet of Jesus was because **she was listening to what Jesus was teaching.**

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- When Jesus came to the home of Martha, Mary discovered that the most important thing she should do is to spend time with Jesus listening to him.
- **She understood that the most important thing she needed to do was to be in fellowship with Jesus.**

Example of pursuing this one Thing

- Let's look at David.
- **Psalm 27:4 (ESV)**
- **One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.**
- **What is that one thing that David desired?**
- From this verse we can see that David longed to dwell in the house of the Lord. **The desire of David was being in the presence of the Lord.**
- David was in the wilderness as his enemies were pursuing after Him, but he longed to be in the presence of the Lord.
- **David did not just want the “Literal temple” . What he desired was to have the active presence of the Lord.**
- **He wanted continued communion and relationship.**
- If we are to look at our contemporary environment it means that when we are at work and working away on our laptops, we are not just working but also thinking about our Lord Jesus, meditating on His word, singing a song to Him.
- When we have fallen in love with someone, even when we are at work, we will still take moments to think about our loved ones as we have a deep connection with them.
- **How much more for our Lord? How should be our pursuit of Him?**
- Let's go back to David, He was longing to gaze upon the **beauty of the Lord.**
- He was also longing to inquire in **His temple.**

What is gazing upon the beauty of the Lord?

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- **David was in awe of God, and he longed to see the loveliness of God's divine character.**
- The devoted followers of Jesus long to admire God and be full of affection towards God.
- **That love for God is shown by how such believers worship the Lord.**

What is inquiring in His temple?

Getting to know about God's character and how he deals with men (Cambridge Bible for schools and colleges)

Conclusion on David

David was in trouble, his enemies pursuing after him, but he chose to pursue God. His priorities were to have a close relationship despite the challenges he was facing. My question to you is whether you are going through a challenging time or great time, are you willing to pursue the Lord?

Let's go back to Look at Mary in

Luke 10:38-39

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

- We have already learnt that when Jesus came, Mary was not focused on eating dinner with Him, but her **attention was to listen to what He had to say.**
- She **was focused on hearing the word.**
- **In this Jewish setting sitting at the feet was how Jewish scholars set at the feet of their rabbis and listened to what they had to say**
- **An example of this is shown in Acts 22:3 with the example of Paul.**

Acts 22:3 (ESV)

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3“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel^b according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. **4**I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, **5**as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

- **Paul was educated at the feet of Gamaliel. As a student of Gamaliel, he was trained in Jewish laws and customs.**
- Paul chose from that time to honour God according to what he had been taught by Gamaliel.
- Gamaliel was the most famous rabbi during this time.
- Paul was a disciple and going back to Luke 10:39 when Mary sat at the feet of Jesus she chose to be discipled and to be taught by God.
- My question that I have to pause to you in your walk with God, is that **“have you mastered how to sit at the feet of Jesus, and are you willing to listen to what Jesus has to say to you through His word?”**
- Are you taught and discipled in the ways of the Lord.
- **Have you chosen to be a scholar and to sit at the feet of Jesus?**

What is a scholar?

According to the Cambridge dictionary, A scholar is a person who studies a subject in great detail, especially at a university:

- When it comes to the above passage, we see Mary who was a woman sitting at the feet of Jesus.
- She was eager to learn, and Jesus was open to disciple her.
- That shows that when it comes to being a scholar for Jesus, **it does not matter your social class, your education, your eloquence, everyone is welcome and anyone can learn from Jesus because Jesus does not discriminate and wants**

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every person who is willing, to have a personal relationship with Him and to learn about Him.

- Being a scholar for Jesus and being dedicated to knowing about Jesus is not limited to the fivefold ministry that is the Evangelists, Prophets, apostles, teachers, and Pastors but it is every believer's portion to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from Him.
- Being a scholar for Jesus will help you to know who Jesus is and you will be pursuing that one thing that is important which is to know Him,
- **When you study someone, you get to know what they like and dislike.**
- For example, **God does not want to be categorised with other gods and the worship that is due to Him to be given to idols.**

Isaiah 42:8

- [English Standard Version](#)
- **8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.**
- **When the focus is not on God that means there are distractions that are in our way.**
- ***The reason why many of us do not pursue this “One thing” is that there are so many things that distract us.***

Let's read again from

Luke 10:40 (NIV)

⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

What is being distracted?

Let's look at Similar words.

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Preoccupied, diverted, inattentive, vague, absorbed, engrossed.

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines it as being.

having one's thoughts or attention drawn away : unable to concentrate or give attention to something.

- We can see from this verse that Martha was distracted by the preparations for the dinner.
- **Could it be that some of us are distracted from Jesus, and we even start complaining about those who are scholars and are sitting at the feet of Jesus.**
- Could it be the reason why Christians in who are distracted complain about the time spent at church on a Sunday, the monies given to the church, the prayer meetings, and the other disciplines that believers do.
- Mary complained to Jesus and even asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her in the dinner preparation.
- **My question is that are you a distracted Christian who even wants to persuade other Christians not to pursue Christ.**
- Are you encouraging other believers to stay away from church, prayer meetings, reading the word etc.
- **You can encourage others to stop pursuing the Lord by your actions and by the words you say.**
- Has it been the reason why you now you look down upon your faith and are ashamed about speaking out about Jesus to the people around you?
- How can you speak about Jesus when you don't relate to Him, and you do not speak in great detail about Him.
- **What type of believer should you be? The one who pursues .** This one thing that is important that is important is following Christ.
- Let's also know that **sitting at the feet of Jesus is done as an individual like Mary and also as a community.**

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- May we be those who sit at the feet of **Jesus as individuals as well as a community.**

Hebrews 10:25

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

- As believers we need to stir each other to love and good works and this can take place in community.
 - Others are not stirred up when we are isolated from each other.
 - When we don't see a fellow brother or sister not attending prayer meetings, not reading the word, not fellowshiping with other believers let's follow up on them and encourage them to remain standing in the Lord because Jesus is coming back again.
 - Don't let the enemy use you as a stumbling block for other people's pursuit of Jesus.
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- **The reason why many of us do not pursue this "One thing" is that there are so many things that distract us.**

Distractions that can hinder one from pursuing close fellowship with the Lord.

1. The love of money

Luke 16:13 (NLT)

¹³ "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money." (Luke 16:13)

As a child of God, there is nothing wrong in obtaining financial wealth, but you cannot worship money and God at the same time.

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Why do a lot of us get distracted by money and love it more than we love God?

It's because a lot of us do not fully grasp that all we have comes from God and we do not have Faith that God is the one who provides for us.

Some of us think it's our hard work that makes us possess wealth.

That is why we cannot even rest because we think our efforts and our hard work are the only ingredients that make us succeed.

Luke 12: 22-34 (TPT)

22Jesus taught his disciples, saying, "Listen to me. Never let anxiety enter your hearts. Never worry about any of your needs, such as food or clothing. **23**For your life is infinitely more than just the food you eat or the clothing you wear. **24**Take the carefree birds as your example. Do you ever see them worry? They neither grow their own food nor put it in a storehouse for later. Yet God takes care of every one of them, feeding each of them out of *the abundance* of his love and goodness. Isn't your life more precious to God than a bird? *Be carefree in the care of God!*

25"Does worry add anything to your life? Can it add one more year, or even one day? **26**So if worrying adds nothing, but actually subtracts from your life, why would you worry about God's care of you?

27"Think about the lilies. They grow and become beautiful, not because they work hard or strive to clothe themselves. Yet not even Solomon, wearing his kingly garments of splendour, could be compared to a field of lilies. **28**If God can clothe the fields and meadows with grass and flowers, can he not clothe you as well, O struggling one with so many doubts? **29**I repeat: Don't let worry enter your life. Live above the anxious cares about your personal needs. **30**People everywhere seem to worry about making a living, but your heavenly Father knows your every need and will take care of you. **31**As you passionately seek his kingdom, above

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all else, he will supply your needs. 32So don't ever be afraid, dearest friends! Your loving Father joyously gives you his kingdom with all its promises!

33“Now, go and sell what you have and give to those in need; you will be making deposits in your account in heaven, an account that will never be taken from you. Your gifts will become a secure and unfailing treasure, deposited in heaven forever. 34Where you deposit your treasure, that is where you fix your thoughts—and your heart will long to be there also.”

Why are a lot of us worried and concerned?

- Maybe some of you started a new business and it failed and you lost everything.
- During COVID a lot of us lost our sources of income and this stressed us out.
- Based on this we have pursued making money at all costs and this has shifted our attention on God and accumulating wealth

How can you tell that you are obsessed with the love of money?

- You have stopped worshipping the Lord and praying because you are working too hard, and you do not have time in your day to spend with the Lord.
- You pursue your work even if it means it squeezes you of all the time to commune with the Lord.
- You are no longer generous, and you are unable to give your wealth away.
- Yes, it is key to save money, but the Lord will require you from time to time to meet the needs of others, when you are prompted do so, **do you hold back and choose not to give as you think money will run out.**

Luke 12:33 (TPT)

- **33“Now, go and sell what you have and give to those in need; you will be making deposits in your account in heaven, an account that will never be taken from you. Your gifts will become a secure and unfailing treasure, deposited in heaven forever. 34Where you deposit your treasure, that is where you fix your thoughts—and your heart will long to be there also.”**

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- When you give to those in need you are storing for yourself treasures in heaven.
- **Your gifts are a secure and unfailing treasure that is stored up in heaven.**
- **When your moneybag is on earth it will run out and you can be bankrupt but when your treasure or money bag lies with God you will never be bankrupt as your God will always provide for you.**
- Our hearts should be focused on loving Jesus more than anything else in this life.

2. Being in a season of plenty

Following on from making money a god, sometimes when we are enjoying.

a lot of wealth,

when we are enjoying good health,

our marriage is in the summer season etc.

we sometimes tend to be relaxed and do not pursue our relationship with the Lord.

Bible reading stops, praying, going to church etc because we are in a good space.

When you have plenty do not forget the wilderness where you have come from and where the Lord has brought you out from.

- **You may lose everything if you don't prioritise God in your life.**
- **Pay careful attention to God.**

(Deuteronomy 8:11) (TPT)

11“Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, 12lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, 13and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, 14then your heart be lifted up, and

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you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, 15who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, 16who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. 17Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 18You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. 19And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. 20Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

3. In a season of hardship

- In times of wealth and good living it is possible that we can get distracted and lose our focus on worshipping the Lord and having an intimate relationship with the Lord
- The opposite is true that we can also get distracted, and we draw away from pursuing the Lord when things are not working out in our lives.
- It can be a season when:-
- **Your children are rebellious.**
- **You have been unemployed for a long time.**
- **You are sick and are not feeling well.**
- **Your marriage is breaking down.**
- **In a time of bereavement when you have lost a loved one**

Let's go back and look at David in Psalm 27

- **The exact scenario in which it was written may not accurately be pinpointed but David speaks about his adversaries stumbling and falling which shows that he was in a time of trouble.**

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Psalms 27:1-14 TPT

Yahweh is my revelation-light and the source of my salvation. I fear no one! I'll never turn back and run, for you, Yahweh, surround and protect me. When evil ones come to destroy me, they will be the ones who turn back. My heart will not fear even if an army rises to attack. I will not be shaken, even if war is imminent. Here's the one thing I crave from Yahweh, the one thing I seek above all else: I want to live with him every moment in his house, beholding the marvellous beauty of Yahweh, filled with awe, delighting in his glory and grace. I want to contemplate in his temple. In the day of trouble, he will treasure me in his shelter, under the cover of his tent. He will lift me high upon a rock, out of reach from all my enemies who surround me. Triumphant now, I'll bring him my offerings of praise, singing and shouting with ecstatic joy! Yes, I will sing praises to Yahweh! Hear my cry. Show me mercy and send the help I need! I heard your voice in my heart say, "Come, seek my face;" my inner being responded, "Yahweh, I'm seeking your face with all my heart." So don't turn your face away from me. You're the God of my salvation; how can you reject your servant in anger? You've been my only hope, so don't forsake me now when I need you! My father and mother abandoned me. But you, Yahweh, took me in and made me yours. Now teach me, Yahweh, all about your ways and tell me what to do. Make it clear for me to understand, for I am surrounded by waiting enemies. Don't let them defeat me, Lord. You can't let me fall into their clutches! They keep accusing me of things I've never done, breathing out violence against me. Yet I believe with all my heart that I will see again your goodness, Yahweh, in the land of life eternal! Here's what I've learned through it all: Don't give up; don't be impatient; be entwined as one with the Lord. Be brave and courageous, and never lose hope. Yes, keep on waiting—for he will never disappoint you!

- **How did David react in times of trouble?**
- **Did he turn away from God or did he choose to pursue the Lord?**

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- Despite his challenges David longed to dwell in the House of the Lord and to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
- David longed to be entwined with the Lord.
- David longed to be taught by the Lord.
- David believed that even though he was going through a tough time, He would live to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of living.
- David learned to be to be entwined with the Lord and not to give upon God and to lose hope in the Lord.
- **Never lose hope in the Lord in times of trouble, be courageous and keep on waiting on God and you will not be disappointed.**

Let the below quote by Charles Spurgeon be true in the life of a believer:-

“The character of God is attractive, and fitted to inspire us with love for him, and to make us, as it were, run after him.” (Gray, cited in Spurgeon)

Conclusion

- The believer should pursue God whether in times of plenty, in difficult seasons and even in seasons of accumulating wealth.
- Pursuing the presence of God should be attractive to the believer and it should not be taken lightly.
- **Like David, the believer should ask the Lord and seek to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**
- **Like Mary, the believer should sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to the teachings of Jesus.**
- Like Charles Spurgeon stated,
- **“It has been said by someone that ‘the proper study of mankind is man.’ I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God’s elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest**

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science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.” (This came from Spurgeon’s first published sermon, titled *The Immutability of God*, delivered on January 7, 1855 – when he was 20 years old.)

- Just like the 20 year old Charles Spurgeon may we be drawn to the Lord and pursue Him.
- We need to study God. Our attention should be fixed on Jesus. Let us pursue Him more than anything we pursue in this life.