



## **Sermon Discussion Notes Stress-Test Part 1**

### **Opening Thought**

*A skillful painter will make sure to spread the paint evenly on the wall he is painting. Unlike paint being skillfully applied to a wall, stress is often applied unevenly in our lives. There are certain seasons in our life that are more stressful than others. For instance, mothers with small children at home may be under more stress than the mother whose children are away studying at college. The empty nesters that now are involved in eldercare (caring for one's aged parents) may be in a unique stage of stress in their lives. Like a runner in a race certain parts of the course may be uphill while other parts of the race we have the wind at our back and are cruising. Life applies stress unequally to all of our lives.*

### **Key Scripture**

*Luke 10:38-42*

*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. 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!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." NIV*

## Discussion Questions

1. In the opening thought we mentioned that stress is not always equally distributed in the course of our life. What have been some of the most stressful times in your life?
2. Is it possible to avoid all stress in this world? Can a healthy level of stress be good for us?
3. Stress can be caused by a myriad of things in our life; unexpected and challenging events, challenging people that give us a hard time, lack of resources and situations that we cannot control. Some stress cannot be controlled in our life. What type of stress can be controlled in our lives?
4. One kind of stress is too much to do in too little time. If we have too much to do we should take an inventory of our activities. God has assignments that each of us are supposed to do in life but what are "human add-ons"?
5. Why do some people take on too much? What do you think the factors are that make people push themselves too far sometimes?
6. In the Bible story in Luke we meet two women, one not stressed and one very stressed. Re-tell the story as a group, what is the plot? Why is Martha having a private melt-down?
7. Discuss the factors that may have lead to Martha's stress.
  - Too many pots on the stove
  - Her identity as a great hostess and cook
  - Perfectionist tendencies
8. What are the two mega points in the sermon of how to take charge of some stress in our lives?

## Final Thought

*Jesus said to Martha, "Martha, Martha". The double vocative in Jewish culture was an expression of endearment. Jesus loved Martha even though her focus had been hijacked from him to less important things. When we get our focus on Jesus the challenges of our life may not disappear but our feelings of stressfulness will.*