

Pressure Points

By Shari Miller



For Bible study leader notes and Bible passages, click by the Quarterly icon at www.lwml.org or contact the LWML Office.

Introduction: The dictionary definition of a “pressure point” is (1) any of several points on the body at which an underlying artery can be pressed against a bone to stop distal bleeding; (2) area on the skin that is highly sensitive to the application of pressure; (3) where problems or disagreements are likely to occur.

Faith Talk: In light of the above definitions, discuss how the term “pressure point” could be applied to emotions and/or spiritual life.

As we consider Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, in this Bible study, we will see how they experienced physical, spiritual, and emotional pressure points in their lives. We will also consider how we experience some of those very same pressure points.

Opening Prayer: Dear Almighty Father, we praise You that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. You have given us our body and soul and all our members. You preserve and protect us. When we sin, we know that we separate ourselves from You, the Holy One. Thank You for sending Jesus to suffer and die for us on the cross of Calvary. We boldly ask that You bless this study of Your Word. In Jesus’ great name we pray, Amen.

Pressure Points: *Mary and Martha*

Read the three references below which refer to both Mary and Martha. Identify in each passage at least one pressure that Mary could have been experiencing and at least one pressure that Martha could have been experiencing.

Luke 10:38–42

John 11:1–44

John 12:1–11

Faith Talk: Finish the following statement. Write in your answers and then share with a partner or in your small group.



I experience these pressures because of my:

family

friends

job

Christianity

Pressure Points: *Pain*

A second definition of “pressure points” follows:

Pressure points are nerve bundles found throughout the body. They can cause both pain and healing. Pressure points can both hurt an attacker (as in martial arts) and heal a wounded body. Acupressure is a traditional Chinese medicinal technique that involves placing pressure on the body to relieve symptoms. Modern-day pressure techniques are practiced in reflexology.

What effect does the pressure of sin have on each of us? Read the following Bible passages. Identify the physical, emotional, and spiritual effects of sin.

Psalm 6:2–3, 6–8

Psalm 32:3–4

Psalm 38:4

Psalm 38:18

Psalm 40:12

Psalm 88:3

What painful pressures did Jesus endure for the salvation of the world? Read the following Bible passages. Identify the physical, emotional, and spiritual effects of Jesus' punishment for our sins.

Psalm 22:1–2, 6–18

Isaiah 53:3–6

Matthew 27:46

Mark 15:15–20

If time permits: Use a cross-reference to find other passages that describe Jesus and His work of salvation. Identify the pressures that Jesus experienced. Share your findings with a partner or in small groups.

Pressure Points: Healing (Relief)

Faith Talk: List ways or methods we use to try to relieve our pain. Share with your group.

Reread the second definition for “pressure points.” Take note of these phrases: “cause ... healing; heal a wounded body; and relieve symptoms.” According to this definition, pressure points can not only cause pain but can also be attributed to relieving and healing such painful things as stress, headaches, nervous tension, anxiety, and even nausea.

Take another look at the three previous references to Mary and Martha. How did Jesus relieve their pressures?

Luke 10:38–42

John 11:1–44

John 12:1–11

How does Jesus our Savior heal us?

Psalm 130

John 14:16–17

Romans 8:22–27

2 Corinthians 5:1–5

Galatians 5:16–26

Hebrews 12:7–11

Extra Credit Question: The Holy Spirit uses the _____ of _____ to keep us in the one true faith. What three things does the Holy Spirit use to “grow” our faith? How are we healed? Hint: See the Bible passages below.

1 Peter 3:18–22

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

2 Peter 1:16–21

Conclusion: Where does every Christian find true joy and peace, even through the pressure points of life? See **Nehemiah 8:10b** and **Philippians 4:4–7**.

Faith Walk:

Help to relieve the pressure of at least one person's sin by sharing with her the Good News of salvation in Jesus this week.

Identify people in your life who need pressure relief. How can you specifically help to provide that relief?

Book Club Suggestion: *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World: Finding Intimacy with God in the Busyness of Life* by Joanna Weaver, Random House, 2000.

Closing Prayer: Pray **Psalm 121** together.

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—
where does my help come from?

2 My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;

4 indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

6 the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;

8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

In Jesus' name, Amen!

Shari Miller, wife of Rev. Larry and mother of Joshua and Johanna, is the District President of the Montana District LWML. She lives in Helena, Montana, and has written various articles and studies for the LWML.