

## THE GOSPEL OF

## JOHN

STUDENT LESSON

THE  
WOMAN AT  
THE WELL

“The setting for Jesus’s encounter with the Samaritan woman is historic: Jacob’s well. But their conversation has to bridge several major gulfs. First, an ethnic gulf: Samaritans and Jews had no dealings with one another, and their history was strained, to say the least. The Samaritans had built a temple on Mount Gerizim (cf. Deut. 11: 29; 27: 12) around 400 BC, which was destroyed in approximately 128 BC by the Jews, who claimed that proper worship must be conducted in the temple in Jerusalem. Second, there was a religious gulf: the Samaritans acknowledged only the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses, as Scripture; the Jews’ canon also included the Writings and the Prophets. Then there was the moral gulf: on the one hand is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God; on the other, the Samaritan woman who has had five sexual partners and is not married to her present companion (4: 17–18).

In all of this, John highlights the amazing divine condescension that caused the preexistent Word to become flesh and take up residence among his people. In the fullness of his humanity, Jesus is tired (4: 6) and thirsty (4: 7) and asks a Samaritan woman for a drink. Yet it is precisely this condescension that opens up opportunities for revelation: regarding Jesus’s ability to grant eternal life (“living water,” 4: 10), regarding Jesus’s supernatural knowledge (4: 17–18; cf. 1: 48), regarding the proper way of worship (in spirit and truth; 4: 23–24), and regarding Jesus’s true identity (he is the Christ; 4: 25–26). In the end, the Samaritan woman goes to get some of her townspeople to come and see Jesus for themselves. Indeed, “many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony” (4: 39).

Thus, the primary topic of this narrative is clear: mission. ... [W]hen dealing with the Samaritan, Jesus develops water symbolism in the direction of his ability to give eternal life (evangelism); in talking with his disciples, he talks about his mission and how they have entered it (discipleship).”<sup>1</sup>

## Open it

1. How did you meet your best friend? Did you become best friends right away or did it take time?

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<sup>1</sup>Köstenberger, Andreas J.. Encountering John (Encountering Biblical Studies) (pp. 145-146). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

# Daily Devotions

## Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read John 4:1–42.

2. Where were Jesus and His disciples headed and where did they stop on their way?
3. Who did Jesus meet while His disciples were in town getting food?
4. How did Jesus show that person that He was the Messiah?
5. What does Jesus mean when He says, “Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest”?
6. What did the woman who Jesus talked to at the well do? What happened because she did that?

## Day 2 — Today's Theme: A Savior for the World

### Read John 4:1–10.

In this passage, we see Jesus show up in Sychar, a town in Samaria, and while he's there, he talks with a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. What a shocking interaction! Even the Samaritan woman was shocked to see Jesus interacting with her. Jews and Samaritans had some bad blood between them. First of all, she is a Samaritan. After the northern kingdom of Israel, with Samaria as its capital, was conquered by the Assyrians, they captured and deported Jewish people to Assyria. These Jews intermarried with the Assyrians. Their children were ½ Jewish and ½ Assyrian and were called Samaritans. They were no longer 100% Jewish, and therefore were looked down upon by Jews. Second, she was a woman, and men and women didn't interact with each other, especially in public and even more so because Jesus was a Rabbi. There were also some pretty strong disagreements about their faith and place of worship (talk more about that soon). In other words, she was the last person that anyone would have expected Jesus, a Jewish man, to talk to!

This is about a lot more than giving an example of being kind to people who are in a different social circle than you or from a different culture or faith than you. In this interaction, Jesus is demonstrating that the Messiah didn't just come for the Jews, He came for all people! In other words, all people can find salvation in Jesus!

"Nicodemus was an educated, respected, theologically trained religious leader. The Samaritan woman was unschooled, without influence, despised. Nicodemus was a man, a Jew, a ruler; she was a woman, a Samaritan, a moral outcast. And both needed Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

We're all familiar with John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world...*" But the challenge is living like we actually believe that to be true! Here's a situation where Jesus is demonstrating that He didn't come just for the Jews, but for the whole world! That means that salvation is offered to everyone—no matter their background and no matter how much you may or may not like them.

**7. Jesus bridges the gap between Jews and Samaritans multiple times during His ministry. Why does the gospel call us to build bridges instead of divisions between groups of people?**

**8. What groups of people in your life or school need someone to build a bridge and share the gospel with them? How could you be part of building that bridge?**

**Spend time praying for the different "groups" of students in your school or community, that God would open doors for them to hear the gospel and that many of them would be saved by trusting in Jesus**

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<sup>2</sup> Carson, D. A.. The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) (p. 216). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

## Day 3 — Today's Theme: Living Water

### Read John 4:7–15.

Nothing beats an ice-cold Sprite from McDonalds on a hot summer day. It's so crisp and so cold. When you take a big gulp, you almost can't help but let out a deep, "Ahhh!" It's so refreshing! That is, for like five minutes. Then suddenly you feel just as thirsty as you did a few minutes ago, if not even more thirsty! That's how they get ya.... Now you gotta go back and get another drink!

Tired from His journey (which would have been walking by the way), Jesus asked this woman for a drink from the well. Now simply satisfying His own thirst wasn't the main objective for Jesus ; He had some bigger plans in the making. After asking the woman for a drink, He flipped it around when He told her that if only she knew who she was talking to, she would ask for His water—living water.

Obviously Jesus wasn't referring to literal water, but taking advantage of their current situation along with their cultural and religious understanding of the importance of water. Jesus is making a claim to the quality and significance of the eternal life He offers. The "water," or life, that Jesus offers won't leave you feeling thirsty again in a few minutes or a few days. What He offers is eternal and will satisfy not only your thirst, but your soul, for eternity!

**9. Why do you think the woman was so eager to receive this water from Jesus?**

**10. Why do you think it is that some people aren't interested in what Jesus offers?**

**11. As you look at this story as a whole, in what ways are you similar to the woman at the well?**

## Day 4 — Today's Theme: Worship in Truth, not Tradition

### Read John 4:16–26

What space is more sacred to worship God in—the worship center or the storage closet? Your church or your school? Even today we may be tempted to say that one place is more sacred than another. When Jesus came as the Messiah, He changed the way and place where we worship God.

One of the big reasons the Jews and Samaritans didn't get along was that they had different opinions about where it was appropriate to worship God. The Jews believed God was to be worshiped at the temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans built a temple to worship God on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria. But Jesus said that it won't be in Jerusalem or in Samaria where people worship God.

In Jesus, we are able to worship God in spirit and in truth. So it doesn't matter where we worship, but how we worship. It's not about a big fancy worship center. It's about the heart! So you can actually worship God in your own home, on the bus, at church, at school, anywhere! Because now we don't need a sacrifice or a mediator to come to God because Jesus is our Sacrifice and our Mediator. Through Him we are welcome to worship God in spirit and truth—anytime, anywhere.

**12. What do you think it means to worship God? How do we worship God in spirit and in truth?**

**13. Throughout the Bible, wherever God is, that place is holy. That's why the temple was regarded as holy — because that's where God dwelt with His people. Read 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 and 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. What are we to regard as holy and treat as sacred today?**

## Day 5 — Today's Theme: A Fruitful Harvest

### Read John 4:27–42

Every year all around the world, farmers plant their fields in the spring. Spring isn't a time when they harvest the fruit of their labor. They know well that there is a time for planting and a time for harvesting. But you never harvest what isn't first planted.

As His disciples came back to Him after getting food from town, they found Jesus wrapping up his conversation with the Samaritan woman. After she left, Jesus explained to them that He had food they didn't know about. That food wasn't bread, fish, or vegetables. That "food" was to do the will of God.

At the end of this conversation with His disciples, Jesus said, "*Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor,*" because as Jesus had already said, the fields were now ripe for harvest. The planting had been done, and now they were in a time where people would come to saving faith in Jesus!

As He said these things, John tells us that "many Samaritans from that town believed in Him" and that they came out to see Jesus for themselves. Imagine being there with the disciples, looking up and seeing lots of people from town coming out to see Jesus. Is this what Jesus means by "the fields are ripe for harvest"?

**14. Do you think this harvest that Jesus was talking about is still taking place today? Why do you think that?**

**15. Read 1 Corinthians 3:5–9. How are we able to engage in God's "harvest"? What encouragement do these verses offer you about God's harvest?**