



## SESSION 6

# THE SAMARITAN WOMAN: FAITH WORTH SHARING

### ▶ **The Point**

Your life-changing encounter with Christ should be shared with others.

### ▶ **The Passage**

John 4:10-18,28-30

### ▶ **The Bible Meets Life**

On March 2, 2018, millions of people watched the funeral of Billy Graham. One of the most memorable moments of the service came from Graham's youngest daughter, Ruth, when she told about going through a messy divorce and desiring a fresh start. She moved away and started dating another man. They quickly married, but within twenty-four hours, Ruth knew she had made a terrible mistake. She told the audience, "You don't want to embarrass your father. You really don't want to embarrass Billy Graham."

As she drove to her parents' home, Ruth said, "My father was standing there waiting for me. As I got out of the car, he wrapped his arms around me and said, 'Welcome home.' There was no shame, there was no blame, there was no condemnation, just unconditional love. My father was not God, but he showed me what God was like that day. When we come to God with our sin, our brokenness, our failure, our pain, and our hurt, God says, 'Welcome home.'"

Ruth's testimony of her father's faithfulness and forgiveness was a powerful reminder of our heavenly Father's love

### ▶ **The Setting**

During the first year of Jesus' ministry, His popularity began to grow and He left Judea to avoid confrontations with the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist. Jesus and His disciples traveled toward Galilee on a journey that took them through Samaria. They came to Jacob's well, located near Sychar. Jesus spoke with a Samaritan woman and for the first time in His public ministry, He announced He was the Messiah.

## *What does the Bible say?*

**The Christ** (v. 29)—This title comes from words that mean “anointed one.” The Hebrew comes into English as “Messiah” while the Greek comes into English as “Christ.”

### ***John 4:10-18,28-30***

<sup>10</sup> **Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”**

<sup>11</sup> **The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?”**

<sup>12</sup> **Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”**

<sup>13</sup> **Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,**

<sup>14</sup> **but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

<sup>15</sup> **The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”**

<sup>16</sup> **Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”**

<sup>17</sup> **The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;**

<sup>18</sup> **for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”**

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<sup>28</sup> **So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,**

<sup>29</sup> **“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”**

<sup>30</sup> **They went out of the town and were coming to him.**

# GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes



**LEADER PACK:** Display **Pack Item 2**, the “Living by Faith Map,” to give context for some of the places that were important in the story of the Samaritan woman.

**DISCUSS:** **Question #1** on page 53 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG): “**What events in your life do you most love talking about?**” Allow time for each person to respond.

Notes



**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** In advance, enlist members who will participate in a “show and tell.” Ask one person to bring a dish they love to cook that can be shared with the group. Ask another to bring a craft item they made or purchased. Still another can bring a scrapbook or album. Make the point that it’s not difficult to share with others about something or someone we really care about.

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to “**The Bible Meets Life**” on page 54 of the PSG. Introduce the importance of sharing our faith by reading or summarizing the text—or by encouraging group members to read it on their own.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to “**The Point**” on page 54 of the PSG: “**Your life-changing encounter with Christ should be shared with others.**”

**PRAY:** Transition into the study by asking God to bring to mind people in our lives who need to hear the life-changing message of the gospel.

Dotted lines for taking notes.



# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### John 4:10-14

*<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."<sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."<sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,<sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

**READ:** Ask a group member to read aloud John 4:10-14 on page 55 of the PSG.

**DISCUSS: Question #2** on page 55 of the PSG: **"What do you appreciate about the way Jesus approached the conversation with this woman at the well?"**

**SUMMARIZE:** Highlight the main points from pages 55-56 of the PSG. The Samaritan woman's meeting with Jesus at the well was extraordinary. Of course, every encounter with Jesus is remarkable, but this conversation was especially unique.

- ▶ **Jesus spoke to a Samaritan.**
- ▶ **Jesus had a theological conversation with a woman.**
- ▶ **Jesus revealed His humanity.**
- ▶ **Jesus revealed His divinity.**

**DISCUSS: Question #3** on page 56 of the PSG: **"What are some obstacles that keep us from engaging with others to share the gospel?"**

**TRANSITION:** We must see our need. In the next verses we discover that we must also confront our sin.

**ALTERNATE QUESTION:**  
*What are some ways God reveals the deeper needs in our lives?*

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## John 4:10-14 Commentary

**[Verse 10]** Jesus met a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well at the sixth hour (the literal rendering of the Greek). Using Jewish time, that would be about noon. Using Roman time, it would be about 6 p.m. His disciples had gone into town to buy food and Jesus began His conversation with the woman, asking for a drink of water. She referred to the racial prejudice between Samaritans and Jews (John 4:9). She also was surprised Jesus asked her a question, since men usually did not speak to women (even their wives) in public. Jesus focused on this woman's deeper need. He captured her attention with **"If you knew,"** and by making her focus on the spiritual aspect of their conversation. Jesus also tied in His previous request by saying **"If you knew . . . who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you. . . ."** Jesus also attracted her interest with the phrase **gift of God**. Although some commentators identify this gift with Jesus (and He certainly is), in this verse Jesus identified **the gift of God** with **living water**. The term **living water** can be taken two different ways: (1) running water, such as a river, stream, or spring, or (2) God as "the fountain of living waters" (Jer. 2:13) and "fountain of life" (Ps. 36:9). In John's Gospel **living water** refers to the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39).

**[Verses 11-12]** The Samaritan woman addressed Jesus as **Sir**, a common and respectful form of address. She did not yet see her spiritual need. She pointed out that the well was deep and Jesus had no bucket. She asked, **"Where do you get that living water?"** Earlier the Samaritan had already played the culture card (men don't talk to women in public, v. 9) and the race card (Jews don't associate with Samaritans, v. 9). In verse 12, she played the religion card; she attempted to get Jesus to focus on religious questions rather than on her, her needs, and Jesus' solution. According to the Jewish historian Josephus (Antiquities, 11:341), Samaritans traced their ancestry back to Jacob, Joseph (his son), and Ephraim and Manasseh (Joseph's sons). The Samaritans claimed Jacob dug the well, drank from it, watered his livestock from it, and gave it to them.

**[Verses 13-14]** Although Jesus did not directly respond to the woman's question, He did provide the answer: Jesus' words demonstrated He was greater than Jacob. First, Jesus stated a physical truth, **"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again."** Second, He told her **"whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again."** We will see the woman's response in verse 15, but Jesus certainly got her attention. Third, Jesus described what His water would do. **"The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."** This eternal type of life referred to endless life, life beyond a person's experience on this earth, life that comes only through faith in God through Jesus.



# STUDY THE BIBLE

## John 4:15-18

### Notes

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***<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” <sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”***

**READ:** Ask a group member to read aloud John 4:15-18 on page 56 of the PSG.

**DISCUSS:** Question #4 on page 58 of the PSG: “Why is it so difficult to confront people about sin in their lives?”

**SUMMARIZE:** Highlight the main points on page 58 of the PSG. Confronting our sin is only the first step. What we do once we confront it makes all the difference.

- ▶ **Confession.** We must confess our sin. Confession is more than admitting wrong; it is seeing our sin as God sees it—He hates sin—and desiring to have nothing more to do with it.
- ▶ **Repentance.** Confession and repentance go hand-in-hand. With confession, we express sorrow for the sin we’ve committed, and with repentance we turn and go in the opposite direction.
- ▶ **Joy.** When we confess and repent, God forgives and the result is joy—joy for the sinner here and joy in heaven over the one who repents.

**DO:** Direct group members to complete the activity, “My Story” on page 57 of the PSG to help them.



*Write an outline that will help you share your testimony. [The PSG has the following outline: Decisions I made that kept me far from God, the decision I made to follow Christ, and the decisions I’ve made since I trusted in the Lord.] Then offer a prayer to the Lord for courage to share it.*

**TRANSITION:** In the next passage we learn that we must share Christ, the One who meets our need and redeems our failure.

#### **ALTERNATE QUESTION:**

***Why is confronting sin such an essential first step toward the Savior?***

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## John 4:15-18 Commentary

**[Verse 15]** The Samaritan woman again used polite address, “Sir.” At this point, she viewed Jesus as a normal man. Only after Jesus revealed information about her marriages did she begin to realize Jesus was much more than just a man (vv. 19,29,39). The woman’s next words indicate she was still concerned only with her physical needs. She asked Jesus to **“give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”** The word **give** was a response to Jesus’ offer of “living water” (v. 10) and “a spring of water welling up” (v. 14). **“So that I will not be thirsty”** reveals her first reason for desiring this water. She wanted water to satisfy her immediate thirst and so she would never again get thirsty. **“So that I will not . . . come here to draw water”** reveals her second reason. She did not want to walk to the well. She focused merely on how the physical aspects of Jesus’ words might make her life easier.

**[Verse 16]** To help this woman understand His meaning, Jesus focused her attention more directly on her personal life. Jesus asked her to **“Go, call your husband, . . . and come here.”** Jesus knew all about her personal life; we call this quality God’s omniscience—from two Latin words, *omni* meaning “all” and *scientia* meaning “knowledge.” Jesus was totally God and totally man. As man, Jesus was (and is) a man of action. First, He commanded the woman to **Go**. Second, Jesus commanded the woman to come back, bringing her husband along with her. Here’s where it began to get very personal to the Samaritan woman.

**[Verses 17-18]** The Samaritan woman answered by telling Jesus she did not have a husband. Jesus responded to this assertion by acknowledging she had answered correctly. But that was not the whole story. Jesus demonstrated divine insight into her personal life. He gave the reason for His statement that she had answered correctly. Jesus responded, **“You have had five husbands.”** Can you imagine the shock this woman must have felt? She may have thought: Who is this man? How does He know about my married life? I’ve never seen Him before today. What else does He know about me? Jewish rabbis usually would allow a woman to be married only twice but in some cases they would allow her to be married a third time. Yet this woman was not a Jew, so the opinion of the rabbis mattered little, if at all. Nevertheless, for a woman to be married five times indicated real problems in her life. Jesus’ statement that the woman had five husbands was shocking—but with His next words, Jesus dropped a bombshell: **“The one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”** The woman must have had an “aha moment.” As evidenced by her comment in verse 19 that Jesus must be a prophet, the woman realized He was not just a man. But instead of confronting her sins relating to sex and marriage, she attempted to divert Jesus into a discussion about religion by raising religious questions.





# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### John 4:28-30

***28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.***

**READ:** Ask a group member to read aloud John 4:28-30 on page 59 of the PSG.

**RECAP:** In that moment, the Samaritan woman tasted the "living water" (John 4:10). She left her water jar and ran to tell others. She didn't forget her jar—she wasn't being absentminded—she just couldn't wait to go into town to tell others about the stranger who knew everything about her—the Messiah and His gift of living water. She was eager to tell everyone—even those who had kept her at arm's length because of her lifestyle.

**DISCUSS:** Question #5 on page 59 of the PSG: **"How can our group help one another be more active in sharing our faith?"**

**SUMMARIZE:** Highlight the main points on page 59 of the PSG. When Jesus the Messiah ...

- ▶ ... meets us where we are and redeems our failure ...
- ▶ ... relentlessly pursues us and never gives up on us ...
- ▶ ... gives us a righteousness we cannot attain except through His grace ...  
... we want others to know.

A changed life is one that others notice, and a changed life comes from being forgiven. The Samaritan woman understood and accepted the forgiveness and grace extended to her.

**GUIDE:** Use the Commentary for verse 30 on the next page of this Leader Guide for help in extending an evangelistic invitation to your group.

**GUIDE:** Refer back to **"The Point"** for this session: **"Your life-changing encounter with Christ should be shared with others."**

**ALTERNATE QUESTION:**  
*How would you briefly summarize the gospel?*



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## John 4:28-30 Commentary

**[Verse 28]** In John 4:19-27 several significant points occur. The Samaritan woman asked Jesus several religious questions about which Jews and Samaritans disagreed. Jesus responded with answers from God. Most significantly, Jesus told the woman that He was the Messiah. Finally, Jesus' disciples returned from buying food in town, but they didn't ask Jesus why He was talking with this woman. The questions "Did this woman become a Christian?" and "If so, at what exact point did she become a Christian?" are impossible to answer with any degree of certainty. However, we do know the woman took three actions. First, **the woman left her water jar**. Her purpose in coming to the well was to get water for herself and likely also for the man with whom she was living. She was so excited, so thrilled, so motivated by her conversation with Jesus that she left her water jar at Jacob's well. This may be an indication of a changed spiritual condition. Second, the woman **went away into town**, a distance of perhaps half a mile. What she had heard Jesus say resonated in her soul so much she wanted to share it with those living in her town. If so, this may indicate her spiritual condition was changing. Third, the woman told the people in town about her experience with Jesus. This also may indicate her spiritual condition was changing or had changed.

**[Verse 29]** The woman told the people in town, **"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did."** Likely the people knew of her reputation and may not have put much trust in the truthfulness of her words. However, her words sparked the interest of the townspeople. **All that I ever did** may be hyperbole (a literary device of exaggeration not intended to deceive). Since Jesus had told her some private information about her life, to assume He knew everything about her certainly is not unreasonable. The second part of her invitation to come see Jesus was a question: **"Can this be the Christ?"** Like the Jews, the Samaritans also believed that one day God would send the Christ to them. Also like the Jews, the Samaritans may have misunderstood who the Christ was going to be and what He was going to do.

**[Verse 30]** Rather than dismissing the woman's invitation, the people left town and made their way to Jesus. Undoubtedly the woman's words had a significant impact on the people of Sychar. Not only did they come see Jesus (v. 30), but also they believed what the woman had said (v. 39), asked Him to stay (v. 40), and more believed because of what Jesus told them (v. 41). The inside front cover of every adult Bible study guide LifeWay produces prints a plan of salvation. Extend an invitation to become a Christian to any learners in your group who have not done so. You might say something like this: "If you have never committed your life to God, why not do so now? Talk with a Christian friend, me, another Bible study leader, or a minister about leading you to make this life-changing commitment public, be baptized, and share your commitment with others."

Read the article "The Messiah: Samaritan Expectations" in the Summer 2019 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. Previous *Biblical Illustrator* articles "Jews and Samaritans: Why the Tension?" (Spring 2017), "Who Were the Samaritans?" (Winter 2007-2008), and "Sychar and Jacob's Well" (Winter 2004-2005) relate to this lesson and can be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at [www.lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator](http://www.lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator). Look for Bundles: Bible Studies for Life.



5 minutes

# LIVE IT OUT

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to page 60 of the PSG. Encourage them to choose one of the following applications to carry out this week.



## Notes

Dotted lines for taking notes.

- ▶ **Write.** Contemplate your personal faith story. Write it down and pray for the Lord to open the door for you to share it with someone this week. Post your written testimony online.
- ▶ **Pray.** Begin a list of people you know who need to accept Christ as their personal Savior. As a group, begin consistently praying for them. Consider prayerwalking as a group in an area close to your church or in your neighborhood.
- ▶ **Share.** Learn a simple evangelistic presentation you can use when you begin gospel conversations. Incorporate this presentation with your own personal testimony of a changed life in Christ.

## Wrap It Up

**TRANSITION:** Read or restate the final paragraph from page 60 of the PSG:

Billy Graham’s daughter, Ruth, gave a powerful testimony of what God’s love and forgiveness looks like. The Samaritan woman at the well certainly had a story to tell too. And so do you.

**PRAY:** Conclude by thanking God for bringing you to salvation. Ask Him for wisdom and courage to share the gospel with others.

**GROUPS  
MATTER.**

Grow with other group leaders at the [Groups Ministry blog](#).

[LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry](http://LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry)