

The Pastor's Bible Study

An interactive study of the Gospel of John¹

Week 7 ~ Exploring John 4:1-54

Personal Study Time:

(Use the following suggestions in your personal Bible study time this week to prepare for our class discussion next Saturday.)

Day 1: Read John 4:1-42 through twice, then answer the following questions in your Gospel of John notebook.

- In the story of the woman at the well, she moves from totally ignoring a stranger to whole-hearted acceptance of the Messiah. Write out in your own words the substance of each of her responses to Jesus and try to describe how each response enlightens your understanding of her attitude toward Jesus at that stage of the interview.
- What social, ethnic, sexual, and religious barriers do you find it difficult to overcome in your relationships with other people? Based on this story, how do you think Jesus would relate to each of these types of people?

Day 2: Reread John 4:1-42 and then answer the following questions in your Gospel of John notebook.

- List everything you can find in the passage that helps you understand the theology, history and attitudes of the Samaritans, especially in relation to the Jews. What kind of picture did the woman have of the Messiah? Do you think Jesus agreed with her view of what the Messiah would be like? Why? Does 2 Kings 17 help you to understand the problems between the Jews and the Samaritans? The Samaritan view of the Messiah was largely based on Deut 18:15-18. What does that passage suggest the Samaritan Messiah would be like?
- Jesus' encounter with the woman was not an accident, but was in response to the plan of God for Jesus' life. Do you think that your first encounter with Jesus was accidental or was it clearly part of God's plan? Review the evidence that supports your conviction.

Day 3: Reread John 4:1-42 and then answer the following questions in your Gospel of John notebook.

- Compare this story with the story of Nicodemus. One is about a man, the other is about a woman. One comes in the middle of the night, the other at hand noon. How many points of contrast between the two stories can you list on paper? What do you think is the author's purpose in highlighting these contrasts? *(continued on back page)*

¹ Quoted and/or adapted from Jon Paulien and George R. Knight, *John: Jesus Gives Life to a New Generation*, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1995).

- Jesus patiently endured the woman's repeated attempts to change the subject and avoid the confrontation which He had initiated. How important is it to give people time to process a challenge to accept Christ or a teaching of the Bible? Can you think of times when you needed extra time to think things through before making a decision? How does one know when to push, as Jesus did with Nicodemus, and when to back off, as Jesus often did with the woman at the well?

Day 4: Reread John 4:1-42 and then answer the following questions in your Gospel of John notebook.

- Given the social barriers between Jews and Samaritans, what significance do you see in Jesus' treatment of the woman and in the fact that He was willing to stay in town for two whole days? Based on their reactions in the story, describe how you think the disciples felt about Jesus' behavior?
- What was it about Jesus that made the Samaritans place their faith in Him? What can you do today to follow their example?

Day 5: Read John 4:43-54 twice and then answer the following questions in your Gospel of John notebook.

- What is it that motivates the people in Galilee to welcome Jesus back? How does their attitude compare to that of the Samaritans in this chapter and the Jews of Jerusalem in John 2:23-25?
- When you bring problems to God do you tend to leave them in His care or do you allow yourself to continue worrying and complaining about them? Can you think of times when you trusted God and He did exactly what the Scriptures promised?

Day 6: Reread John 4:43-54 and then answer the following questions in your Gospel of John notebook.

- How do you explain the contrast between the way Jesus is welcomed by the people and His comments in verses 44 and 48?
- What does the miraculous sign of 4:46-54 teach us about Jesus? Write out your answer in a paragraph or two.
- What did the father place his faith in – the signs and wonders of Jesus or the words of Jesus? How about you – are you placing your faith in answered prayers or promises from His Word?

