

# LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of May 3

## Introduction

Probably not one of us enjoys difficult conversations. We go out of our way to avoid them. And yet, difficult conversations are part of life because any relationship worth deepening will require, at crucial points along the way, honest, truth-filled exchanges. We call these 'crucial conversations', a term we picked up on several years ago when speaker/author Joseph Grenny spoke at the 2014 Global Leadership Summit.

Whether it is within our families, in the workplace, on the team, in ministry, in the business world, respectfully addressing dysfunction is what caring, mature individuals do. We make the effort, rise to the task, and value people enough to work through dangerous blindsides and potential pitfalls. Timing is important, as well as being certain our concern is genuine. All people are valuable, thus, addressing issues in such a way that all feel safe is critical.

## Background

Gospel writer, John, records another beautiful, honest exchange in chapter four. Last week we were privy to the conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus in the middle of the night. Today's text speaks to how Jesus "had to go through Samaria" on his way from Judea back into the region of Galilee. He comes to the Samaritan village of Sychar and engages a woman who comes to draw water from Jacob's well in the middle of the day.

## Read John 4:1-26

Crucial conversations are inevitable if you are going to deepen any meaningful relationship. Jesus did this with the Samaritan woman by the well. And notice, she also engages Jesus in crucial conversation. Some important truths surface as this woman asks Jesus: "Why is it you Jews insist Jerusalem is the only place of worship?" Jesus says—

"Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem ... the time is coming – indeed it's here now – when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:21, 23-24).

## Discussion:

- Where are the disciples, according to v8?
- Though a bit awkward at first, this one-on-one difficult but *truth-filled* conversation is a divine appointment. What does it mean to you, that of all people, Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi, engages *this* woman in such a crucial (pivotal) conversation?
- In what ways is her past informing her reactions/responses?
- Name some of the dividing lines Jesus crosses as he intentionally speaks to the woman at the well. Note points in the conversation where shifts occur. Jesus balances a certain tenderness alongside truth to lead her to what she really desires: Himself, the Source of Living Water. What does Jesus say about the living water he gives (see vv13-14)?
- Think of a time you (or someone you know) took a risk and intentionally crossed cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, or religious lines to offer the living water of Christ. Why is it important to meet people where they are? How does the Holy Spirit help us in the midst of such crucial encounters? Why is genuine humility a prerequisite?

## Further Background:

We often have a narrative we carry with us. The Jewish people despised Samaritans – a narrative they carried that stemmed back to the Divided Kingdom when the northern ten tribes refused to be led by a descendant of king David (1 Kings 12:12-19); the fall of Israel (northern ten tribes) to the Assyrians in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:5-23); and the hostility that ensued from intermarriage and the assimilation of integrating the worship of God with the gods of Assyrian (2 Kings 17:24-41); the fall of Judah in 586 BC (2 Kings 25:1-21) and the return to rebuild (Ezra 4:1-5, 2 Nehemiah 4:1-9). The Jewish people have endured many frail junctures in history.

Watch for falling into a mindset of

Victim stories: "It's not my fault"

Villain stories: "It's all your fault"

Helpless stories: "There's nothing else I can do"

- Why must we leave these narratives behind?
- How is confession (naming, owning) our sin an integral factor in the path to healing and peace?

- Jesus came to cover our sins through his shed blood on the cross. Once we confess our experience Jesus' love and forgiveness, our sin is covered. We do not have to keep sin alive. Why is it important to remember our sin is covered?

Jesus says to us today: Don't keep sin alive! If your sin is covered by the death of Christ, then let it die. Don't keep sin alive in your life by trying to justify it. The Samaritan woman left her bucket of shame and sin behind (v28). And when she left her sin behind, she left her past narrative behind. She returns to her village and says: "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" (v29). And notice, the people come *streaming* from the village (v30) to meet the One she speaks of – the Source of Living Water.

#### Further Discussion:

- What strikes you regarding the fact that the first individual to whom Jesus reveals his identity as the Christ is to a Samaritan (foreign Gentile) woman, an outcast of her village?
- What are you avoiding? Where are you hiding? Jesus knows how to get to the places you hide, meet you where you are, and engage you in a critical life-transforming conversation. Will you meet with him today? Be honest before him. Ask questions. Pour out your heart and in turn, drink from *HIS* spring of "Living Water" that provides real refreshment.

#### In Closing

Read **John 4:25-38**, share a one-word take away, and pray. Pray for healthy conversations with the Lord and with one another.

#### One Year Bible Reading

May 3: Judges 17:1-18:31, John 3:1-21, Psalm 104:1-23, Proverbs 14:20-21  
 May 4: Judges 19:1-20:48, John 3:22-4:3, Psalm 104:24-35, Proverbs 14:22-24  
 May 5: Judges 21:1-Ruth 1:22, John 4:4-42, Psalm 105:1-15, Proverbs 14:25  
 May 6: Ruth 2:1-4:22, John 4:43-54, Psalm 105:16-36, Proverbs 14:26-27  
 May 7: 1 Samuel 1:1-2:21, John 5:1-23, Psalm 105:37-45, Proverbs 14:28-29  
 May 8: 1 Samuel 2:22-4:22, John 5:24-47, Psalm 106:1-12, Proverbs 14:30-31  
 May 9: 1 Samuel 5:1-7:17, John 6:1-21, Psalm 106:13-31, Proverbs 14:32-33



**Text: John 4**

**Power Point: Jesus goes to the places we hide.**

- 1. Don't resist the pursuit of \_\_\_\_\_ of Heaven.**
- 2. Stop deflecting when the Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_.**
- 3. Let \_\_\_\_\_ flow.**

#### PLAIN TRUTH:

**Real \_\_\_\_\_ begins when you allow \_\_\_\_\_ story to bring \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to your story.**

**May 3, 2026**