

This is Us: Real People

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: Breaking Down Barriers

John 4:1–9 (NIV)

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Devotion

Jesus deliberately walked into Samaria, crossing centuries of hatred and division. When He asked the woman for water, He shattered cultural, religious, and social barriers that seemed impossible to overcome. Today, what barriers keep you from experiencing God’s promises? Perhaps you’ve convinced yourself that you don’t belong, that your past disqualifies you, or that the divide is too great. Jesus says otherwise. He sees beyond every wall we construct and every label society assigns. His invitation remains: you are worthy of a deeper relationship with God. No barrier is too high for His love. Who might God be calling you to reach across divides to welcome today?

Day 2: Letting Go of Judgment

Luke 22:31–34 (NIV)

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.”

Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”

Devotion

Jesus told Peter, “I have prayed for you.” Even knowing Peter would deny Him, Jesus believed in him and saw beyond his failures. Like the woman at the well carrying the weight of five failed marriages, we often judge ourselves more harshly than God does. Jesus doesn’t see your past as baggage to condemn—He sees you fully and says, “I know you, and that’s okay.” What judgments are you carrying that Jesus never intended you to bear? The promise isn’t that we’ll be

perfect; it's that Jesus prays for us, believes in us, and calls us back. When you return, strengthen others with the grace you've received.

Day 3: True Worship

John 4:19–26 (NIV)

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Devotion

The woman tried one last defense: “Our religions are too different.” Jesus responded that true worship isn't about location, tradition, or checking religious boxes—it's about spirit and truth. God desires honest hearts, not perfect performances. Where are you in your spiritual journey today? Bring that truth to God. Faith isn't pretending to have it all together; it's showing up as real people, honestly seeking God in every moment. Stop worrying about whether you look or act like other believers. God invites you to worship authentically, bringing your doubts, questions, and struggles. That honesty is what opens the door to experiencing God's transforming presence.

Day 4: From Ordinary to Extraordinary

John 4:27–30, 39–42 (NIV)

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.

They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Devotion

The Samaritan woman left her water jar and ran to tell others, “Come and see!” Her testimony—simple, honest, powerful—brought her entire town to Jesus. She didn’t wait until she had all the answers or felt qualified. She just shared what she experienced. You might feel too ordinary for God to use you. Yet Jesus specifically seeks ordinary people to reveal extraordinary promises. What has Jesus shown you that others need to hear? Your story, your encounter with grace, your honest journey—these matter more than polished theology. The woman’s past didn’t disqualify her; it became her testimony. Let go of feeling inadequate. Share what you’ve seen.

Day 5: Choosing Love Over Laws

Mark 12:28–34 (NIV)

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Devotion

We create invisible laws—middle school lunch table rules that follow us into adulthood. Who’s acceptable, who’s not. Where we belong, where we don’t. These unwritten codes weigh us down and keep us from living in Christ’s freedom. Jesus stayed in Samaria for two days, eating meals, sharing life, breaking every “law” about separation. He chose love over division. What invisible laws are you living by? What barriers have you accepted as unchangeable? Today, you have a choice: carry the burden of judgment and division, or choose love. Sit at the table where others sit alone. Cross the divide that seems impossible. Be a real person offering real grace, because that’s exactly what Jesus does for you.