

PREPARATION

Spend the week studying John 4:1-26. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

DETERMINE | which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group

PRAY | for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.

LANDING POINT | Living with awareness means understanding God's purposes for you and how the Holy Spirit guides you in them.

• Remember the 4 Rules for Small Group Discussion

1. **Confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
2. **No cross-talk.** Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
3. **No fixing.** We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
4. **Sharing.** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Last week your group discussed Pinelake's second value, the Word applied. The Bible tells us God's saving message (the Gospel) and shows us how we can know Him and what it looks like to live for Him. The Bible is our guide and, with the Spirit's help, directs our daily living. When God's truth is applied, life change and growth happens.

This week you will discuss Pinelake's third distinctive value, leveraged living. Believers are to live out their faith in a way that impacts others. We can't impact others without God's help. Therefore, a life that's leveraged is one that's lived with an awareness of God's purposes for you and how the Holy Spirit guides you in them.

How would you describe someone who lives out their faith in a way that impacts others? Identify key characteristics of someone who lives this way.

What is your understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the life of a believer? How does your understanding affect your daily life?


 LEARN

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

◉ A conversation about true worship

Read the following story about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman by dividing paragraphs between group members.

Jesus interacted with people from all walks of life. He spoke with the political and religious elite, but He also interacted with the lowly and oppressed in society. Jesus was no stranger to controversy; He invited much of it by living a very different life that challenged societal norms of His day.

In John's gospel Jesus has an encounter with a Samaritan woman. He meets her at a well and engages her in conversation. On the surface, this seems innocent; few modern readers would find this troubling. However, Jesus crossed cultural barriers to talk with this woman. First, Jewish law forbade a Jew to eat or drink with a Samaritan, because they were deemed ritually unclean. Second, it was culturally inappropriate for a Jewish man to interact with a woman that wasn't his wife. And, yet, Jesus overcame these barriers to speak with this woman and reveal an important spiritual truth to her.

Jesus begins their conversation with a request: He asks for a drink of water. The woman questions Jesus' request by reminding Him of the relationship between Jews and Samaritans. Undaunted, Jesus quickly turns the conversation to the spiritual. He tells her the water He has is "living water." But she doesn't quite get what Jesus is talking about. She's thinking literally, not spiritually. Jesus tells her that those who drink His water will never thirst again. Moreover, this water gives eternal life.

The woman asks Jesus for a drink, and Jesus makes a strange request. He tells her to get her husband. The woman tries to dodge the request. Jesus sees right through her and reveals that He knows she's been married five times and the man she's living with isn't her husband. Jesus knew this woman like He knows us, which is down to our core.

The woman quickly tries to change the subject, asking about the right place to worship. Jesus responds to her question by declaring that a new era has arrived where God can be worshipped anywhere, not just in a physical temple. God's people are to worship Him in the Spirit and in truth.

The woman is amazed. How could someone know so much about her and speak with such authority? She mentions that a Messiah is coming to explain these spiritual things. Jesus tells her directly, "I—the one speaking to you, am he."

What sticks out most to you from this story? Why?

How was Jesus a controversial figure in His day? What do you learn from the way He lived His life and interacted with others?

Identify cultural barriers you might need to cross today to engage others about Jesus and the Gospel?


 LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

◦ Inside-out living

Jesus changed the Samaritan woman's view of God by revealing a spiritual reality she was previously unaware of. He told her God's people are to worship Him in the Spirit (i.e., by the guidance of the Holy Spirit) and in truth (i.e., Jesus reveals God's truth through His life and teaching). But what does that mean for you as you try to live out your faith in the everyday?

We want introduce a new term to you. It's called inside-out living. If you are a believer, the Holy Spirit now indwells you. Apart from God, you were spiritually dead. But the Spirit makes you spiritually alive and able to understand God's truth and respond to it. The Holy Spirit's main job is to point you to Jesus and how the Gospel changes who you are on the inside (thoughts and desires) and out (actions and relationships).

What things can prevent you from worshiping God in the Spirit and in truth?

What's one thing you can start doing to embrace inside-out living in your life?

◦ Living out your design

Another aspect of inside-out living is that, in Christ, you can live out God's original design for you. God meant for you to live your life with Him at the center. His design was for you to be in a relationship with Him, where His Spirit guides you in love towards the best life possible.

The best life possible is one lived for God and His purposes. No longer do we live for our little kingdom of one. That's what sin caused us to do. Now we live for God's larger kingdom and lead others to experience God's best for them as a disciple of Jesus. Being aware of God's design for you allows you to lead an extraordinary life that impacts others for God.

Recall a time when you felt like God was at the center of your life. How did that affect the way you thought and acted?

Contrast someone who lives for their "little kingdom of one" with someone who lives for God's kingdom. How do they view God? Relationships? Their purpose in life?

LEAD

Select 1 question from this section to ask your group.

◦ Spiritual frequency

If want to listen to your favorite radio station, you must tune your radio to the right frequency. When your radio is tuned to the wrong frequency, you either hear noise or tune-in to another station. When your radio's tuned to the right frequency, you hear your favorite station clearly. The spiritual life works similarly. This life is full of competing things and ideas that compete for our attention. We can choose to tune our mind to their frequencies or to God's. We can't tune our mind to both.

Think of the Apostle Paul. He had a spiritual awareness of what was most important in life. And he was tuned-in to God's frequency. That's why he could proclaim, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." [1] God's Word and His Spirit give us the ability to tune-in to the same frequency.

When do you find that you are most in tune with God's frequency? Perhaps it's during your quiet time, in worship or when you're in nature. Share your response.

In what ways can your group encourage one another to embrace Paul's proclamation in Ephesians 2:10? Be specific.

PRAY

Praise God for His grace in raising you to new life and spiritual awareness in Jesus. Acknowledge that, apart from Him, you would not desire or seek Him. Thank Him for His many gifts, namely your salvation and His Spirit. Ask the Spirit to guide you individually and as a group to live for God both inside and out.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

Ask the group to share any significant conversations or truths God is revealing to them based on last week's lesson.

Read John 3:1-21 and reflect on how Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus relates to his conversation with the Samaritan woman.

COMMENTARY

◦ Jesus in conversation.

John's gospel records a number of conversations Jesus had with people on different ends of the social spectrum. He conversed with the religious (e.g., the Pharisee, Nicodemus in John 3) and political elite (e.g., the Roman governor Pontius Pilate in John 18-19). He also engaged with those society paid little to no attention to (e.g., the Samaritan woman in John 4; the woman caught in adultery in John 8; the man born blind in John 9). These conversations are essential to John's gospel, because they reveal who Jesus was. In these exchanges we see Jesus' character, compassion and authority. We also see His purpose in coming: to complete God's plan of salvation by offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin.

◦ Living water.

When Jesus refers to "living water," He intended a double meaning. In one sense, He is being literal by referring to the spring at Jacob's well. In another sense, He was being figurative. Living (or running) water was often used figuratively in the Old Testament to refer to God's activity (Jer. 2:13; Isa. 12:3; Ezek. 47:1-6; Zech. 14:8). Jesus explains to the Samaritan woman that the "living water" is the Holy Spirit indwelling believers. [2]

◦ A new era in redemptive history.

Jesus reveals profound spiritual truths to the woman at the well. He shows her that a new era in redemptive history has begun where God's people have been empowered by "the Spirit of truth" to worship God anywhere. God is a spirit, which means that He isn't confined to a physical space like other gods. His divine attributes are beyond our full comprehension. Nevertheless, Jesus tells the woman that, now, God's people have His Spirit dwelling inside them, producing eternal life and giving them spiritual understanding (see 1 Cor. 2:6-16). Later in John's gospel, Jesus speaks of the Spirit's role in guiding believers in all truth and convicting the world of sin (John 14:15-26; 15:26-16:15). Because of Jesus, we are privileged with the gift of the Spirit, something generations before Jesus didn't have.

◦ Made alive in Christ.

Paul's description of the believer's condition before and after Christ in Ephesians 2:1-10 shows us God's great work in our salvation. He brought us from death to life; that is, our spiritually dead hearts were raised to new life by God's grace expressed in Jesus. Our salvation, like the Spirit, is a gift from God. These gifts enable us to know God and live for Him. At the end of this passage Paul declares that, "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (2:10). Because of God's gifts, we can complete the "good works" He has planned for us.