

BEHOLDING CHRIST . . . THE SON OF GOD

Water for a Thirsty Woman

John 4:1–42

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

In this section of John's gospel, we'll watch Jesus as He offers living water to a sin-parched woman at a Samaritan well. With all the tenderness and care of a loving father, Jesus engaged and listened to the woman's deepest needs. What began as a simple request for a much-needed quenching of physical thirst resulted in this woman's drinking in a full gulp of grace and truth from the Source of living water—Jesus! With one sip of faith, her deepest thirsts were quenched in Him. Let's journey back in time and stop and rest with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and learn from the Master Provider of the water of life.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

As we turn to this passage, we'll use the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study to observe, interpret, correlate, and apply the text. Chuck Swindoll's book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, explains these methods in more detail. You can purchase a copy at Insight for Living Ministries' [online store](#). Also, you may wish to check out [Chuck's commentary](#) on John's gospel.



Observation: What Do You See?

Often in the gospels, we can learn much by taking a close look at personal encounters. That is especially true of conversations—or what may be more formally referred to as *dialogue*. In this account from John 4, we can observe much by “listening in” on a very famous conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Through observation we can begin to understand why John included this touching scene and learn from Jesus the tender art of offering living water to those parched by the dryness of sin.

Quotable

*Jesus Christ,
though weary, a
reputable Jew,
and the holy Son of
God, took time to
notice and listen
to one who had only
known rejection
and scorn.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Searching the Scriptures Tool

Observation is a critical beginning technique to put together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. Read the passage carefully, noticing features such as contrasts, comparisons, repeated words, cause-and-effect, and emphasized words. Particularly notice imperatives (commands) and verbs (action words), which are like tree limbs. All the ideas in the paragraph, like branches and leaves, connect to these words.

The Setting (John 4:1–6)

The scene in John 4 opens with Jesus on a journey from Judea toward Galilee. On the way, He passes through Samaria (4:4). What prompted Jesus to take this journey with His disciples? How do you think Jesus and His disciples would have been feeling at this point in their trip?

Using a map titled “Ministry of Jesus” or something similar located either in the back of your study Bible or in a Bible atlas, trace the route Jesus and His disciples traveled from Judea to Galilee. (Also, look online at <http://insight.org/general/bible-maps>.) How long of a trip did they take? What kind of terrain do you think they encountered? Where is Samaria in relationship to Judea and Galilee?

Find a Bible dictionary and locate the entry for *Samaria*. Make some notes on what you learn about this region of Palestine. What strikes you as significant to this story?



Read John 4:6. What details does John include that provide additional information about the setting of this story?

What time of day did this occur? What do you know about the setting of a water well in ancient times? (Hint: Consult the commentary notes associated with this passage included in your study Bible.)

The Conversation (John 4:7–26)

In this tender dialogue, we learn much about how to engage someone seeking spiritual truth. In fact, Jesus used six separate appeals to the woman He met at the well.

Notice, Jesus first appeals to her kindness. What does He say in John 4:7?

How does the woman respond? How would you characterize the nature of her response (John 4:9)?

Second, Jesus appeals to her curiosity. How does He do that? What idea does He introduce in her mind (4:10)?



How does the woman respond to Jesus' words about God's gift and the "Giver" (John 4:11–12)? Why do you think her response is significant?

In John 3:5–8, Jesus contrasts physical birth and the new birth. What are the words and images He uses to develop this contrast?

Jesus then follows up by appealing to her desire. How does He do that? What theological concept does Jesus bring into the conversation at the end of 4:14?

How does she respond in 4:15?

Next, Jesus appeals to her personal interest (4:16). How does Jesus do that?



What is her response to Jesus' suggestion that she go get her husband (4:17)? Why do you think Jesus took that approach?

Jesus then appeals to the woman's conscience (4:18). How does He do that?

How does she respond (4:19–20)?

Finally, Jesus appeals to the woman's will (4:21–24). How does Jesus do that?

What contrast does Jesus employ that directs the woman's focus to more spiritual matters?





Interpretation and Correlation: Finding John's Original Intent

Interpretation answers the question, *What does this passage mean?* To clarify the meaning of a text, first view it through the eyes of the original audience. How did John intend his readers to understand this encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman? Correlation—the *Searching the Scriptures* process that shows how one passage relates in meaning to another—also helps bring clarity to our own interpretation. Let's use both interpretation and correlation to understand the meaning of this important encounter with Jesus.

The Reaction (John 4:27–42)

In John 4:26 Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah. Soon after, His disciples return from town where they had gone to get food and other supplies for the remaining journey. Let's look closely at the conversation between Jesus and His disciples after they find Him talking to the Samaritan woman.

How do the disciples react to seeing Jesus talking with the woman at the well?

What does John tell us the Samaritan woman was doing at that time (John 4:28–29)? What does she say to the townspeople that helps us understand her response to meeting the Messiah?

How does Jesus' interchange with the disciples about physical food compare with His discussion with the Samaritan woman regarding water (John 4:31–34)?

Jesus makes a clear appeal to the disciples about the urgency of declaring His message to countless others like the Samaritan woman. What metaphor from nature does Jesus use to illustrate His point (4:35–38)?



Read Matthew 28:18–20. How do Jesus' words to His disciples in this passage *correlate* with what He says to them in this story?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:6–7. How does this passage relate to Jesus' words about the importance of a spiritual harvest?

How does the response of the Samaritan people prove Jesus' teaching about the harvest being ripe?



Application: Bringing Home the Lessons

Obviously, Jesus' vision of fields ripe for harvest is still very applicable today! So many people are waiting to be engaged in discussion on matters of truth and eternity. And if what John teaches in this story is true, seeds of God's truth have already been sown in the hearts of people who have yet to believe.

What are some of the barriers that keep you from connecting with unbelievers around you?



What so-called “necessities of life” might keep you from noticing the deeper needs in your own life or in the lives of others?

How might procrastination or fear play a role in preventing you from engaging people with the truth of the gospel?

In the space below, write down the names of three individuals you’d like to talk to about their need for Jesus Christ.

1.

2.

3.

Now take a few moments to bring these names to the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to prepare their hearts for an initial conversation. Then ask Him to provide an opportunity for you to share what you believe. He will be faithful.



A FINAL PRAYER

Lord, thank You for sending someone into my life to share the love of Jesus with me! Give me the courage and the desire to speak to someone today about what You have done for me in Christ. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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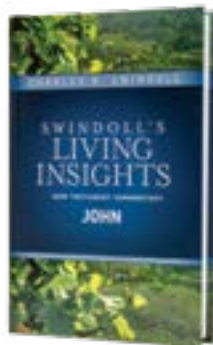
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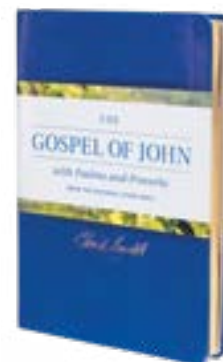
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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