

descriptive

Bible studies on the people and questions in the Gospel of John



How can individuals who belong to tightknit, antagonistic groups ever be evangelized?

The Samaritan woman, in chapter four and Nicodemus in chapter three show that one-on-one personal evangelism works best. In his personal approach (3:10, 4:9, 4:17-18) the Lord used various shocking statements (3:3-5, 4:10) which naturally resulted in many questions.

stage one - probing (about personal needs)

4:3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. **4:4** And he must needs go through Samaria. **4:5** Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. **4:6** Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. **4:7** There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, **Give me to drink.** **4:8** (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) **4:9** Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, **How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.** **4:10** Jesus answered and said unto her, *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* **4:11** The woman saith unto him, **Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?** **4:12** Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? **4:13** Jesus answered and said unto her, *Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

stage two - confronting (about personal sin)

4:15 The woman saith unto him, **Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.** **4:16** Jesus saith unto her, **Go, call thy husband, and come hither.** **4:17** The woman answered and said, **I have no husband.** Jesus said unto her, *Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*

stage three - teaching (about the Jewish Savior)

4:19 The woman saith unto him, **Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.** **4:20** Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. **4:21** Jesus saith unto her, *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* **4:25** The woman saith unto him, **I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.** **4:26** Jesus saith unto her, *I that speak unto thee am he.*

Let's describe . . .

1. The Woman's Questions

- * She was probably a social outcast, but do her questions sound like she was?
- * Often evangelists ask the questions, but perhaps it's better when the one being evangelized asks them, if he (1:46) or she (4:19-20) is honest and sincere.
- * The Samaritan woman's final two statements in vv. 19-20 and 25 were clearly intended as questions. How are they different from her first two questions in vv. 9 and 11-12? Note the passage divisions on the left.
- * Describe the woman's request in v. 15 and answer in v. 17, as well as her questions in other verses.

2. Jesus' Answers

- * There was more than one subject, but what was the main one in Jesus' answers?
- * How would you describe Jesus' request in v. 7 and his command in v. 16? If nothing else, they show that he was in charge and not just responding to the woman's questions.
- * How were the Lord's answers and message to the Samaritan woman like and / or unlike those given to Nicodemus (3:5-8, 10-17) and Nathanael (1:46)?
- * Be sure to describe the Lord's special revelation of himself to the woman in v. 18, as it was greatly used to lead her to personal faith.

and make applications.

- * How should I be like and / or unlike the woman of Samaria?
- * How should I deal with others like the Lord Jesus dealt with the woman at the well.

At a seminar on personal evangelism, participants were asked to add descriptive notes to the John four dialogue, as shown below. Look for recurring words, patterns, and general principles.

4:7 Give me to drink. ← human (needy), probing, unexpected

bold, not fearful →

sectarian

4:9 How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

4:10 If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

← difficult to understand
about her spiritual need

physical, like Nicodemus in 3:4 →

defensive and sectarian,
about Jesus' identity

4:11 Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 4:12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

4:13 Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

← about her spiritual need
like his answer in 3:5-8

a polite request, needy,
probably still physical →

4:15 Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

4:16 Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

← personal, probing

defensive, evasive →

4:17 I have no husband.

4:17 Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

← about her life, omniscient,
proof of his special nature / deity

about worship places,
about Jesus' identity,
somewhat sectarian →

4:19 Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

4:21 Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

← about spiritual worship,
about the future,
about salvation, evangelistic,
pro-Jewish, pro-scripture

sincere and open to truth,
not sectarian or defensive →

4:25 I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

4:26 I that speak unto thee am he.

← about Jesus' true identity

At the same personal evangelism seminar participants were also asked to describe the dialogue section by section, making a chart. This involved asking if the words spoken in each section were good or bad and describing why. Let's join the discussion by studying the comments and charts below and personally filling out the personal application section of the "to the point" chart at the bottom.

Maria (personal focus)

"As my chart shows, I believe, the Lord's words were primarily **personal**, just as they also were to Nicodemus in chapter three."

	The woman's words were...	Jesus' words were...
4:3-14	ethnically defensive	about personal need (water)
4:15-18	personally defensive	about her personal life (husbands)
4:19-26	ethnic, but more open personally	about personal worship (God)

"Whereas the Samaritan woman kept bringing up **ethnic** issues, the Lord repeatedly stressed the personal. In the key middle section, in 4:15-18, he even asking about her husband and spoke at length about her unhappy and sinful home situation. Likewise, **we, too, must get beyond the nationalistic and sectarian, to the personal, in order to reach individual souls.**"

Dan (ethnic focus)

"Sure, the Messiah was reaching out to an individual, but he did not ignore the woman's **anti-Jewish** and **pro-Samaritan** lines."

	The woman's words were...	Jesus' words were...
4:3-14	defensive, anti-Jewish	evangelistic, pro-individual
4:15-18	defensive, pro-privacy	omniscient, pro-openness
4:19-26	less defensive, anti-Jerusalem	pro-Jewish, post-Jerusalem

"Jesus did not side with the Samaritans (4:22, 8:48). Rather, he was **pro-Jewish** in supporting true worship in Jerusalem and upholding the Hebrew scriptures (Cf. Rom. 3:1-2.9.), though he also spoke **about the approaching post-Jerusalem era**, about the coming end of temple worship in AD 70. Basically, **Jesus was opposed to inflexible sectarianism, Jewish and Samaritan.**"

Dr. Evans (evangelistic focus)

"Every word the Samaritan woman said was **spoken as an outsider**, as a non-Jew and as an outcast from her own city.

	As an outsider she was...	As the God-man Jesus...
4:3-14	unhappy, unfulfilled	understood human needs
4:15-18	unloved, unholy	understood everything about her
4:19-26	uninformed unsaved	understood everything about God

"Though **defensive** at first, she **step-by-step** came to welcome the Savior, whose words **showed that he alone understood her and God in every way.**"

"What a great **evangelistic** message this would make!

Good News for the Outcast

- 1.) for the unhappy (4:3-14),
- 2.) for the unloved (4:15-18),
- 3.) for the unsaved (4:19-26)."

the people the Samaritan woman the Lord	the principles (general principles)	to the point my personal applications
The woman at the well was a sectarian Samaritan, a sceptic (especially at first), and, above all, a sinner in need of the Savior.	We should be more focused on the personal spiritual need of individuals rather than upon our sectarian differences.	
The Lord Jesus was the model personal Evangelist, firm and confronting, as well as patient and caring as the Savior of the world.	We should follow Jesus' example by interactively proclaiming the gospel firmly but, also, with patience and understanding.	