

WOMAN AT THE WELL

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

BIG IDEA

09/06/26

What if some of what we've always believed about the woman at the well isn't actually what the Bible says? In this eye-opening study of John 4, we take a fresh look at one of Scripture's most familiar encounters, challenging long-held assumptions about the Samaritan woman's past, reputation, and place in her community. By examining the passage in its biblical and historical context, we discover a powerful reminder that spiritual maturity means loving truth enough to change our minds—and that our stories are ultimately defined not by what others assume about us, but by what Jesus does through us. Along the way, we'll see how Jesus honored, defended, discipled, and commissioned women, including this remarkable woman whose testimony helped lead an entire community toward Christ.

CONNECT Spend 10 minutes getting to know each other as a group by answering the following question.

Tell us about a time where you made an assumption that turned out to be incorrect.

DISCOVER Read John 4:6-16 out loud and answer questions focused on the details of the biblical text.

1. What details does John explicitly tell us about the Samaritan woman—and what things have we traditionally assumed about her that John never actually says? Why is it so easy to blur the line between what Scripture says and what we have heard about Scripture?

2. The sermon says, "Sometimes we need to check our assumptions to get to the fullness of truth." What assumptions—cultural, theological, political, personal, or denominational—can we unknowingly bring with us when we read the Bible? How can we recognize when that is happening?

3. Jesus knows the woman's complete marital history, yet the sermon points out that Jesus does not label her an adulteress, call her a prostitute, or pronounce the moral judgment interpreters have sometimes placed upon her. What does that teach us about the danger of filling biblical silence with our own conclusions? Where do Christians sometimes do the same thing to people today?



REFLECT

Review the following and use this time to discuss how your thoughts and feelings are affirmed and/or challenged.

5 HUSBANDS

Greek anēr (ἀνὴρ), which in this context means husband, not a casual sexual partner.

"A Middle Eastern woman in this time of history "generally did not possess anything like modern autonomous control over marriage and divorce. Her history could readily reflect death, divorce imposed upon her, or some combination of the two." - Bible Commentary

4. We know the woman had five husbands, but the sermon emphasizes that Scripture does not tell us why. How does our interpretation of someone change when we move from "I know what happened" to "I know why they did it"? Have you ever discovered that your explanation for someone else's behavior was completely wrong?

5. The sermon raises several possible explanations for the woman's marital history—death, divorce, abandonment, economic necessity, family arrangements, or other circumstances outside her control—without claiming certainty. What does this teach us about extending humility and compassion when we know only part of another person's story?

APPLY

Use this time to discuss how the Big Idea and scriptures impact your view of the world around you.

6. What is one assumption—about Scripture, another person, yourself, or who God can use—that Jesus may be challenging you to reconsider?

Prayer Requests:

