



**A deep-deep understanding about faith!
A study on John 4-7**

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The Gospel of John: Lesson plan

- Lesson 1 — Apr 15 — Jesus' ministry is so...unique! (John 1-3)
- Lesson 2 — Apr 22 — A deep-deep understanding about faith! (John 4-7)
- Lesson 3 — Apr 29 — Jesus IS God! (John 8:1-12:11)
- Lesson 4 — May 6 — Serving like this is unheard of! (John 12:12-14:31)
- Lesson 5 — May 13 — Living a powerful life (John 15-17)
- Lesson 6 — May 20 — The tomb is empty! (John 18-21)

John 4:1-42, A Samaritan woman starts a movement in her hometown!

Jesus surely wants nothing to do with competition and division amongst believers! This we see clearly from vv. 1-3 where He decides to leave Judea in the south and goes clear up to Galilee in the north to prevent any attempt at comparing His following with John the baptist, specifically with regards to baptism (see also 1 Cor. 1:10-17).

To get from Judea to Galilee though Jesus had to travel through Samaria (v. 4) where He encounters a Samaritan woman. It is no wonder that Jesus is tired (v. 6) as this would now be after about 1.5 days of traveling roughly 40 miles! Of course one needs to keep the history of the Samaritans in mind before continuing with this encounter as the Jews and the Samaritans most certainly had no good relationship with one another. Samaria gained a bad name after some Israelites here started to inter-marry with heathens after the exile of the northern kingdom (Israel) in 722-721 BC (see also 2 Kings 17-18). Around 400 BC the Samaritans built their own temples on Mt Gerizim in Samaria, which was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, a Hasmonean ruler of Judea, near the end of 2 BC. The Samaritans also only acknowledged the Pentateuch as their “Bibles”.

Thus, for Jesus to start a conversation with a Samaritan woman (v. 7) was definitely something that any Jew would have frowned upon to say the least (see even her own surprise in v. 9, and also that of the disciples in v. 27)! On top of it, this woman is out and about all by herself around noon, which confirms that she is probably a woman of questionable character (v. 6).

Jesus however uses this as a teaching moment, and elevates the request for water from a physical to a spiritual level in v. 10. This however is followed by a misunderstanding on the women’s part (vv. 11-12)—something that has quickly become typical in the Gospel of John. Jesus continues to explain though that He can give water that will quench your thirst forever, because it becomes like a fountain in you that feeds you from within and keeps you going... forever (vv. 10, 13-14)! To see the connection here between the themes of “life” and the Spirit becomes extremely helpful - see John 6:63 for example.

Of course the woman wants some of this water, still misunderstanding...thinking that then she doesn’t need to come back again (v. 15)! However Jesus then helps the Samaritan woman to understand that He can see and share things on another level. He challenges her to bring her husband (v. 16), and she is forced to acknowledge that she has none (v. 17a), giving Jesus the opportunity to point out to her that she is living in sin with multiple men moving in and out of her life (vv. 17b-18).

This helps the woman to at least acknowledge that Jesus is a spiritual leader (v. 19), thus redirecting her attention about where one should worship (where the Samaritans say they

should, or whether it rather should be in Jerusalem, v. 20). Again Jesus gives an unexpected answer: It is not about a location (v. 21), but more about positioning yourself within the stream of God’s revelation (v. 22), so that you can catch God’s heart for worshiping Him in spirit and in truth (vv. 23-24). It shouldn’t surprise that this helps the woman to understand even better who Jesus is—He is the Messiah, the Christ (vv. 25-26)!

The woman is so excited about coming to understand Who Jesus is that she immediately “leaves her water jar” to go and tell her village (vv. 29-30)!

May I ask: Have you left your “water jar” yet to go and share the greatest News ever?!

Jesus now directs His attention to His disciples for a teaching moment, and uses their misunderstanding about physical lunch again (vv. 31-33) to explain that the true “food” is to do the will of God and fulfill the purpose that He has put in our lives (v. 34). This is the example that Jesus is setting, and this is also what we should be doing (vv. 35-38): We should look at the world around us through a spiritual lens, recognizing how late it is...it is harvest time! This is a harvest of people, and it is a harvest that we didn’t even work for—Jesus did! We can now simply reap the benefits of His hard work, and help to go and reap as He is sending us to do. Therefore, let’s GO!

It is amazing that the Samaritan woman got this right...immediately (a woman hated by the Jews and of questionable character amongst her own)! In fact, she started an entire movement of believers in her town (v. 39)! Because of her people flocked to Jesus, they wanted to hear more (v. 40), and so even more came to faith (v. 41)...not only because of what the woman shared, but because they had a personal encounter with the Lord Himself (v. 42)!

John 4:43-54, A child lives and an entire household believes

From an act of desperation (vv. 46-47), an act of faith (v. 53) is born! Yes, God can use even our most desperate circumstances to open our spiritual eyes. We just need to be sensitive to how God uses these to help us see! Here he uses exact timing to nudge us to see Him at work on another level—the child on the brink of death (v. 48) gets healed at exactly 1pm (v. 52), the moment that Jesus said, “Your son will live” (vv. 50a, 53a).

This can bring salvation to entire families (v. 53b)!

John 5:1-30, A Miracle on the Sabbath helps us to see who Jesus really is

Jesus heals the invalid on the Sabbath (vv. 5-9), and challenges him to stop sinning, so that something worse won’t happen to him (v. 14). On top of “only” being an invalid, he could lose eternal life!

Jesus then continues to help people to see who He really is by explaining that He can call God “My Father” (vv. 17-18), and not only “Our Father”, as Jews might have called Him sometimes in corporate worship. Also, just as God’s providence can never stop, not even on the Sabbath, Jesus’ redemptive work can never stop (v. 17b). Starting in v. 19 Jesus connects with the principal of “perfect sonship”, and shows that as required from a great son, His perfect Sonship involves perfect identity of will and action with the Father (v. 30, and also John 8:29). The opposite would have denied this: Separate, self-determined action, would have set Jesus apart, and even against God, creating something like a ditheism of sorts. So, by doing all that the Father does, He must be as great, as divine, as the Father (vv. 19-20, and also John 14:9), especially if raising the dead can also be ascribed to Jesus (v. 21)! Raising the dead is seen as a prerogative only belonging to God (see also 2 Kings 5:7). Rabbi’s said that 3 keys remain in God’s Hand: Rain (Deut. 28:12), the key to the womb (Gen. 30:22), and resurrection of the dead (Ezek. 37:13). People like Elijah may have served as exceptional representatives of God, but the difference is that Jesus gives life to whomever He pleases (v. 21)—Jesus gives healing and life by choosing whomever He wants (John 5:3-6 and 15:16)! Jesus is God indeed, and by “working” on the Sabbath He helps us to see that clearer!

As if this is not enough to help us to see who Jesus really is, He takes it one step further: Jesus states that the Father will no longer be the Judge anymore announcing judgement at the end (v. 22a)—this right has now been handed over from the Father to the Son (vv. 22b, 27)! Therefore people will honor the Son and the Father in equal manner (v. 23a), which also means this: If one does not respect and honor the Son, then you also disrespect/ dishonor the Father (v. 23b)! Remember: The Father sent His Son to represent Him, to be His Ambassador (v. 23c).

Whoever takes this to heart can already now have eternal life (v. 24a), does not have to fear condemnation (v. 24b), and has crossed over from spiritual death to a new life with the Father (v. 24c)! The time has come, it is NOW (v. 25a)—let all who is spiritually dead hear the Message of the Son of God...hear and believe so that they can Live (v. 25b)! When the graves open and all hear the our Lord's voice (v. 28), those who have listened to Jesus will continue to Live (v. 29a), and those who have chosen to stay in spiritual darkness will be condemned forever (v. 29b).

This understanding from John 5 helps us tremendously on the missions field (in our home country or abroad), to explain to people who Jesus truly is—He is God, He is the Life-giver (v. 26)!

John 5:31-47, More than enough testimonies to the Truth of Who Jesus is!

Our Father knows that we need help to believe the claims that Jesus made, and that we would struggle to come to a deep faith if it came across as if Jesus' ideas were simply His own (v. 30). Therefore the claim that Jesus makes is that His decisions is not from Himself, but from the Father who has sent Jesus to say exactly what He wants Jesus to say (v. 31).

So, imagine a court case where it would be difficult to believe someone if we only had their own words to base the truth on. For this reason Jesus is not the only One testifying to the Truth of who He is (v. 32). There are others too, like John the baptist (v. 33), which to be honest is

almost a bit sad to need to reference, as the testimonies that Jesus has to offer are so much more powerful than what any human could ever testify too (v. 34a). However, Jesus is doing this for our sake as He knows that we sometimes need to see, touch and hear in an earthly manner too (v. 34b). Perhaps one can think of John as a lamp that burned for a while, for the purpose that it can at least put us on the right path, point us in the right direction, so we can start to see something of this amazing Truth (v. 35)!

But now we know there are other, much more powerful testimonies, like the incredible things that Jesus does—this has to show us that the Father is with Jesus and has sent Him to do these (v. 36)! Then of course there is the Father Himself who testifies (v. 37a)! It is sad though that so many doesn't want to believe this, because they have not really heard or seen the Father (v. 37b), while the Son is right in front of them making Him known...if you cannot see, nor hear the Son, then you will also miss the Father (v. 39)!

The third testimony is that given by the Scriptures (vv. 39-40): Even though many diligently seek the Scriptures to find eternal life in it, they miss the point that the Scriptures are pointing to Jesus, because it is only in Him that Life is found! It would be so sad to spend much time with God's Word, yet missing what God's Word is pointing you towards... It is helpful to understand that there were often messianic pretenders, claiming that they are the one that Deut. 18:15 for example was referring to, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him". However, the one characteristic almost across the board of these false messiahs was a yearning for fame and power.

It has never been for Jesus about receiving fame from people (v. 41), yet people love to receive the praises from their fellow men so that they can feel important (v. 44a). This causes many to fail, to miss the importance of Jesus, as it is so easy to think that people who appear to be important in the sight of other people are the ones to be followed (v. 43b). It is therefore critical that we don't miss the Father behind Jesus (v. 43a), that we come to a place where we love the Father from deep within our hearts (v. 42), and that we seek our Father's praise rather than that of man (v. 44), or else we will stand accused before our Father one day (v. 45a)... In fact, if we don't come to acknowledge the Truth that is right in front of us, backed up with powerful testimonies, we will find that Jesus won't even have to list all of our wrongdoings, as the same Moses that so many had put their hope in (v. 45b) will accuse us simply because even he spoke about Jesus (v. 46. See again the discussion above concerning Deut. 18:15)! It is true though...if people won't even believe what Moses wrote, how will they then believe what Jesus said (v. 47).

John 6:1-71, The miracles pointing to the greatest Miracle of them all!

Jesus wants us to see through the miracles who He is, and that the Kingdom of God has come near to all (v. 14). When we are faced with the impossible He want us to remember that He is there to help, that He can open any doors, that He can make a way where no one sees a way! When a huge crowd needs to be fed (vv. 5-6), He doesn't want us to go into panic mode, or get stuck within our earthly paradigms, trying to get things figured out—no, He is longing for us to remember that the greatest Miracle of them all, that He, Jesus Christ, Lord of all, is standing right beside us, with more than enough to feed a nation (vv. 12-13)!

One of the most overlooked verses in this chapter might be v. 6 where we read that Jesus only asked His disciples where they will get food to feed all these people, because He wanted to test them (vv. 5-6a). Jesus of course knew upfront “what He was going to do” (v. 6b)!

Unfortunately the disciples made the same mistakes we often make: They first tried to solve the problem with money and realized they don't have nearly enough (v. 7), and then they looked at their connections and resources and determined quickly that this would also not solve the problem (vv. 8-9). What they all however failed to see was...JESUS standing right there beside them! One almost don't know whether you should laugh, weep or scream at the disciples...or is it actually at ourselves?! For the One standing right beside us it is never a problem to solve any problem (vv. 10-12a)—may we never forget that!

Not only did all get “enough to eat” (v. 12a), but after collecting the leftovers they also gathered 12 baskets of bread (vv. 12b-13)! This cannot be a coincidence! Why not 8 baskets...or 13...why not fish too...why only bread? All of these are important questions. And it seems that it is crucial to remember that this happened right before the Jewish Passover Feast (v. 4) where people celebrated God's provision in the deepest of troubles, and His salvation from one's deepest needs, to His people of how many tribes...12! Therefore one should also not be surprised that Jesus picks up the teaching the next day or so (vv. 22-25), helping the people to see that He is actually the true manna, the true Bread of heaven, the Bread of God “who comes

down from heaven and gives life to the world” (vv. 26-33)! To have Jesus in one’s life is a possibility for all (v. 33b), just like the leftovers proved that Jesus can feed *all* of His people! He Himself is the greatest Miracle of them all (vv. 30-32)! He is the One who gives true life, everlasting life (vv. 44-58)! It is available for all, nobody will be driven away (v. 37), but faith is needed to find it (vv. 34-40).

If one wonders how this faith, how believing works, then Jesus answers that too: It is like eating bread, just like the Israelites had to eat the manna to live (vv. 41-49). However the manna could not sustain people forever, they still died, but if you eat from Jesus as the Bread you will not only be sustained during this lifetime, but for eternity (vv. 49-51)! What does faith in Jesus mean? Jesus knocks in the nail all the way in vv. 52-59: It means you are ALL IN, it means you cannot only know about Jesus, ponder Him, question Him, consider Him, believe things about Him, be amazed at Him, read about Him, study Him, tell others about Him, give things to Him that you think will honor Him, do things for Him that you believe will impress Him...it means you need to EAT HIM and DRINK HIM...it means you need to be ALL IN... be changed from the INSIDE OUT...have Jesus become part of your life as much as manna/ bread and water/ wine becomes a part of your body when you eat and drink it—it becomes one with your body (it can never come out in the same way it went in), it changes you, it fuels you, it feeds you, it sustains you, it moves you, it drives you, it is completely part of you! Can this metaphor be any more powerful?!

Does this scare you as it did some (vv. 60-61), does it want you to turn away from Jesus as some did (vv. 64-71), or does this excite you and you want to say with Jesus, “The Spirit gives Life, the flesh counts for nothing” ...the words that Jesus has spoken will continue to give Life to me through His Spirit, forever (vv. 62-63)!

A final warning perhaps: Remember, if there is distance between us and Jesus, we end up in darkness (v. 17), we lose our way, our courage, and sometimes the storm might even seem scary/overwhelming (v. 18). On the other hand, with Jesus right there, next to us, IN US... well, that’s a whole different story, because when He, the “I am” (v. 20, see also Isaiah 40:10-13), is in the boat, fear is driven away, and the ride, even in rough waters, becomes a dream ride (v. 21)!

With a deep-deep faith as we surely find IN JESUS we can face anything, anywhere, anytime!

John 7:1-13, 25-52; (see also 2:4; 8:19-20; 12:20-36; 17:1), The hour of Jesus' glory is coming, and the whole world should see it!

While the death of Jesus is very much in the context of suffering in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), His death in the Gospel of John is described within the light of His glory! Everything leads up to that glorious moment, when in His death and resurrection, Jesus will finally prove beyond any doubt that He is truly the Son of God, God Himself! John uses several words, or phrases, to show this to us, and here is one that we pick up on fairly often within the Gospel: "My time/hour has not yet, or...has come".

In John 2:4 Jesus makes it clear to His mother that His ministry has started, and from now on His focus needs to be 100% on the will and timing of His heavenly Father. We see the same obedience of Jesus, working hard to stay exactly on God's schedule, in John 7:1-13! It is also important to see that no one else could deter Jesus from staying on God's schedule—John 7:25-52, and John 8:19-20.

We start to see the cross in the light of glory more clearly in texts like John 12:20-36 (see especially v. 23), as well as in John 17:1-5, 20-26. The whole world should take note of this glory (John 17:20-23)!

John 7:14-18, Who is Jesus really?

If you want to know who Jesus truly is, you need to really listen to Him. This way you will not just look at Him as a human (vv. 14-15), you will find that He is not just trying to gain the favor of man (v. 18a), and most importantly, you will discover that His teachings come from Above (vv. 16-17), and that He as a Man of Truth He seeks to honor His Father (v. 18b)! Look at Jesus, listen to Jesus, and you will see the Father and hear His heart!

John 7:19-24, Jesus and the Sabbath

Jesus confronts the accusation that He is breaking the law because of His healing of the invalid on the Sabbath (5:1-15). His debates starts with Moses who gave the law, even though many still break the law...yet now people want to kill Jesus for so-called breaking the law (vv. 19-21)! Jesus argues that Moses (based upon the tradition from the patriarchs, Abraham), said that all boys at the age of 8 days had to be circumcised (v. 22a). In an effort to fulfill this law the religious leaders would circumcise children even on the Sabbath (vv. 22b-23a), therefore why would they now not allow Jesus to bring healing to the entire body of a man on the Sabbath (v. 23b)! For the Jews the circumcision was a perfecting rite, which is why Jesus is arguing that He is not only perfecting a portion of a person, but the entire person when He healed the man on the Sabbath. One should therefore think carefully not to pass judgement just on what you see, but on what is actually happening in truth (v. 24). Rather than a Sabbath-breaker, Jesus is actually the One fulfilling both the Sabbath and the circumcision!

Jesus is clearly not under the Sabbath, but Lord of the Sabbath (see also Mk. 2:28), and teaches us that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27). The Sabbath is in other words supposed to serve us to gain healing and rest, to regain perspective and focus, and to intentionally connect and honor God and each other!

John 7:25-30, Yes, Jesus is our Savior!

To see what you need to see, and not to miss it, you need to look at Jesus through open spiritual eyes...you need to look from the vantage point of the Above! Some folks were confused about who Jesus is, because the leaders want to kill Him (v. 25), yet they let Him speak, and so some wonder if the authorities have not perhaps concluded that He is the Christ, the Savior (v. 26)...yet, that would mean that there should be a mystery about where He is from, but of course all know where Jesus is from (v. 27)...or, do they?

Jesus, knowing what people ponder even in their hearts, speak up that the people might think that they know where He is from, but they actually don't (v. 28a)! He is from here, but also not, as He is actually from Above, sent by the Father, whom the people don't know (v. 28b), but He does as He is from God who sent Him (v. 29)!

This gave the Jews even more reason to grab Jesus, but no one did, "because His time had not yet come" (v. 30 - see also v. 44)! This is so important in the Gospel of John—Jesus is clearly acting only on God's schedule, and the people are also acting only on God's schedule, and can only do what they want to do when allowed to do it! God is in control, Jesus is in control, Jesus is fulfilling what God has sent Him to do, and nothing can change a thing about *it*, *it* is all timed out, *it* is all planned out, and *it* will happen exactly when *it* needs to happen..."it"...our SALVATION!

John 7:31-52, Believe or not to believe...

Some did believe in who Jesus was, and for them the signs made it clear—it pointed directly to His identity as God and Savior (v. 31)! Even though they tried to share this only softly (v. 32a), it still came out and the Pharisees wanted to arrest Jesus (v. 32b). Jesus however tells them that He won't be with them for much longer, as He is returning to His Father (v. 33), and when He does it won't help them to try and find Him, because they won't be able to reach Him there (vv. 34-36). Of course this is terribly sad to hear, as it means that salvation will elude you! I pray that we are never so hard hearted that we come to a place where we cannot find Jesus anymore...let us rather wake up now, listen to Him now, see Him now, and accept Him now!

This is what you will find when you find Jesus: He is the one Who can quench your spiritual thirst (v. 37)! All you need to do is to believe in Him, and you will become like a fountain from which fresh water will flow from—not just normal water, but water that will bring forth eternal life (v. 38). With this metaphor Jesus was referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit, which every believer will receive when Jesus returns to heaven (v. 39).

Many started to wonder who Jesus was (vv. 40-52). Some wanted to believe there was something more to Him (vv. 40-41a, 45-46), while others felt He came from the wrong place (vv. 41b, 52) or the wrong lineage (v. 42). They were divided (vv. 43-51), and some even wanted to throw Him in jail, but none did a thing, because it was not yet His time (v. 43)!

Where are you at...do you believe yet? It is surely time to choose!

Want to dig deeper, or just stay connected?

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