

HOW CAN WE TREAT ALL PEOPLE MORE CONSISTENTLY?

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Read John 4:3–14 (bold added for emphasis), which records Jesus’s interaction with a Samaritan woman. Jesus and his followers had been traveling for several days and stopped to rest near the town of Sychar in the region of Samaria. It’s important to note that because of an ancient Jewish dispute, the people who lived in this region were widely considered outcasts socially, culturally, and religiously. Jesus’s interaction with the woman there would have been shocking not only because of his position as a teacher and Rabbi, but also because of his gender, ethnicity, and social class. What do you observe about this conversation that characterizes Jesus’s care for her despite these differences?

³ So he [Jesus] left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. ⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there, and **Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.** It was about noon. ⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (**For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.**) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” ¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?” ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” ¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a **spring of water welling up to eternal life.**”

HOW CAN WE TREAT ALL PEOPLE MORE CONSISTENTLY?

THINK ABOUT IT

1. In verse 6, we learn that Jesus was tired from his journey. Often the people who feel most excluded from our kindness and patience are those who we interact with when we're tired, hungry, or waiting for a service. What can we learn from Jesus about our interactions during those times?
2. Think about verse 9, which says "Jews do not associate with Samaritans." Is there any group with whom it's difficult for you to associate? Why? Do you have the opportunity to expand your moral circle to include someone in particular from that group?
3. What do you picture when you imagine a "spring of water welling up"? Jesus offered the Samaritan woman refreshment for her soul. His kindness was the gate to a conversation and relationship with her. Think about someone who you interact with regularly who seems to need that kind of refreshment. How can you show them Jesus's love this week?

APPLY IT

1. Draw a large circle on a piece of paper. Inside it, draw two or three more circles like on a dartboard. Who is in your innermost circle? Write their names. Who is on the outermost? What is one quality you share with your innermost circle that you don't share with the outer circle?

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION (IF DESIRED)

1. Have you ever been treated like you were on the outside of someone's moral circle? What was that experience like?
2. What are the times when you are most at risk of making your moral circle very small (only being kind to those who are of your kind)?
3. What would it look like practically for you to enlarge your moral circle to include more people who are unlike you and need to experience Jesus's love?