

onechurch

bigIdea small group discussion

How do you conduct a relationship with an invisible God? How do you connect with someone you can't see? Christianity is a lot like online dating, because people meet online and start a relationship, though they have never met. Whether it's a person who's *Sleepless in Seattle* or with our Heavenly Father, what we all are seeking isn't a predictable routine or ritual. What we all seek—and what our God wants us to experience—is an intimate relationship with our Creator.



BIG IDEA: God wants a relationship with everyone, not a routine with everyone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tell how you met the love of your life. How did it happen? Where? Who spoke first? How did your relationship grow?
2. *Read John 4:1-8.* Was the Samaritan woman a religious insider or outsider? Who initiates the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman?
3. What do you believe Jesus' agenda was in initiating this conversation? Why might this conversation be considered somewhat controversial in Jesus' time?
4. *Read John 4:9-15.* Do you think Jesus and woman were on the same page and understanding in talking about water and living water? Why or why not? How did Jesus turn the conversation into something deeper?

Within every one of us, there is a God-shaped vacuum that cannot be longed or satisfied with anyone else but God Himself. Because God created us, He created us for a relationship with Him. But that doesn't mean everyone tries to fill that void in their life with God. No, many of us try to fill that God-shaped void and ache with money. Success. Collecting stuff. Others try to fill that craving for God with social status. Position. Others fill that gap by getting more friends.

5. *Read John 4:16-19.* Why does the woman acknowledge Jesus as a prophet of God?
6. What was this woman pursuing to give her life meaning?
7. How do people try to fill the God-shaped void in the life with other things besides God? Why do you think that is?

How much sand would someone have to consume in order to quench his thirst? Or how much stuff would an individual have to purchase and hoard in order to satisfy his need for approval? Or how many relationships would an individual need to pursue to satisfy his need for a relationship with God? Some of our approaches to quenching this thirst are really no different from someone trying to quench their physical thirst with sand. And the results are not too different either. We just get thirstier.emptier. More Alone. God has created us with a need that can only be filled with Himself.

8. You have probably not tried to quench your thirst with sand. But are there other things, habits, or relationships you have hoped would soothe your soul? What has been the result?
9. Why does living a life without God make no sense and doesn't satisfy?
10. *Read John 4:19-24.* What does the woman do after Jesus confronts her? Why do you think she does this?
11. *Read John 4:25-26.* Who does Jesus eventually claim to be?
12. *Read John 4:27-30.* What is it about Jesus' words and actions in relationship with the Samaritan woman that cause her to seriously consider his claim of being something much more than a prophet?
13. *Read John 4:39-42.* Why were so many others from her city also convinced that Jesus was truly their promised Savior?
14. How does this story impact your understanding about who Jesus is?

THINK ABOUT IT

We don't know this woman's whole story, but perhaps it is enough to know she "preferred the afternoon heat to the company of the other women in town." God has great compassion for the outcast, having been the ultimate outcast rejected by men and by God (on the cross). Describe a time when you have felt isolated or outcast. How did you cope with it? In what ways is Christ always there for us when we feel abandoned by people?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Jesus had an amazing capacity to communicate and identify with people from any background, gender and worldview. How would you compare or contrast Nicodemus (John 3) and the Samaritan woman (John 4)?
2. What does Jesus' amazing capacity for connecting with such diverse people say about his ability to relate with you?
3. *Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and Philippians 4:4-7.* According to these two passages, how are we to approach God? What does God promise to provide?