

# **Koinonia Gathering Guide: The Encounter of Miracle Identity and Soul Restoration**

**Scripture John 3:22-30 and John 4:1-30**

## **Opening Prayer (5 minutes)**

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to receive what He wants to teach through this discussion. Pray for vulnerability, honesty, and transformation.

## **Heart Check Question**

How are you doing with sexual purity?

## **Ice Breaker (10 minutes)**

**Question:** If you could meet any person (living or historical) at a well or coffee shop for a life-changing conversation, who would it be and why?

## **Key Takeaways from the Sermon**

### **1. Identity Reordered Around Jesus**

- Before encountering Jesus, we build identity on unstable foundations (occupation, relationships, achievements, recognition)
- John the Baptist shows us identity transformation: from platform to purpose, from comparison to celebration

### **2. Soul Restoration Through Living Water**

- The Samaritan woman represents broken souls searching in wrong places
- Jesus breaks down all barriers (ethnic, social, moral) to restore our souls
- Three types of thirst: physical, spiritual, and relational—all satisfied in Jesus

### **3. The Miracle of Encounter**

- Both the respected prophet and rejected woman experienced transformation
- Jesus meets us where we are, regardless of status or past
- Encounter leads to witness: we cannot stay silent about what Jesus has done

## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Identity Transformation (20 minutes)

1. **Personal Reflection:** How would you answer the question "Who am I?" What typically defines your identity?
2. **Scripture Connection:** Read John 3:28-30. John the Baptist knew who he was AND who he was NOT. What are some things you need to recognize you are NOT (mistakes, failures, labels, etc.)?
3. **Comparison Culture:** In what areas of your life do you struggle most with comparison? How does comparison rob you of contentment and celebration?
4. **Application:** What does "He must increase, but I must decrease" look like practically in your daily life? What specific thing needs to decrease so Jesus can increase?

### Section 2: Soul Restoration (20 minutes)

5. **The Woman's Story:** The Samaritan woman came to the well at noon to avoid people. When have you "hidden" because of shame, guilt, or brokenness? What were you avoiding?
6. **Thirst Analysis:** Jesus identified three types of thirst (physical, spiritual, relational). Which of these do you find yourself trying to satisfy in places other than Jesus? What are your "wells"?
7. **Breaking Barriers:** Jesus crossed ethnic, social, and moral barriers to reach the woman. What barriers (internal or external) do you feel exist between you and Jesus right now?
8. **Leaving the Jar:** The woman left her water jar—representing her old life. What "jar" is Jesus calling you to leave behind today?

### Section 3: The Encounter (15 minutes)

9. **Transformation Evidence:** The woman went from hiding to becoming a missionary to her town. What evidence would show that you've truly encountered Jesus and experienced transformation?

10. **Purpose vs. Platform:** John the Baptist understood his purpose wasn't about building his platform. How does our culture's obsession with personal branding conflict with kingdom purpose?
11. **Witness:** The woman said, "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did." When was the last time you invited someone to "come and see" Jesus? What holds you back?

## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2):

#### For Identity Transformation:

- **Daily Declaration:** Each morning, declare "I am not \_\_\_\_\_ (mistake, failure, stuck, etc.), but I am \_\_\_\_\_ (loved, chosen, called, etc.) in Christ."
- **Comparison Fast:** Identify one area of comparison (social media, career, relationships) and intentionally practice celebration instead when you see others succeed.
- **Purpose Prayer:** Spend 15 minutes asking God, "What is my purpose?" rather than "How can I build my platform?"

#### For Soul Restoration:

- **Thirst Inventory:** Journal about where you're trying to satisfy spiritual thirst in physical or relational ways. Confess these to God and ask for the living water.
- **Leave the Jar:** Identify one specific "jar" (habit, relationship, identity marker) you need to leave behind. Share it with a trusted friend for accountability.
- **Break the Hiding:** Reach out to one person or group you've been avoiding due to shame. Take a step toward restoration.

#### For Witness:

- **Tell Your Story:** Share with at least one person this week about an encounter you've had with Jesus and how He's transformed you.
- **Invitation:** Invite someone to "come and see"—whether to church, small group, or just to hear your story over coffee.

## Memory Verse

**John 4:13-14** - "Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"

## Closing Reflection (10 minutes)

### Quiet Reflection Questions:

- What is one thing God spoke to you about today?
- What needs to decrease in your life so Jesus can increase?
- What is your next step in response to this message?

**Sharing:** Invite 2-3 people to share their answer to one of the above questions.

## Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray together:

- For identity to be reordered around Jesus
- For broken souls to be restored
- For courage to leave old jars behind
- For boldness to witness about Jesus
- For specific needs shared in the group

## Leader Tips

1. **Create Safety:** Both John and the woman's stories involve vulnerability. Model openness about your own identity struggles and soul brokenness.
2. **Avoid Judgment:** The woman had five husbands and was living with a sixth man. Ensure your group is a grace-filled space where people can be honest about their struggles.
3. **Point to Jesus:** Keep redirecting conversation to Jesus as the answer, not self-improvement or behavior modification.
4. **Follow Up:** Check in with group members during the week, especially those who shared vulnerable struggles.
5. **Celebrate Transformation:** If someone shares a testimony of how Jesus has reordered their identity or restored their soul, take time to celebrate!

## Additional Resources

- Read the full stories: John 3:1-36 and John 4:1-42

- Reflect on other "well encounters" in Scripture: Genesis 24 (Isaac and Rebekah), Genesis 29 (Jacob and Rachel), Exodus 2 (Moses and Zipporah)
- Consider reading: "The Me I Want to Be" by John Ortberg or "Soul Keeping" by John Ortberg

## 5-Day Devotional: Encountering Jesus - Identity Transformed, Soul Restored

### Day 1: From Platform to Purpose

**Reading:** John 3:22-30; Philippians 2:3-11

**Devotional:** John the Baptist understood a profound truth: our identity must be rooted in God's purpose, not our platform. In a world obsessed with building personal brands and accumulating followers, John declared, "He must increase, but I must decrease." This wasn't self-hatred but proper alignment. Everything John possessed—his influence, gifts, and calling—came from heaven. When we anchor our identity in what God has called us to do rather than what recognition we receive, we find freedom from the exhausting cycle of comparison and competition. Today, ask yourself: Am I building my name or glorifying His? The answer reveals whether your identity is centered on platform or purpose. True contentment comes when we celebrate others' successes, knowing God has uniquely equipped us for our specific calling.

### Day 2: Knowing Who You Are and Who You Are Not

**Reading:** John 3:27-30; Romans 12:3-8

**Devotional:** John the Baptist declared, "I am not the Messiah." He knew precisely who he was and, equally important, who he was not. This clarity brought him peace while chaos swirled around him. Many people struggle because they think they know who they are but haven't defined who they are not. You are not a mistake. You are not defeated. You are not what others say about you. You are not trapped in your current situation. But you are also not the savior—you cannot rescue everyone from their burdens. When you try to be someone's messiah, you'll need rescuing yourself. Understanding your identity in Christ means embracing both the truth of who God created you to be and the freedom of releasing what you were never meant to carry. Where are you trying to be someone you're not?

### Day 3: Breaking Down Barriers

**Reading:** John 4:1-9; Galatians 3:26-29

**Devotional:** Jesus "had to" pass through Samaria—not geographically, but divinely. Every respectable Jew avoided Samaria, adding miles to their journey to bypass the despised half-breeds. But Jesus demolished ethnic, social, and moral barriers to meet one broken woman at a well. He crossed every boundary that separated people from God's love. This is the scandalous grace of the gospel: Jesus pursues those society

rejects. He meets us in our shame, not after we've cleaned ourselves up. The Samaritan woman represents everyone who feels too far gone, too broken, too rejected. Yet Jesus intentionally sought her out. What barriers have you erected between yourself and God? What shame keeps you hiding in the heat of the day, avoiding community? Jesus is crossing every barrier right now to meet you exactly where you are.

#### **Day 4: The Thirst Only Jesus Can Satisfy**

**Reading:** John 4:10-18; Psalm 42:1-8

**Devotional:** The woman had tried five husbands and was living with a sixth man, searching for something to quench her soul's thirst. We laugh, but we do the same thing spiritually. Our souls are desperately thirsty for Jesus, yet we try to satisfy that longing with everything else—relationships, achievements, possessions, approval. Like drinking juice when you need water, these things leave us still thirsting. Jesus offered living water that satisfies completely. He exposed her relational brokenness not to shame her but to show her that what she truly needed couldn't be found in another man. A broken soul is one searching for fulfillment in places that cannot deliver. What are you drinking from that leaves you still thirsty? Jesus stands ready to satisfy your physical, spiritual, and relational thirst. Stop returning to broken cisterns. Come to the wellspring of life.

#### **Day 5: Leaving the Jar Behind**

**Reading:** John 4:25-30, 39-42; 2 Corinthians 5:17

**Devotional:** When the Samaritan woman encountered Jesus, she left her water jar and ran to tell everyone. She came in shame, hiding from people in the noon heat. She left in celebration, running toward the very people she'd been avoiding. The jar represented her old life, her old identity, her old shame. She didn't need it anymore. Her soul had been restored. Notice what she said: "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did." They already knew what she'd done—that's why she was hiding. But now she wasn't defined by her past. She became the first missionary, bearing witness to the One who transforms identities and restores souls. What jar is Jesus calling you to leave behind today? What old identity, what shame, what broken pattern needs to be abandoned at the altar? You cannot carry the new life Jesus offers while clinging to the old. Leave it. Run. Tell others. Your encounter with Jesus changes everything.