

52 THE PURSUIT OF JESUS

Who Are Social Influencers for Jesus? Part 2

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The Crossing Church
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OPENING

This week we are continuing our Quest 52 series in our year-long **Pursuit of Jesus**. We are looking at the **Person of Jesus** and focusing in this first quarter of our study on **Who He is**. In this 13th week of 2022, we are again asking this question: “Who Are Social Influencers for Jesus?” During this year of pursuit, we will see vividly the magnificence of this Person we call Jesus and will have the opportunity to be changed forever.

SCRIPTURE¹

John 4:4-18 Now he *had to go* through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the *well*. It was about *noon*. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “*Will you give me a drink?*” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 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.) 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*.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this *living water*? 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?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be *thirsty again*, 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*.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t *get thirsty* and have to keep coming here to *draw water*.” He told her, “Go, call your *husband* and come back.” “*I have no husband*,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had *five husbands*, and the man you now have is *not your husband*. What you have just said is quite true.”

John 4:25-26-30 The woman said, “I know that *Messiah*” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “*I*, the one speaking to you—*I am he*.” Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. *But no one asked*, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “*Come*, see a man who told me everything I ever did. *Could this be the Messiah?*” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

John 4:39-41 Many of the Samaritans from that town *believed* in him *because* of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words *many more became believers*.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is **NIV**

Romans 15:7a *Accept* one another, then, *just as* Christ accepted you...

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For Christ's love *compels* us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

OBSERVATION

Back in the 700's B.C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into exile by the nation of Assyria. A remnant of Jews was left in Israel along with Assyrian captors and, in this area known as Samaria, they intermarried and produced children known as half-breeds. Because God had forbidden Jews to intermarry with outsiders, these descendants were reviled and hated by the Jewish people. Now, when Jesus decided to travel from Jerusalem to Capernaum, He had two options as to which route to take. The most common option was along the Jordan River and the other through the middle of Samaria. Can you guess which one He chose?

QUESTION: When have you had two choices to make and chosen the easier path? When have you chosen the more difficult path?

Jesus "had to go" through Samaria. He had a divine appointment with a woman at a well. She wasn't just any woman: She had a past having been married five times which was extraordinarily unusual in the culture of that time. Now a well was a social gathering place where conversations happened. Most of the town's women went there early in the morning, but this appointment time was noon – in the heat of the day when few other people would be there. This woman who was the scandal of the community and rejected by everyone, didn't want to encounter others. Yet there was Jesus waiting for her. He shouldn't have been there to talk with her because: 1) She was a woman and public conversations with women were considered inappropriate; 2) She was a Samaritan and Jews hated mixed-race people and racism ran deep; and, 3) She had a sinful past having had five husbands and was then living with a man she was not married to.

QUESTION: What was your life like before Jesus?

QUESTION: What concerns did you have about your past when Jesus began His conversation with you?

Jesus' conversation with her was about living water – not physical water for physical thirst – but spiritual water that would meet her deepest need: forgiveness of sin. He first exposes her shame and guilt and then offers her the antidote: a new life with Him.

QUESTION: Tell us about your conversation with Jesus when He offered you new life .

The woman went back into the town and announced to everyone she found there that she had just encountered the One told about in the Old Testament – the Messiah. "Come and see!" she shouted and they did. The woman with a past who had been abused by men and rejected by women ended up influencing hundreds of people for Jesus – and it all started with a conversation.

QUESTION: When have you called others to come and see?

APPLICATION

We tend to find all kinds of excuses when it comes to having spiritual conversations with others. 1) I can't do that because my life isn't a good enough example; 2) I can't share Jesus because I don't know what to say; 3) I can't talk to people because I don't know much about the Bible; 4) I can't tell people about Jesus because I wouldn't know how to answer their questions. The common theme here is about "I". But we don't lead people to Jesus – God does. Our part is to have a conversation.

QUESTION: What is your excuse for not having conversations with others about Jesus?

Let's concentrate on how Jesus does it. **1) Acceptance opens doors to influence.** Jesus speaking to the woman meant that he accepted her. Their cultures were so different that conversation was banned, but Jesus broke through that barrier in order to bring to her eternal life. Acceptance is not agreement – we accept people right where they are, but we don't affirm their sin. **2) Ask good questions.** When we ask someone a question it shows that we value that person. We often can't wait for someone to stop talking so we can get our point

across, but Jesus listens and shows an interest in what is being said. **3) Go from superficial questions to spiritual conversations.** Going from questions about jobs or family to deeper questions about prayer, house building in Mexico and church fellowship. **4) Go from spiritual to personal.** How do you do that? Just share your faith story.

QUESTION: With whom do you need to have a spiritual conversation? What open-ended questions have you prepared ahead of time to make that conversation less stressful?

QUESTION: How did you come to Jesus?

QUESTION: What has God done in your life since you made that decision?

QUESTION: God has placed some relationships in your life to influence their walk of faith. Who are they?
Jesus has conversations with unworthy people all of the time. He uses people like us to influence others in their belief and faith in the truth of His place as God's one and only Son. His Spirit calls us to accept His offer of living water in the form of forgiveness and eternal life.

QUESTION: Which friends have you invited to our Easter services at The Crossing?

PRAYER Heavenly Father, help us to be influencers for Jesus as we have conversations with friends, family and strangers. Open doors for us to share Your Son with others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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QUESTION: What was your life like before Jesus?

QUESTION: What concerns did you have about your past when Jesus began His conversation with you?

QUESTION: Tell us about your conversation with Jesus when He offered you new life .

QUESTION: When have you called others to come and see?

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