



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Fourth Gospel – Part 3

God's Love Through Us

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**Main Idea** – The Gospel of John shows that humility, inconvenience, patience, and vision are required for God's love to flow through us to others.

### The journey of the new believer

- Christians desire that God's love will flow through them to others. In order for that to happen, we first have to experience God's love for us as individuals. Then, we need to experience love shared between ourselves and other believers. After that, we are equipped for His love to flow through us to others outside the faith.
- Perhaps many Christians have an image of "the lost" as being those wantonly involved in sinful situations and environments. This perception might come from passages like **Luke 15 where examples of "the lost" are represented as tax collectors and sinners, as well as individuals in famous parables about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost person.**
- We should not assume new believers will immediately understand how we, as Christians, think. Many new believers will not automatically comprehend why we do what we do, and how we think like we think.
- The most famous verse in the Bible contains the word "whoever." This word indicates many different kinds of people are called to salvation. **John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**
- Occasionally, believers tend to forget what it was like to live outside the faith. It is important, as best we can, to not forget the feelings and perspectives of those who are where we used to be. It is difficult to communicate if we are "putting on a mask."
- John 4 contains a story about Jesus meeting a woman by a well. From this story we learn about the necessity to interact with those different from ourselves, and to recognize the attributes often required when we are attempting to communicate with others.

### Humility is required for God's love to flow through us

- John 4:4 says, "But He needed to go through Samaria."
- In Jesus' day, it was considered a great inconvenience – even a social taboo – for a Jew to travel through the district of Samaria.

- This is because the Samaritans had splintered off from the rest of the Jews through intermarriage with other races and adoption of pagan religious practices.
- Jesus did not allow those social practices and beliefs to deter Him from engaging in a conversation with someone considered “beneath” the Jews.

### **Inconvenience is required for God’s love to flow through us**

- **Matthew 5: 46-47 – For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?**
- The Samaritan woman was a person with a troubled past. She had been married numerous times and was currently living with a man to whom she was not married.
- It would have been more convenient for Jesus to travel around Samaria and never meet this woman who was considered offensive to most Jews.
- However, Jesus intentionally engaged these inconveniences in order to reach a lost person.

### **Patience is required for God’s love to flow through us**

- The conversation between Jesus and the woman in **John 4: 8-19** reveals the Samaritan woman did not initially understand *the reason for the conversation*. She thought they were talking about water. In reality, Jesus was talking about contentment and satisfaction for her troubled soul.
- The woman also was not initially aware of *who was talking to her*. **John 4:25-26 - The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”** Even though others may not recognize who you are (a child of God and someone who speaks truth) you must remember how you used to think and understand the world before you came to faith.
- Understanding truth – and recognizing God’s call – sometimes takes time. There is a transition that takes place between what we say, and what God will then say. **John 4:39 & 41 – And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of *the word of the woman who testified*, “He told me all that I ever did.” . . . And many more believed because of *His own word*.**
- Don’t hesitate to give your own testimony. Your spoken words might be used by God as the transition occurs from your story to His Word for the person.

### **A vision is required for God’s love to flow through us**

- When talking to others it is often effective to cast a vision of what life will be like in the future. A vision of a better future can be so compelling as to pull the

person out of his or her present, troubled mindset.

- Jesus supplied a vision for the Samaritan woman. **John 4: 21-24 – Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

### **Make yourself available**

- When talking to others, don't hesitate to show you understand their circumstances. Your personal, unedited, testimony can do this.
- Engaging with others - even those with whom we do not want to associate – may provide an entrance for them to the same contentment we have with Jesus. We are all part of the same “whosoever.” **John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whoever* believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**
- Make yourself available to be used by God to engage others, just as Jesus engaged the Samaritan woman by the well.
- Anticipate divine appointments God will make for you this week.

### **Reflective Questions for The Fourth Gospel – Part 3**

1. Have you ever had an experience where you had difficulty explaining your faith to someone who had a very different background from your own? How did you feel during that encounter? Looking back, is there anything you could have said differently to help the person better understand?
2. In this message, Ryan Leak said it requires humility, inconvenience, patience, and vision to successfully engage in this type of encounter. Could you have done better at employing any of those attributes in the above conversation?
3. Prayerfully consider humility, inconvenience, patience, and vision. Then, ask God to set appointments that allow you to meet those different from yourself, so you can explain what Jesus means to you.