



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Fourth Gospel – Part 4

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**Main Idea** – We cannot respond to what we do not see. We do not feel responsible for what we do not know. Jesus told His disciples to “open your eyes.” Likewise, we Christians should open our eyes to the things that are most important to God, and then act on what we see.

### The woman by the well

- As we know, Jesus often used normal, everyday interactions as metaphors for spiritual truths.
- John 4 contains a story about a conversation Jesus had with a Samaritan woman.
- During the conversation, the Samaritan woman was initially unaware of the spiritual truths Jesus was sharing with her.
- Jesus’ disciples were also unaware of the spiritual significance of what was happening around them at that moment.

### The disciples were preoccupied with their own, immediate tasks

- **John 4: 27-35 – 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. Meanwhile, his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. (NIV)**
- The reason none of the disciples asked Jesus what he needed, or why he was talking to the Samaritan woman (v. 27), was because they were preoccupied with their own tasks of bringing food from the nearby village.
- They were not concerned about what Jesus was concerned about; they had other things on their minds.
- When we become preoccupied with our own, immediate circumstances we are likely missing other important things that are going on around us.

## Nearsightedness

- We do not feel responsible for what we cannot see. We cannot respond to something about which we do not know.
- Nearsightedness is being able to see only what is directly in front of us.
- There is such a thing as spiritual nearsightedness, whereby we miss the spiritual circumstances all around us because we are not aware of their presence.
- In verse 35 Jesus told his disciples to “open your eyes” and notice what was happening at that moment. (People were in the process of coming to the Lord while the disciples were preoccupied with eating food.) Because of their spiritual nearsightedness they were missing the moment.
- Spiritual nearsightedness is missing the heart of the One we serve. We become distracted *and miss what God is actually distracted about.*

## By whom is God distracted?

- God is distracted by those who are lost. (In other words, God’s attention is continually drawn to the plight of those who do not believe in Jesus as their savior.)
- If God is distracted by the lost, what do our prayers to Him reveal about spiritual nearsightedness we may have? Spiritual nearsightedness is revealed by what we pray. What we pray about reveals if we have become distracted by something different from what God is distracted by.
- If we love God, we will love the ones He loves.

## Three-minute evangelism

- Leading someone to faith does not require deep Bible knowledge.
- Leading someone to faith is not about identifying his or her personal shortcomings or misperceptions about God.
- Here are Pastor Chris’ four steps to evangelism:
  1. Accept the personal responsibility that you are “the plan.” **Eph 3:10-11 – His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
  2. Develop a personal relationship with someone.
  3. Share your personal story about the difference Jesus has made in your life. This story is part of your testimony.
  4. Give a personal invitation to come to church. Set a goal to bring a non-believer to church two times a year (2 out of 52 weeks in a year.)

## Open your eyes

- Like the disciples, it is easy to become distracted by the circumstances of the physical world.
- Jesus may also be telling us to “open your eyes” to the harvest that is all around us.
- Opening our eyes will enable us to do God’s work that Jesus referenced in **John 4:34 – “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”**
- If we make ourselves aware of the spiritual circumstances around us, we will enable ourselves to be part of the vast spiritual harvest God has prepared on the earth.
- Being part of the work of the harvest will enable others to have the peace and joy we possess. **1 Thessalonians 4:13 – Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.**

## Reflective Questions for The Fourth Gospel – Part 4

1. Think of a circumstance where your preoccupation with something caused you to miss something else that was happening at that moment.
2. What did Chris Hodges mean when he said, “spiritual nearsightedness is revealed by what we pray”?
3. How might we adjust our prayers so that we become aware of the spiritual circumstances that are happening around us?
4. What did you like about Pastor Chris’ four evangelism steps? In order to use those steps yourself, is there anything you need to do to become ready to use them?