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## Lesson Overview

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**Biblical Passage** John 4:4-26

**Supporting Passage** John 4:1-42

**Memory Verse** John 7:38

**Biblical Truth** Through His Son Jesus, God offers grace to all people, even those some might consider as unworthy and unacceptable.

**Context** The Samaritans had a long history of conflict with the Jews. Although the Jews avoided the region, Jesus traveled through Samaria and met a woman there. To her, Jesus revealed for the first time that His salvation included the Gentiles.

**Learning Goals**

- Students will examine Jesus' offer of eternal life to the Gentiles.
- Students will evaluate their own willingness to share their faith in Jesus with those outside their faith.

**Prayer Suggestions**

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that students will know the grace that God so freely gives to all people.
- Pray that students will be active in sharing the grace that they have through Jesus Christ.
- Pray that students will share with someone this week what Christ has done in their lives.

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## Biblical Commentary

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### Investigation

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Because of conflict with the Samaritans, the Jews usually avoided the region of Samaria. The Jews would cross the Jordan River and travel along its eastern bank to avoid traveling through Samaria. Jesus, however, chose to travel through Samaria. There He met a woman at the town well. This encounter would have been astounding to Jews.

In His conversation with the woman, Jesus confronted the sin and pain in her life and offered her the gift of eternal life. Although the people in her community had found the woman unacceptable, Jesus offered her grace and forgiveness. John included the account as proof that God's love and salvation is not reserved for the Jews alone. Jesus talked with the woman about living water that brings eternal life, thus identifying Himself as Messiah.

### Importance

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The woman at the well quickly recognized that **People are God's Treasure**. She was astonished that Jesus was willing to talk to her, a Samaritan woman (v. 9). Secondly, she was amazed that He knew all about her (v. 19). As with the Samaritan woman, Jesus knows all about us, treasures us despite our sin and baggage, and is willing to communicate with us. This Scripture passage is important because it declares that through Christ God offers grace to all people, even those some might consider unworthy and unacceptable.

This passage also includes the key truth that **Salvation is by Faith Alone**.

### Interpretation

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**John 4:4-6** Jesus was making His way from **Judea** in the south to **Galilee** in the north. Between Judea and Galilee was an area called Samaria. **Samaritans** were members of a mixed race who were part Israelite and part Gentile. Racist feelings caused most Jews to take the long way around to the east through the Trans-Jordan.

Jesus, not bound by racial prejudice, chose to go through Samaria, where He had a divine appointment with a woman at Jacob's well in the city of Sychar. He was tired from His long journey. It was about noon, the sixth hour in Jewish time, and Jesus sat down to rest by the well.

**John 4:7-8** Why did this woman come alone to the well at noon? Most women came together in the cool of the early morning and used the time to socialize. Jesus' later revelations about this woman's rough life demonstrated a possible topic for gossip. So, although Scripture is not clear, she might have intentionally avoided being with other women.

It seems only natural today that Jesus, a hot and thirsty traveler, would request water from a woman drawing some for herself. But the request surprised her because of the cultural norms of her day. The disciples would have drawn the water had they not been buying food in town.

**John 4:9-10** Because of their racial and religious differences, Jews did not associate with Samaritans, which meant they definitely would not share cups. Drinking from her vessel would have meant ceremonial defilement for Jesus since He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan. The woman's surprise was warranted. Yet Jesus was more interested in changing the woman's heart than in following religious rules of the day. If the woman had only known who Jesus was, maybe her response would have been different. He then shifted the conversation from physical concerns to spiritual concerns. Jesus implied that because of who He is, He could give her a gift from God greater than ordinary water.

**John 4:11-12** The well's source was at its bottom. The woman assumed this was the "living water" to which Jesus referred. She wondered how Jesus could obtain this water since He had nothing to drop into the well. Jacob had dug the well for his family and descendants. Though the Old Testament does not tell us when Jacob dug the well, it probably happened around the events of Genesis 33:18-20. The well had provided refreshment and life-sustaining water for many generations. The woman likely doubted Jesus could provide greater refreshment than Jacob.

**John 4:13-15** As He often did, Jesus used a physical reality to illustrate a spiritual one. Physical water refreshes the body for only a little while; eventually, a person has to draw more. But Jesus spoke of water that would refresh the soul forever. His living water serves as a well of eternal life that springs up within every believer.

The woman had not yet understood. She could not follow the symbolism. But she was aware of her physical need for water. How wonderful it would be if she had "living water"! She would never have to come back to Jacob's well. The tables had turned, for she was now asking Him for a drink of water, just as Jesus had asked her earlier.

**John 4:16-18** In response to her request, Jesus asked her to call her husband. The request was proper because it was not considered good etiquette for a woman to talk to a man without her husband present. This was technically true, but Jesus knew the real story: She had been with five husbands in the past and was now living with another man who was not her husband. Jesus wanted her to admit that the cause of her spiritual thirst was **sin**. In order to accomplish this, Jesus confronted the woman with her past.

**John 4:19-24** The woman changed the subject to religion by bringing up an ongoing debate between the Jews and Samaritans about the proper place for **worshiping** God. Samaritans believed Mount Gerizim was the proper place to worship God, but the Jews believed **Jerusalem** was the correct location. The Samaritans followed the five books written by **Moses**, which did not establish a place of worship. The Samaritans, therefore, believed they could choose where they wanted to worship, so they chose Mount Gerizim. This tradition was passed down all the way to the time when the Samaritan woman brought it to Jesus' attention

Jesus would not be diverted. Instead of directly answering her question, He addressed the heart of the matter. When Jesus told her that "salvation is from the Jews," He meant that salvation has its origin in the Jews. He also explained that worship is not confined to a place, since God is Spirit. God desires worshipers who worship in spirit (absolute sincerity) and truth (absolute reality). Worship involves much more than location.

To worship God in truth, people must know who He is. He has revealed Himself through His Word. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, humans have a mixed-up view of God. But by His grace, people can worship Him in truth.

**John 4:25-26** The woman had some idea of who **Messiah** was supposed to be. She knew Messiah would reveal

all truth. But then Jesus declared Himself as that person. He normally did not make such a public claim. In fact, many times He had urged His disciples to keep His identity as the Messiah quiet. But in response to her statement, Jesus told her the truth about Himself. Jesus' words, "I . . . am he," literally translate as "**I AM**" in the Greek. The name God used for Himself when he spoke to Moses was "I am" (Ex. 3:14). Jesus' use of these words may have been a statement of His identity as God.

## Implications

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Some people make a mistake by saying, "My life is a mess right now. I'll trust in Christ when I clean it up." In reality, we cannot clean ourselves up; only Jesus can change us. Jesus did not tell the woman to clean up her life before she could experience His living water. He met the woman at her personal point of need and understanding. How has Jesus met you at your personal point of need? How has He changed your mind to better understand Him? How can you share this personal change with your students?

Some people may think that others are unworthy of God's grace because of their race, status, or past sins. None of those issues prevented Jesus from sharing the truth with the woman. No one is excluded from His offer of "living water." How can you help your students understand that **People are God's Treasure**, and are therefore worthy of hearing the gospel? Encourage your students to desire to become more like Jesus by sharing the Good News with people from all walks of life.

## Teaching Plan

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### Connect

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#### Review Questions: Nicodemus' Questions

*(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.*

*Print one copy of the "Review Questions" activity sheet for your use.*

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide the context for today's lesson.

#### Master Teacher Option: Asking Questions

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will identify the difficult questions they would like to ask God.*

*Provide paper, pens, a dry erase board, and marker.*

**Say: Have you ever thought about having an opportunity to ask God questions about anything.**

Divide students into groups of three or four and give each group a sheet of paper and a pen. Instruct students to work together to come up with a list of questions they would ask God if they had the chance. *(Possible questions: Why did You allow evil in the world? Why do You allow suffering? Did Adam have a belly button?)*

After two or three minutes, call for groups to share their responses, writing some of the questions on the board. Then, ask: **Do these questions make a difference in what you believe about God? Why?** After responses, share that, in today's lesson, learners will examine the conversation Jesus had with an unbeliever who had a lot of questions for Jesus.

### Explore

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#### Master Teacher Key Study: He is the Living Water

*(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will study John 4:4-22 to examine Jesus' offer of eternal life to the Gentiles.*

*Print one copy of the Master Teacher Key Study for your use. Also provide a copy of the Student Worksheet and a pen for each student.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will examine Jesus' offer of eternal life to the Gentiles.

Pass out pens and copies of the Student Worksheet. Then, use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach John 3:1-21.

## Transform

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### Deeper Discussion

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will evaluate their own willingness to share their faith in Jesus with those outside their faith.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will evaluate their own willingness to share their faith in Jesus with those outside their faith.

Use the following questions to lead students to evaluate their own willingness to share their faith in Jesus with those outside their faith:

- **What cultural or social boundaries in your school would prevent you from associating with people who are different from you in some way?**
- **Under what circumstances would you be willing to cross those boundaries to share Jesus with someone?**
- **How does Jesus' example of crossing all boundaries to meet someone's spiritual needs inspire you to do the same?**
- **How can meeting physical needs create opportunities to discuss spiritual needs?**

After discussion, point out that what often makes us hesitate to cross these boundaries is not recognizing the worth of those on the other side. Instruct students to picture in their minds someone they would be hesitant to approach. Then, lead students to think about that person's background and culture, what makes that person seem different to them, and what makes that person seem similar to them. Lead students in prayer that God will provide an opportunity for them to cross that boundary in a way that will let them begin to see these in a new light.

### Master Teacher Option: Comfort Zone

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will consider past experiences with people who were different in significant ways.*

*Provide paper and a pen for each student. Also, provide a dry erase board and marker.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will evaluate their own willingness to share their faith in Jesus with those outside their faith.

**Ask:** **What are the concerns you have that could cause you to be hesitant in sharing your faith**

**with people who are significantly different than you are?** List responses on the board (*which should include not feeling knowledgeable to answer questions about God and the Bible; being afraid of offending someone who believes differently; not understanding someone's background or culture so not sure how to even begin*). Share that one of the things that often keeps us from sharing our faith is just not knowing how to cross those boundaries that students considered earlier . . . cultural, social, gender, and racial.

Distribute paper and pens and instruct students to record two or three experiences they've had with people who are different from them in some way in which the subject of faith came up and whether the experience was positive or negative. After two or three minutes, invite one or two volunteers to share their experiences. Ask: **What made this a positive or negative experience?** Say: **Dealing with people who are different from us in some way can be frightening because they pull us out of our comfort zone.**

Lead students to consider how they can use their faith to begin to cross the boundaries that separate people from us. Then, explain that God sent us into the world precisely for this purpose: to move us out of comfort zones and into faith in Him. Divide students into groups of two or three. Encourage students to share with each other one of the experiences they recorded, and then to pray for each other to be willing to step out of their comfort zone to share their faith with others.

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## Take Home Activity

### Family Devotion

*(10-15 minutes at home, easy set-up)*

*Distribute copies of the Family Devotion to students and encourage them to share the devotion with their family.*

A copy of the Family Devotion will be included in your lesson PDF download.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Use these questions to review the content from Lesson 11: "Nicodemus' Questions."  
The correct answer for each question is printed in bold, italic font.

1. Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council, was a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Sadducee
  - b. Pharisee**
  - c. Zealot
  - d. Roman Centurion
2. When did Nicodemus go to Jesus?
  - a. At noon
  - b. Early in the morning
  - c. At night**
  - d. During the afternoon
3. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus that he found difficult to understand?
  - a. He must not follow the laws of God in order to be saved.
  - b. He must be born again.**
  - c. He must give all of his possessions to the poor.
  - d. He must be able to recite the Ten Commandments.
4. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit \_\_\_\_\_."
  - a. gives birth to spirit**
  - b. gives birth to a new flesh
  - c. gives birth to sin
  - d. gives birth to eternal life
5. Jesus told Nicodemus that God loved the world so much that He \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. decided to save it
  - b. pardoned the sins of all
  - c. gave abundant life to all
  - d. gave His only Son**

## HE IS THE LIVING WATER

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

**Introduction:** Many things separate people from each other: race, social status, language, and gender. Yet only one thing separates people from God—sin. And only One reconciles people to God—Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus crossed human divides to bring about our reconciliation to God. By doing so, He alone is able to quench the ultimate thirst in our lives.

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### 1. Jesus reaches beyond boundaries to offer salvation to all peoples (John 4:4–9).

**Description:** Jesus does not limit salvation to select people. Salvation is available to all regardless of geography, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, or any other boundary. In His encounter with this woman, Jesus crossed geographical boundaries to meet her, social boundaries by speaking to a woman, and ethnic boundaries because she was a Samaritan (vv. 4-9).

**Illustration:** In the movie *Finding Nemo*, a clownfish father loses his son, Nemo. The entire plot of the movie involved the father traveling through all kinds of physical boundaries while encountering dangerous circumstances in order to find his son. Because **People are God's Treasure**, Jesus crossed all boundaries to emphasize that salvation through faith in Him is available to all people.

**Application:** It can be easier and more comfortable to share the gospel with some people more than others. Salvation, however, is not reserved for certain people. Like Christ, we must willingly cross boundaries to share the gospel with all peoples of the world.

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### 2. Jesus identifies our need for Him in our lives (John 4:10–18).

**Description:** Jesus first used the metaphor of water to draw this woman into a spiritual evaluation of her life as dry and in need of eternal life (v. 10). Jesus then noted her social situation in life, bringing to light her need for forgiveness and restoration (vv. 11–15).

**Illustration:** If you were to start a new training regimen, you would begin with a medical check-up to make sure you're healthy enough to train. Then, you'd work with a physical trainer who would create a plan for you that would, based on your goals, help you get into shape physically and mentally. Finally, there's a good chance you'd meet with a nutritionist to help you eat correctly to provide the fuel your body needs to train effectively. Each member of your team helps you identify your personal needs and provides the information you need in order to move forward in your training.

**Application:** Jesus focused on the woman's needs, both spiritual and physical, and then gave her the information she needed to change her life. Likewise, Jesus understands our needs and helps us find our solutions in Him.

### 3. Jesus reveals Himself as the Messiah who is truth and salvation (John 4:19–26).

**Description:** Jesus confronted the woman's sin that she had tried to keep hidden (vv. 16-18). In response, she tried to use religious arguments to avoid facing her real need (vv. 19-20). Yet, Jesus dismissed her arguments with spiritual truths (vv. 21-24). She had heard of the Messiah and believed that He knew all truth. She knew of the Messiah, but Jesus offered her something more: the knowledge of knowing the Messiah personally (vv. 25-26).

**Illustration:** The *Twilight* book series has gained popularity and readers across the United States. Readers have fallen in love with these characters. The problem is that these characters are not real. Knowing about these characters from reading a book cannot replace an actual relationship. The same principle applies to knowing Jesus.

**Application:** Many people in the world have heard of Jesus and know a lot about Him. Other people know that there's some type of God that exists but is unsure of who He is. Knowing about Jesus and God is not the same as having a relationship with Christ. Salvation in Christ comes from having a relationship with Him.

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**Conclusion:** The woman's experience with Jesus did not end at the well. She returned to her village a changed person and shared what Jesus had done for her (vv. 28–30). Many in her village came to believe in Jesus as the Christ because of her testimony (vv. 39–42). Her life-changing encounter with Christ demonstrated that God offers grace to people of all backgrounds, groups, and languages, even to those we might consider unworthy and unacceptable.

# LESSON 12

## HE IS THE LIVING WATER

**CHRISTOS**  
STUDENT EDITION

**Biblical Passage:** John 4:4-26

**Memory Verse:** John 7:38

“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

1. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ beyond \_\_\_\_\_ to offer salvation to all peoples (John 4:4–9).
2. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ for Him in our lives (John 4:10–18).
3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Himself as the \_\_\_\_\_ who is truth and salvation (John 4:19–26).

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What cultural or social boundaries in your school would prevent you from associating with people who are different from you in some way?
- Under what circumstances would you be willing to cross those boundaries to share Jesus with someone?
- How does Jesus’ example of crossing all boundaries to meet someone’s spiritual needs inspire you to do the same?
- How can meeting physical needs create opportunities to discuss spiritual needs?

### OPPOSITES

*Identify how Jesus and the Samaritan woman were opposites morally, culturally, spiritually, and racially.*

**JEW**

**SAMARITAN**

**MAN**

**WOMAN**

**SINLESS**

**IMMORAL**

**MESSIAH**

**ETERNALLY LOST**

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT . . .

“Christ is not a reservoir but a spring. His life is continual, active and ever passing on with an outflow as necessary as its inflow. If we do not perpetually draw the fresh supply from the living Fountain, we shall either grow stagnant or empty. It is, therefore, not so much a perpetual fullness as a perpetual filling.”—*A.B. Simpson*

# LESSON 12

## HE IS THE LIVING WATER

**Biblical Passage:** John 4:4-26

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In this age of international travel, living abroad, the Internet, and instant worldwide communication, people today live and work with people from all over the world. Where previous generations may have lived their whole lives among people from their own country, or even community, today's adults and teens frequently interact with people who are very different from themselves. Of course, living in the age of "tolerance" is both good and bad. Perhaps God is creating awareness among today's generation that His plan includes the redemption of people from all nations, and all walks of life.

Read John 4:4-26. This, along with Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan, is one of the most graphic illustrations of Jesus' concern for the salvation of all people. The Jews hated the Samaritans, and had little regard for women in their own culture. Jesus defied both types of prejudice by speaking openly to a Samaritan woman in the middle of the day—alone. Jesus would not allow the cultural dictates of that day to prevent Him from offering salvation to any person who would believe in Him. Laying aside all judgments and prejudices, Jesus revealed that the woman at the well had value to Him and He wanted her to know this. Because He was and is Lord of all creation, His actions clearly communicated to His followers that ALL people are precious in His sight.

As a family, discuss the diversity of people currently living in your community, schools, and workplaces. Encourage each other to befriend someone of another nationality. Also, remind them that in knowing Christ, they have much to offer people who follow other religious traditions. Emphasize that because believers know the God of all creation, they have the privilege and responsibility of sharing Him with others—even those who come from different racial, religious, cultural, and socioeconomic groups.

### CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

- Why did Jesus seek out and speak with this Samaritan woman in the middle of the day?
- How did Jesus' actions in this situation demonstrate that God offers salvation to all people?
- How would you describe Jesus' message to the Samaritan woman in just one sentence?
- How frequently do we interact with people who are different from us? If God made people to be different in this world, what do you think His plans are for all people?
- How can we work to bring different people into our circle of friends who need to know Christ? What risks should we be willing to take in order to include them?