

3

Getting People Interested

John 4:4-30



“Evangelism is not the imposition of a point of view but the overflow of a thankful heart.”*

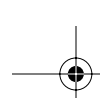
Christians sometimes communicate their faith as if they are sales people trying to sell a product. But evangelism is not employing a super sales strategy. Why? Because the gospel is not for sale! It is a free gift of grace for those who will accept it. We are called to *expose* our faith in the most winsome way possible—not impose it.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What kinds of people make you feel they’d never be interested in the gospel?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What are specific skills you need to develop to become a better communicator of the gospel?

Have you ever met a person and instantly concluded, “Oh, they’d never be interested in the gospel,” only to discover later how wrong you were? If you have, then you’re in good company. The disciples crossed the Samaritan woman off their list because a mere glance betrayed her immoral life and her Samaritan racial characteristics. But Jesus shows us that we must never look at a person superficially. Instead, we should ask ourselves, *Why are they doing what they do?*





18 ————— *Evangelism*

Are they looking for the right thing but in all the wrong places? If that is the case, then the real challenge before us is how to arouse their curiosity in the gospel. Read John 4:4-30.

1. While Jesus is resting from his journey, a Samaritan woman approaches at “the sixth hour” (noon). Why would she come to draw water at the hottest time of the day (vv. 6-7)?

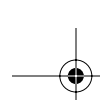
2. The Jews had high standards of righteousness that they thought their rabbis should live up to. How does Jesus arouse the woman’s curiosity by taking the risk of talking to her?

3. Instead of telling her right away who he was, Jesus began by asking the woman for a favor (v. 7). How has an unbeliever surprised you by meeting your needs?

4. Why does Jesus’ use the phrase “living water” when he knows she won’t fully comprehend his meaning (vv. 11-15)?

5. Why, just at this strategic moment when the women says she’ll take this water he is offering, does Jesus delve into her personal life (vv. 16-18)?





Getting People Interested ————— 19

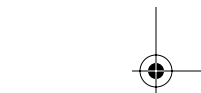
6. What relationships do you now see between the “thirst” Jesus has been speaking of and the woman’s immoral past?

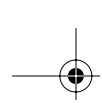
7. Think of seekers you know. In what ways do they indicate they are spiritually thirsty?

How can you show them the way the gospel can meet their needs without being judgmental or manipulative? (Note that even though Jesus speaks frankly about the woman’s morals, she does not respond defensively.)

8. The Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim, the Jews in Jerusalem. How does Jesus deal with the woman’s “red herring” in verses 19-24?

9. Why does Jesus wait until the end of the conversation to reveal who he is (vv. 25-26)?





10. How do verses 28-30 reveal the woman's excitement about her conversation with Jesus?

11. Look back over the passage. What are the ways Jesus aroused the woman's interest in the good news?

12. How can we use objects, ideas, experiences and needs people are familiar with to arouse interest in spiritual truths? Give some specific examples of how you might arouse someone's interest in the gospel.

Ask God to open your eyes and help you see "beneath the crust" of the lives of the seekers you know. Pray that he will help you recognize their God-hunger and make you more effective in being a "fisher" not a "hunter" of people.

Now or Later

Ask the Lord to show you who the spiritually receptive people are in your life right now. Invite one person to do something socially with you this week. Then, if you feel led, throw out a comment or two about spiritual things, see how they respond and go from there.

*Donald G. Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 244.

