**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Expect the Unexpected**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. ([Proverbs 3:5–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Pr3.5-6))

*We all make plans—plans for where we’re going and what we want to do. But life is more often a story of unexpected interruptions. Our faith helps us to recognize God’s hand at work in unanticipated ways. By faith we learn to embrace life’s interruptions as the place God so often does miraculous things. We learn to respond with compassion and faith when things seem impossible.*

**Session Overview**

**Allow for Redirection**

**Biblical Encounter:** A Woman’s Life Is Changed at a Well ([John 4:5–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn4.5-30))

**Outcome:** Welcome God’s radical redirection of your life story.

*In this session, we explore an encounter Jesus had with a woman who had a shameful past. Her arrival time at the well likely points to her trying to avoid other women from her town. Yet a Jewish man, someone who normally would be even less likely to talk to her, stepped into her situation. Through their conversation, the woman learned who Jesus is and couldn’t wait to tell others about Him. The woman’s life was radically redirected from avoiding other villagers to telling her entire village about Jesus.*

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Two blindfolds* *•* ***Group Activity Game Page*** *• Scissors* *• Open space for the activity****Getting Ready*** *• Print the* ***Group Activity Game Page*** *and cut apart the instruction lists.* • ***First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Pray for your pastor, church, and the students who’ve gathered for today’s discussion. Ask God to bless other groups that are meeting to discuss the Bible. Pray for a great discussion and that everyone present will be challenged in their walk with Jesus.*

**Introduction**

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| **QUESTION**Who is the one person that has made the greatest impact on your life? How has that person affected you? |

Have you ever wanted to reboot your life? When your phone or computer is acting up or not working, you reboot or reset it. Like our devices, we sometimes want a reset. Today, I want to introduce you to a woman from the Bible who had something like that. She had a long conversation with Jesus at a well while she collected water for the day. This one encounter literally changed her life, as we’ll see. So, how did this all go down? We’ll get to that, but first, let’s have a bit of fun with this activity.

**Group Activity**

**Redirection**

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Two blindfolds* *•* ***Group Activity Game Page*** *• Scissors* *• Open space for the activity****Getting Ready*** *• Print the* ***Group Activity Game Page*** *and cut apart the instruction lists.* |

We’re going to play a game called Redirection. I need six people for this game, three guys and three girls. We’ll play guys versus girls.

• *Choose volunteers. Then assign roles as you read the following.*

One person from each team will be the Target and stand at the other end of the room. The second person from each team will put on a blindfold and stand at the opposite end of the room.

The third team member, the Caller, will read a series of instructions, one at a time. Each instruction will give a specific direction for the blindfolded team member to follow. For example, the Caller might say, “Two steps to the right.” The blindfolded team member would then follow the instruction of their team’s Caller~~.~~

Once during the list of ten instructions, the Caller can yell out, “Redirect.” This allows the Caller to change the direction of the instruction but not the number of steps. For example, the Caller might redirect the blindfolded person to go left instead of right. The Redirect instruction can help the blindfolded team member move closer to the Target. The Caller must yell out, “Redirect” prior to changing the direction.

The team that is closer to their Target after following all of the instructions or is first to touch the Target member, is the winner. Let’s play.

• *Callers must wait until the previous instruction has been carried out before reading the next instruction.*

• *When all instructions on a list have been read, the two Callers exchange instruction lists and read the second set for their team.*

• *Determine the winning team.*

Life can feel like this game for many of us. In the midst of following directions, we often encounter changes or redirections that change the outcome. We might feel like we’re heading in the right direction, then something changes. At times, this can be frustrating for us. The same can be said about following Jesus’ instructions for our life. We’re taking steps to go one way only to have Him call out a change.

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| **QUESTION**What are some reasons Jesus may change the direction of our life? |

Those are good thoughts. We’ll explore this more, but now, let’s change direction a bit and watch this video before moving on in our discussion.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

Our Bible story happened when Jesus and the disciples were on a journey. Remember, there were no fast-food chains along the road back in Bible times. Neither were there water fountains or places to buy bottled water. Travelers often had to get water from wells. Jesus’ disciples had gone into town, and He was resting at a well when a woman approached. Their encounter is the longest recorded conversation between Jesus and another person in the Bible. Perhaps you’ve had a conversation with someone that has changed your life. If so, you’ll understand our story.

**A Samaritan Woman’s Encounter with Jesus**

Read [John 4:5–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn4.5-12).

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think Jesus chose not to go into town with His disciples? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think the woman was feeling at this point about this encounter with a Man she didn’t know? |

Many times, people wanted to be around Jesus. They often approached Him or asked Him questions. But this woman seemed to want little to do with Him. That’s quite a change from other conversations we read that people had with Jesus. Maybe that’s because there are a few things different about this encounter. First, men and women usually didn’t have conversations in public like this. So, it looked bad for a woman to speak with a man she didn’t know. Second, Jesus was a Jew, and the woman was a Samaritan. Most Jews and Samaritans didn’t get along with each other.

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever started a conversation with someone who seemed like they didn’t want to talk with you? |

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| **QUESTION**At what point do you see Jesus changing the direction of the conversation? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Jesus meant by “living water”? |

The woman seemed shocked that Jesus was speaking to her and asked for a drink. She even pointed out to Him why He couldn’t get any water after His offer of living water. She even questioned who He thought He was by asking Him if He was greater than the man who first dug the well. You may remember Jacob from the Old Testament. He was the son of Isaac and the father of Joseph.

**Did You Know?**

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| Water wells served as some of the most important fixtures throughout the three thousand years that encompass the narratives of the children of Abraham in Israel. This Promised Land God gave to the Israelites had hard ground with little natural water. So, the people relied heavily on God for the rains to fill their wells. Because water was scarce, wells became sources of power and control in the land. If someone were denied access to a well, they could be denied life itself. |

**The Woman Asked for Living Water**

Read [John 4:13–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn4.13-20).

The woman’s attitude toward Jesus seems to have changed by this point. Earlier she questioned His offer of water. By this time, she’s asking for it!

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| **QUESTION**Do you think the woman fully understood what Jesus meant by living water when she asked for it in verse [15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn4.15)? What makes you say this? |

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| **QUESTION**At what point does the conversation get more intense between Jesus and the woman? |

Surprisingly, Jesus addressed things about her personal life He shouldn’t have known. He knew she’d had five husbands and was now unmarried and living with a different guy.

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| **QUESTION**How do you think this woman felt, knowing that Jesus knew about her past? |

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| **QUESTION**How did the woman change the subject? Why do you think she did this? |

This woman had come to the well alone because she probably wanted to avoid the other women in town. She got water when no one else was usually around. What a lonely way to live! Then she asked Jesus for living water. Maybe she simply didn’t want to have to go to the well anymore. But doing so only opened the door to her current situation in life. She probably wanted to avoid that topic, but Jesus used it to continue their conversation and help her find a new way of living her life.

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever felt God speaking to you about a personal issue from your past? |

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| **QUESTION**Why does He address these personal issues with us? |

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever tried to change the subject when you felt God was addressing something in your life? Why? |

* *You may want to have an example to share from your life to help get the group started.*

**The Woman Learned Jesus’ True Identity**

Read [John 4:21–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn4.21-30).

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| **QUESTION**What did the woman already know about the Messiah? |

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| **QUESTION**What was the woman’s response when Jesus told her He was the Messiah? |

The conversation continued back and forth between Jesus and the woman. Jesus revealed who He is. This is such a great story of redirection. She went to tell the people she had been trying to avoid. Though she had a bad reputation, her encounter with Jesus changed her outlook on life. Can the same be said about us after meeting Jesus?

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| **QUESTION**What was your response to discovering that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of the world? |

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| **QUESTION**Who was the first person you told about Jesus after meeting Him? |

**Reflect**

**Welcome God’s radical redirection of your life story.**

What an incredible story! Here was a woman who had a bad reputation. She probably spent most of her day living away from interaction with other women. Then, Jesus chose to reveal His identity as Messiah to her. This was news most people in that part of the world were waiting for. But He said it to *her*.

Regardless of your past, Jesus can change your life. It’s up to you and me to pay attention as He offers redirection. What’s amazing about our relationship with Jesus is that He always wants to redirect our life for the better. We never get to the point of having a perfect life here on earth. We will continue to grow as we embrace Him and the conversations He wants to have with us about our life.

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

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| **QUESTION**Is there an area of your life that Jesus wants to redirect? |

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| **QUESTION**How can others help you embrace the change Jesus wants to do in you? |

**Activate**

It’s one thing to discuss these Bible stories, but quite another to live them out. Let’s all do our best to have a lengthy conversation with Jesus this week. Let’s make some time for Him, and let Him speak into our life. Make a decision to embrace Jesus by allowing Him to redirect your life story into one that affects people around you.

**Conclusion**

Jesus is more than willing to have conversations with us. For some, we may only talk with Him when we need something big in life. But Jesus desires to speak into our life. This can happen when we’re open to change. Let’s embrace the idea of being redirected by our loving Father God, who truly cares about the rejection and pain of our past. He wants us to live to our potential in the days ahead. There’s much to learn from this encounter. No matter how others see you or the life you’ve lived, Jesus wants to have a conversation with you that will change your life.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*The woman’s life was changed as a result of this encounter. In the same way, Jesus longs for you to experience this living water. He wants to be your Savior, just as He was for this woman and many others from her village. The question is whether you are ready to embrace His love and forgiveness.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Prayer**

Jesus, thank You for Your goodness. We saw this in the story we just talked about. You made time for someone who was probably lonely and had gone through several bad relationships in life. And You brought change to her life. Help us to embrace You as You help to redirect our life, too. And help those who are struggling in life. Help them to find You. Amen.

**Dismissal**

Make sure you open the Bible Engagement Project app this week. Let’s all do our very best to do at least one devotion this week. Next time, I’m going to ask how many were able to. I’m already looking to seeing each of you next time!