

October 22, 2023

Gamers: Lessons from Minecraft and Tetris (John 4)

Enjoy creativity and think strategically with Jesus.

Warmup: What travel experience turned out far better than you expected? What made the trip so memorable?

READ John 4:1-42

- Why did Jesus leave Judea?
- What is the conflict between the Jews and Samaritans? (Read the historical cultural notes for John 4 on page 2)
- What is God saying to you in these verses?

REFLECT

- Why was traveling through Samaria strategically important for Jesus and the disciples?
- Like the Jews in this narrative, have you found yourself avoiding certain places so that you can remain comfortable? Jesus was intentional in teaching his disciples evangelism strategy; what evangelism strategy is Jesus asking you to try?
- How does what Jesus is teaching you in these verses line up with your life?

RESPOND

- How will you make a difference this month by impacting those society tends to overlook?
- Spend five minutes in prayer with your breakout group, listen to the Holy Spirit, and discern God's heart for your "next steps" in reaching out to those in your community who do not know Jesus, or who need encouragement. Decide on an action step and invite another person in your Life Group to join you.
- How is the Spirit leading you to respond this week?

Historical Cultural Context of John 4

In Jesus' day, three regions were stacked on top of one another. There was Galilee in the north, Samaria in the middle, and Judea in the south. The easiest and quickest way to get to Galilee from Judea was to go due north right through Samaria. John 4:4 says that Jesus "had to" go through Samaria. Now, why did he have to do that? The answer, He didn't. There was another route he could have taken. Some pious Jews would go east, cross the Jordan River, enter the region of Perea, then go north, re-cross the Jordan River, and they would be in Galilee. This was out of the way but meant they wouldn't have to go encounter any Samaritans.

A little history will help us at this point. The Jews and the Samaritans intensely disliked each other. This enmity goes back to 722 B.C. when the Assyrians conquered Israel and took the northern ten tribes into captivity. They brought in Gentiles from other areas to settle in that same region. Eventually the Gentiles with their pagan ways intermarried with the Jews who had been left behind. As a result of interracial marriage, they were no longer considered Jews, they were called Samaritans, and they developed their own religion, partly based on pagan ideas and partly on Judaism. The mixed race of Samaritans was impure in the opinion of Jews who lived in the southern kingdom; they felt their fellow Jews had betrayed their people and nation. As a result, most Jews would do whatever they could to avoid Samaria.

When Jesus purposely walked into Samaria, he was intentionally dismantling cultural barriers, revealing to His disciples that God's love and salvation, was for Jew and Gentile. Every detail of this narrative is the working of God's will, that the message of salvation is for everyone. In His divine appointment with the woman at the well, Jesus invites the woman to repent and follow him. The outcome of this one divine appointment affects the entire region.