

Within Arm's Reach

John 4:1-30,39-42

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / February 18, 2024

I. From cover to cover, your Bible upholds the value of every person that was ever created!

- A. From the very beginning, God's Word shows us why every person's life is valuable (Genesis 1:26-27).
- B. Old Testament laws upheld the dignity of foreigners, widows, orphans, laborers and the poor (Exodus 22:22-25; Leviticus 19:9-10, 34)
- C. The prophets of old taught people to value every human being (Isaiah 10:1-2; 58:6-8).
- D. The Gospels are filled with accounts of Jesus demonstrating what it means to love all people as image-bearers of God (Matthew 25:35-36; Luke 14:12-14).
- E. The Bible speaks to the value of human life while in the womb (Luke 1:15, 39-44).
- F. The very last chapter of the Bible shows how God sees and cares for all of us (Revelation 21:3-4).

II. You need to approach the Bible with humility, especially if you've read it multiple times.

- A. What do we know about the Samaritan woman at the well?
 - 1. She chooses to go at a time of day when she'd likely be alone (John 4:6).
 - 2. Throughout her conversation with Jesus, she's thinking about her earthly life and needs, and Christ is thinking about her eternal life and greater need.
 - 3. Although she's not currently married, she has been married five times (John 4:18).
 - 4. She "has" a man who is not her husband (John 4:18).
- B. What should we wonder or notice about the Samaritan woman at the well?
 - 1. We should wonder how it came about that she had five husbands (John 4:18).
 - 2. We should wonder what Jesus meant when He said "...and the one you now have is not your husband." (John 4:18).
 - 3. We should wonder why Jesus never calls her to repent, or tells her to "sin no more" as He usually does (John 5:14; 8:11).
 - 4. We should wonder why the townspeople immediately believed the woman and went to see Jesus (John 4:29-30).

5. We should wonder why the townspeople believed in Jesus specifically because of the woman's testimony (John 4:39).

III. You need to know you live side-by-side with modern-day "Samaritan" women & men.

"...a full three-quarters of our interviewees know someone personally who has had an abortion. Many shared stories of mothers, daughters, cousins, friends, people from church, neighbors, or classmates..." (Tricia Bruce, PhD. "How Americans Understand Abortion." University of Notre Dame. 2020)

"One out of every six churchgoers in the United States has had, paid for, or encouraged an abortion..." (Survey on Adult Churchgoers on Social Issues and Worldview).

IV. You need to approach people with humility and compassion, and not assume you know their story.

- A. We should never think that life circumstances will remove the guilt of sin.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."

Romans 6:23a "For the wages of sin is death..."

- B. We should never think that life circumstances preclude anyone from the healing, hope, and help that can only be found in Christ through the Gospel!

Romans 3:23-25 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

V. What Christ has done will always matter more than what you have done!

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 "From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. **We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.**"

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion

1. Pastor Peter said “Every single person has the image of God ‘stamped’ on them, and that’s what gives them dignity and worth.” How does that impact your view of others? How does that impact your view of yourself?
2. When you have struggled to love someone, or see their inherent, God-given dignity?
3. How have you seen the Lord redeem brokenness or dire circumstances in your life?
4. When are you most tempted to think, “Yeah, but this is different,” and ignore what God is saying in James 1:20?
5. How might God be calling you to step out of your comfort zone to restore the God-given dignity of another person?