

The Holy Spirit and Worship

Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one person or thing you are a huge fan of?
2. Do you like to sing?

Read the following passage: John 4:4-26.

Jesus's conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well is the kind of conversation that never should have happened. John's narrative makes it clear that Jesus was crossing ethnic barriers, religious barriers, gender barriers, and, in the eyes of any outside observers, moral barriers. Why did Jesus do this? John's telling of the story reveals several important themes. Jesus came to this woman to show her his identity as the Messiah, to give her the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to empower her to be a true worshiper. "...a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Interactions like the one recorded in John 4 scandalized the religious leaders who watched what Jesus said and did. Although no religious leaders were present to observe this interaction, Jesus's disciples were certainly surprised when they returned and saw him talking with a Samaritan woman. Why do you think Jesus did these kinds of things, and why do you think John, a Jewish man, recorded it? What are some things we can learn from Jesus's example?
2. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that the Holy Spirit is a "gift of God." Do you have a genuine awareness of the grace of God in your life? Explain. Do you expect God to graciously meet you with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? Explain.
3. Why was the temple important to Jews and Samaritans? How did worship change after Pentecost?
4. Read Psalm 73. Describe some ways our "worship" impacts how we see the world and understand our experiences. Can you think of things you have idolized in your life which have impacted how you're processing your experiences? Read Luke 14:26. What is Jesus getting at in this verse and how does it relate to worship?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18. What is one way we experience transformation? How does this relate to worship? When you worship, do you find it difficult to focus on Jesus rather than yourself or other people? Explain.

6. Explain the sense in which we can say that Jesus has the life that we're all looking for. (Consider, for example, John 15:9-12.) How does this connect to your own life?
7. Read Philippians 1:18b-26. What was the key to Paul's experience of freedom (even while in prison!)? Explain the connection between what we worship and our experience of freedom. How might the things we worship cause us to live with greater anxiety?
8. What does it mean to worship "in the Spirit and in truth"? What are some ways this might be expressed?

Pray