



Week 11: John 7-9

Study Guide for the week of March 9-15

Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with John 8:1-11.

The religious leaders are once again attempting to catch Jesus in an unwinnable situation: either condemn a woman to death for the sin of adultery which only the Romans could do, or violate the Law of Moses. Problem is, they have already broken the Law of Moses themselves by bringing only the woman to Jesus, and not the man also (remember, it takes two to be caught in the act of adultery!). Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you self-righteously condemned another rather than checking your own heart and life?

Jesus knelt down and wrote something in the dust which leads scholars to speculate on what he was writing; maybe a list of the hidden sins of the leaders standing around him demanding the death penalty for the woman? If Jesus were writing down your sins, what would you see taking shape in the dust? Does that change your feelings toward others “caught” in “public” sin? Why or why not?

Jesus’ wise response to his persistent questioners caused them to drop their rocks and leave, the eldest first, followed by the younger. Why do you think the elders left first? Have you grown in faith as you’ve grown in years and experience?

Jesus saved the woman’s life, an act of grace, but didn’t want her to remain in her sinful ways, and urged her to change and “sin no more.” Confession and repentance mean a change in one’s heart and life. We cannot earn grace, but we respond to the gift of grace by making an effort (again with God’s grace) to walk as Jesus commands us to walk. Jesus offers grace and forgiveness to you. Where is he telling you to “sin no more”? Have you decided to tap into God’s grace and make the effort to change?

Spend time each day this week confessing your sins. Consider using Ps 51 as a tool in your confession. After confessing, read 1 John 1:9 and know God will forgive your sins. Then ask for God’s strength to change your heart and life so you may “go and sin no more.” (John 8:11)

Discussion starters

1. How do you test whether or not someone is telling the truth? Do you check Consumer Reports, the Better Business Bureau, friends, references? Make a list of the sources you trust to tell you the truth. How do you know religious leaders are telling the truth? This question was important during Jesus’ time (and throughout the ages) – reread John 7:14-18. What is Jesus’ answer to the question, “How do I test the truth claims of a religious leader?”
2. Jesus faced many people who were opposed to or skeptical of him, yet others believed. Reread John 7:31 for one very pragmatic reason people offered for their belief. What practical reasons can you think of for believing in Jesus? Is there someone in your life who would be interested to know those practical reasons for your belief? How could you share with them?
3. Jesus called himself the light of the world (John 8:12). Read Exodus 13:17-22 and Ex 14:19-24. What three functions did the pillar of light fill for Israel? Does Jesus fill these roles in your life?

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4. Freedom is a deeply cherished value in our society; we often understand it as freedom “from” someone or something. What “freedoms from” have you experienced as a follower of Jesus? Being “freed from” allows us as Christians to be freed “for.” Read 1 John 4:19 and Eph 2:8-9 and discuss what we have been “freed for.”
5. Reread John 9 aloud, assigning different people to read the parts of: Jesus, the disciples, the blind man, the blind man’s parents, the neighbors and crowd, the Pharisees, and the narrator. Have fun and put some expression into the reading – remember, the Bible is a best-seller with blockbuster stories! After you’ve read the chapter, discuss the increasing and decreasing blindness of the various characters in the story. Now trace the growth of the faith of the blind man through the story.

Bible verse to memorize: John 8:12