

## **Mission Of Christ** **Lesson 4 – Jesus’ Interaction with Others**

### **Instructions for the Coach:**

#### **General Instructions:**

As in the first three lessons, this lesson on the Interaction of Jesus with Others is intended to be a discussion oriented lesson where instruction is provided through group participation. As a coach, you will be facilitating the discussion.

#### **Opening the Discussion:**

We are now at the last of our four part series looking at the mission of Christ. This discussions session has the potential to be very lively and interesting. It may cause you to contemplate the work and life of Christ in a whole new way.

As you lead the discussion, it will be helpful for the group to get meaning by contrasting Jesus reaction from one type of people to another. It will also be helpful to contrast to the way most folks in the society at that time would have treated that same group of folks. Take for example women. In the Gospel of John, Jesus has numerous encounters with women (Jesus’ Mother John 2:1-11, Samaritan Woman John 4:1-42, Adultrous woman John 8:1-11, Mary and Martha John 11:17-37, Woman with Perfume John 12:1, Jesus’ mother again John 19:25-27) You may want to contrast how Jesus interacted with these women and how the culture would have dealt with them. Women were treated as second class citizens, not very respected. You can make similar contrast with other groups such as the disabled and foreigners. The opposite contrast should be made with his dealing with religious leaders (Pharisees and “the Jews”)

Also interesting are some exceptions that may seem to defy a trend of Jesus only dealing with social outcasts. For example, Jesus does not seem to treat Nicodemus who comes to Jesus privately with the same fiery defiance that he confronts the other groups of Pharisees who reject Jesus. Also in John 4:43-54, Jesus has a positive encounter with a royal official and in other gospels with Roman leaders. The last interesting contrast is to consider how Jesus reacted to the religious leaders and Roman officials that unjustly sentenced him to death. These are all complex relationships and should make for interesting discussion.

#### **Completing the Discussion:**

As you complete your discussion time, be sure to reflect on how your observations of Jesus’ interaction with others can help give direction to house church outreach and missional focus.

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### 1. Grasp the Issue:

#### Focus:

Jesus lived his life in a relatively small geographical sphere. However, in the scriptures it is obvious that he encountered a large variety of individuals during his ministry. We can learn a lot from these interactions.

This lesson will focus on the interaction between Jesus and those he came into contact with. Sometimes he was loving and tender and at other times he was very harsh. Are there trends or patterns in scripture as to the kinds of folks he spent time with and how he interacted with them? Jesus encountered poor people and rich people. He talked with religious folks and sinners. He also walked among common fishermen and military leaders. He ministered to men, women and children. Did he say the same things to each group of people? Did he treat them all the same?

These are the kinds of questions we hope to address in this lesson. The topic is to look at how Jesus interacted with others. We hope this lesson will round out our understanding of Jesus’ mission on earth. As always, it is our intent that these insights will be influential for you as you mentor your house church.

**Sound Bites:** (These are statements that may or may not reflect biblical truth, but represent a variety of common statements you may here in our culture on the topic. The purpose is to get you thinking about the lesson topic.)

- For centuries the leaders of Christian thought spoke of women as a necessary evil, and the greatest saints of the Church are those who despise women the most.  
Annie Besant
- “When Jesus Christ asked little children to come to him, he didn't say only rich children, or White children, or children with two-parent families, or children who didn't have a mental or physical handicap. He said, "Let all children come unto me.”  
Marian Wright Edelman
- “In a time and place where women were not even "second-class citizens", Jesus showed an extraordinary sympathy and respect for women.”  
Liberal Christian website
- We send missionaries to China so the Chinese can get to heaven, but we won't let them into our country.  
Peal S. Buck

# HOUSE CHURCH

- ...It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, the same hour when many are standing to sing: "In Christ There Is No East Nor West."  
Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Only about 5 percent of the nation's churches are racially integrated, and half of them are in the process of becoming all-black or all-white, says Curtiss Paul DeYoung, co-author of "United by Faith," (copyright 2003) a book that examines interracial churches in the United States.
- "If to be feelingly alive to the sufferings of my fellow-creatures is to be a fanatic, I am one of the most incurable fanatics ever permitted to be at large."  
William Wilberforce

## 2. Study the Scriptures:

Your assignment for this lesson is to read through the gospel of John. As you read, try to focus on the various types of people that Jesus interacted with. You will probably find it helpful to take some notes. Try to notice all the different types of individuals that he interacted with in this gospel. When you encounter a passage where Jesus is interacting with someone, take note of the kinds of things Jesus does and says. For example, you may want to notice whether he is harsh or loving, whether he is accepting or critical. You should also take note of how these various individuals respond to Jesus after the encounter. This reading will take meaning as you compare and contrast his reaction to the different types of people he engages. Be prepared to share your observations during the discussion session. Feel free to include references of Jesus' message taken from the other gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke).

## 3. Discuss the Issue:

1. How did Jesus interact with the following groups of folks? Women, the disabled, foreigners (Samaritans, Greeks), the wealthy (royal officials) and crowds
2. How did Jesus respond to the religious leaders in Israel (Pharisees, priests, the Jews, temple merchants)? Did he treat them any different when they came to him one on one (Nicodemus).
3. How does Jesus respond to the governing officials that arrest him, try him in court, punish him and sentence him to death?

What kinds of people follow Jesus and believe in him? What kinds of people reject him? Is rejection/acceptance universal for every person in that group?