

## Pa232 Counseling

### *Lesson Pa232-41 Show Acceptance*

What comes to your mind when you see a beggar or poor person on the side of a road? Do you wonder what they did to end up like that? In other words, do you blame them for their situation? Or do you see them with eyes of compassion? In this counseling case study from the Bible, you will see Christ demonstrate another conclusion for counselors. It is that before you can counsel someone, you must love them as they are, showing them respect and acceptance.

This case study involves a ‘divine appointment.’ A ‘divine appointment’ is when God puts people, places, and things together to accomplish his will. The Bible records a divine appointment between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. Jesus and his disciples were traveling north to Galilee from Judea. He was led by the Spirit to pass through Samaria, though most Jews went out of their way to avoid that route. It was near noontime as they stopped to rest near the town of Sychar. Jacob’s well was there. Jesus was tired and thirsty, so he sat down by the well. He sent his disciples into town to buy food. The well was deep, and Jesus had no way to draw water for himself. While he was waiting, a lone Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus gave her respect and asked her a simple question, “Will you give me a drink?”

As you hear the rest of the story, consider these points:

- 1. Imagine what it would be like to feel thirst and have no way of getting water. Jesus stayed and waited for help. Would you have looked for help or just waited?*
- 2. Perhaps the woman had come to the well at noon, to avoid other women. Most would be coming later, in the cool of the day. Did this mean she was a social outcast?*
- 3. Jesus and the Samaritan worshiped the same God. Both groups believed in the coming Messiah, but they did not agree on where to worship.*

So, Jesus had asked a woman from Samaria for a drink. The woman said, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?”

Jesus answered, “You do not know who is asking you for a drink.”

The woman asked, “Our father Jacob gave us the well; are you greater than he?”

Jesus told her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty again.”

The woman said, “Sir, give me this water, and I won’t have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus said, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said, “What you have said is true. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. You Jews say we should worship in Jerusalem. Our ancestors, however, worshiped on this mountain. What do you say?”

Jesus answered, “A new time is coming. In fact, it is already here. True worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. These are the kind of worshipers God is looking for.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah is coming. He will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

The woman left her water jar and ran back to the town. She said, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did” (John 4:7-29).

Jesus and the disciples stayed in the town, ministering to the people for two days. Many of the Samaritans from the town believed in Jesus. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said. Now we have heard for ourselves” (John 4:42).

Jesus was ready to talk with anyone, as demonstrated in this story. In that time and place, there was enmity between Jews and Samaritans. It was not proper for a Jewish man to speak to a woman—any woman—in public. Women were generally looked down upon by men in Eastern cultures. None of these things stopped Jesus from talking to the woman at the well. This was a divine appointment! God arranged circumstances to bring about his will and plan. Jesus was there to meet her spiritual needs and those of many people in the nearby town.

As a counselor, you will find that in the moment you need it, you will feel in your heart a well of love and tolerance for others. You will have compassion to counsel those whom God places in your path. Be looking for them—those divine appointments. And, look to the Holy Spirit to enable you to respect and honor that person in need. Trust Jesus to help you see the unlovely, the calloused, the mean-spirited, the unkempt, and the stinking person as he sees them: a beloved child he longs to embrace.

In this story you saw that Jesus was willing to talk to the woman he met at the well. This was the beginning of his ministry to the woman, and the other people in the town. Note that Jesus did not ask to speak to the town’s leaders. He spoke to the woman who came to the well. He revealed to her that he was the longed-for Messiah. Later she became the evangelist who spread the news about Jesus being the Messiah. None of this could have happened if Jesus had feared for his reputation or had worried about his own thirst. If he had been unwilling to talk with her for social, gender, or religious reasons, she may never have known the truth.

It happened when Jesus the counselor, was hot, hungry, thirsty, and tired. Don’t miss your divine appointments, even when they may not be convenient. It has been said that Jesus’ ministry on earth was to the people in front of him. That is all he expects of you; to minister to the ones in front of you. God has already planned divine appointments for you. And the Holy Spirit will direct your steps to that meeting place with them, just as he led Jesus.

This lesson is **important** because as humans, even as Christians, we often separate ourselves from others. We erect barriers based on how we are different, our social class, race, gender, age, religion, or language. But Jesus came to break down the walls that divide us. He is our peace. He ministers peace and forgiveness to people in need.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the true counselor follows Jesus’ example and shows acceptance—unconditional positive regard—of people he or she meets. This means seeing each

person as Jesus sees them—a person he died for, just as they are, in all their mistakes and life's messes.

To **review** this lesson, answer these questions:

1. What is a 'divine appointment'? [Pause]

A. If you said, "A 'divine appointment' is God arranging people, places, and situations so we can meet and minister to someone in need," you are correct.

2. What was surprising about Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman? [Pause]

A. If you said, "In those days Jews did not speak to Samaritans, and Jewish men did not speak to women," you are right.

3. What is one thing both the Samaritans and the Jews believed? [Pause]

A. If you said that they both believed in the Messiah, you are right.

Your **assignment** is to listen to this lesson until you can repeat the conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well. Tell the story to a fellow worker from the perspective of a counselor. Observe and discuss the methods Jesus used to invite this woman to move beyond her past. Can these methods be used in your culture? How can a counselor in your country show acceptance to a person in need? What barriers exist that might prevent you from following the example of Jesus? Pray with your friend and ask the Lord to help you to overcome such barriers in your ministry. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern when God has arranged a 'divine appointment.'