

# How A Meeting With Christ Can Change Your Life

We can see something of the impact that Christ can have on a person if we look at the recorded meeting of one likeable rebel whose meeting with Christ has been recorded in **John 4:7-30, 37-42**.

This young woman reflects the lifestyle of many people today.

She was disillusioned because of what she saw that the established traditional life of her country had nothing to offer her that was real and satisfying.

She was a Samaritan and the Jews were not on speaking terms with the Samaritans, she was looked on as an outcast.

Social and racial distinctions were deep rooted.

Politically, the country under the Roman government was “*going to the dogs*” [does this sound familiar?]

Economically, times were hard and here she was, poor thing, having to collect water every day from the only tap in the neighbourhood.

Morally, there was only a hypocritical veneer of respectability in society!

The very people who complained about the morality of her generation were by no means innocent themselves.

Sometimes a really juicy bit of aristocratic scandal would hit the headlines.

Theologians spent their time arguing whether God ought to be worshipped in Samaria or only in Jerusalem.

They with the rest of the leaders were hopelessly out of touch with real life, and their teaching was completely irrelevant.

Theologians and political leaders were spending their time answering questions that nobody was asking.

In particular, she could not stand the religious preoccupation with sin, always so guilt-ridden and introspective.

*“Positively a neurosis”* she must have said *“what is the point of being so morbid all the time? Life is bleak enough as it is!”*

What was the answer to this question?

Well, of course it was to throw religion overboard.

The Samaritan woman was no fool. She was determined to get some kicks out of life in the set-up which was otherwise extremely dreary.

Unless she could find some excitement, life was scarcely worth living.

Therefore she let go some of her inhibitions, experimented with free love and drew to her a large circle of friends.

Three words summed up her life and total ambition: happiness, freedom, life.

Isn't this a fair description of what most people are looking for today?

### **Disillusioned.**

However, she met with a number of surprises.

Her pursuit of happiness left her curiously unhappy and dissatisfied.

Playing around with men merely convinced her that all men were selfish creatures, only out to satisfy their own lusts and knew very little about love and affection.

Free love soon lost its initial thrill, and left a great deal of pain and sorrow behind it.

Her wide circle of "*friends*" proved unreliable and selfish, leaving her very lonely at times.

She had no-one to whom she could turn to.

Reluctantly she could **not** finally throw overboard all notions about the existence of God.

Various questions still required answering, **her conscience nagged her now and again** during her reflective times of loneliness.

What she was beginning to discover, the hard way, was the truth about human nature.

### **Too often we only look at the symptoms and not the root cause of the unhappy society in which we live.**

Human nature is "*a seething cauldron of untamed desires.*"

Yet we try to ignore this truth by talking about inhibitions, complexes, twists in our nature, mistakes, temperaments and genes.

### **We don't like using the Biblical word for human nature and its natural lifestyle, sin.**

The word that the Christian Bible and Jesus frequently used.

This one word, sin [to miss the mark or goal] covers all those characteristics of uncontrolled human nature.

To be selfish, to lie, hate, steal, cheat, lust, criticise and judge other people.

### **The common fault today is blaming someone else for our own uncontrolled human nature, sin.**

*"It's them", "it's him", "it's her", "but never me" !*

### **That is why the word sin is so unpopular, it is too personal.**

Once we accept the personal concept of sin, we have to face the fact that we are responsible for our own actions.

Accept that we are guilty and need to be forgiven.

Jesus Christ taught a good deal about sin, He saw it as humanity's number one reason for needing God.

**Matthew 1:18-21** [NIV] *“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”*”

**Jesus Christ was born into this world to save humans from their humanity, their sin.**

God knew that unless the diagnosis of humanity's nature was known and accepted He could **not** begin to deal with it.

We read of the “*age of enlightenment*” or “*the age of reason*” “*the golden age of knowledge*”.

Humanists think that humanity is the measure of all things and our will is the architect of our own destiny.

Human intelligence, storming the secrets of the universe, is occupying the throne of God, God is dead.

But is humanity really master of all things?

History tells us very clearly that this is **not** true, yet today we find the same silly optimism.

**Humanists say that humans are capable of dealing with the world's problems as long as they are not shackled by the immature creeds of religion.**

By the way, humanism only flourishes in intellectual circles where it is easy to be idealistic about life.

People have a variety of theories as to why things are so wrong in this world but no-one can truthfully answer this question until they can say with honesty “*I am the reason*”.

**Mark 7:21-23** [NIV] *“For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean’.”*

Christ pinpointed the problem.

**Romans 3:12** [NIV] *“All have turned away, they have together become worthless; **there is no-one who does good, not even one.**”*

Paul summed up the problem with society.

One aspect of human nature is reflected in the widespread feeling today that we can play with God's gift of sex.

*“Why shouldn't I go to bed with a girl if I want to?”*

The first answer to that question is that we are **not** self-created beings, responsible only to ourselves.

**We received life from God and are responsible to God.**

**Romans 14:10-12** [NIV] *“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? **For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.** It is written: “‘As surely as I live,’*

*says the Lord, 'Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'*” **So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.**”

No-one can avoid this time in their existence.

God has **not** left us without guidelines on how to avoid a harsh judgement on that day of coming face to face with our Creator and life-giver.

Just as any complicated piece of machinery comes with a handbook, the makers instructions, and if these are ignored the user has only themselves to blame.

The Christian Bible is our Creator’s guide to abundant life.

**If we ignore this handbook we can expect to suffer the consequences, often tragic results.**

This is what the young woman of Samaria found, she played with sex, ignoring the maker’s handbook and her pursuit of happiness left her unhappy and dissatisfied.

**Frustrated.**

In the second place the Samaritan woman’s pursuit of freedom left her bound and enslaved to a way of life from which she many times longed to be free.

**Jesus Christ told of another young rebel who wanted to be free from the constraints of His Father’s house and all His stuffy house rules.** This is told in **Luke 15:11-24.**

He wanted to be independent and free.

The son takes his share of the inheritance and leaves to “*do his own thing*”.

The father doesn’t even try to stop him but without a word lets his son go.

Does the son find this freedom he seeks?

His actions are very similar to the Samaritan woman.

Disturbing factors come to light over the weeks and months of his “*freedom*”.

**1 He never can quite get out of his mind the memory of his father and his previous home.**

He cannot quite free himself from these pricks of conscience as he remembers his father’s grief as he left home.

It is quite impossible to run away from God or hide from His presence, whether we like it or not.

**2 He cannot get away from the fact that everything he has – clothes, food, money, possessions – all come from his father.**

Trying to live his life without reference to his father spoils everything he does.

Parties with excessive food and drink don’t satisfy.

The friends he made turn out to be “*fair weather*” friends.

Life becomes hollow, empty and pointless without God in it to fill that void only He can.

**3 He finds he is not quite as free as he had imagined.**

He was ruled by his natural desires, and therefore had to indulge them.

He was bound by the opinions of others by his desire to be popular fearing what others may think or say behind his back.

In fact he is **not** free at all.

This part of his life ends up penniless, starving and sitting in a pigsty feeding the pigs.

**When a person tries to run away from God or ignore Him, he throws away the real potentiality that God has given every human being.**

**Romans 1:24, 26, 28** [NIV] *“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.” ... “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.” ... “Furthermore, since they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.”*

**As people give up on God, God gives them up.**

**Romans 6:12-13** [NIV] *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

**We become slaves to whoever has control of our life, our human nature or our Creator God.**

Both the son who left home and the Samaritan woman discovered the same truth.

Drink and feed on what this world offers and we will always be needing further excitement, always wanting another “kick” every day looking for something new to satisfy our thirst.

Their pursuit of freedom left them enslaved to their human desires.

#### **4 Their pursuit of “life” ended up a mere existence.**

Many famous and successful people, as far as this society measures success, end up baffled and bewildered as all their wealth and success did **not** bring them true happiness.

A spiritual rebel, despite every apparent promise of happiness, freedom and life, will always find themselves cut off from God, the only person who really loves and cares for them.

The relevance of Christ.

**John 3:17** [NIV] *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

Jesus Christ came to save us from ourselves being a slave to our human nature.

**Tragically, the prevailing attitude today is that of sheer apathy towards what Jesus Christ has done for us.**

*“Why should I bother?”, “What is the point?”, “Why all the fuss?”*

**John 3:18-24** [NIV] *“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.”*

A person does **not** have to be against God before he is in danger of harsh judgement from God, they just have to be apathetic.

**Revelation 3:15-18** [NIV] *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see.”*

A group of people who were apathetic and didn’t see the need for God in their lives, God rejected them.

But does God stop caring for them? No.

**Revelation 3:19-21** [NIV] *“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”*

God is knocking at the door of their conscience, if they would only hear Him.

**John 4:14** [NIV] *“but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

Christ was offering not a set of dreary religious rules but life, eternal life.

**John 4:24** [NIV] *“God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

The Samaritan woman was looking ahead to some dim and distant future for hope of a better life.

**John 4:26** [NIV] *“Then Jesus declared, ‘I who speak to you am he.’”*

Christ cut her short and said you can have that hoped for life now.

Have a well of spring water within us satisfying our every thirst or be hungry.

What is this food and drink that satisfies us for ever?

**John 4:34-38** [NIV] *“‘My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.’”*

This was Christ’s food and drink, it should be ours also.

**John 4:39-42** [NIV] *“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.’”*

The Samaritan woman began to feed on the same food and drink as Jesus Christ.

Christ doesn’t come to us with a big stick but with a challenge to be part of an exciting new life following Him and help Him to fulfil the Father’s master-plan and deep desire.

**Genesis 1:26** [NIV] “*God said, let us [and we can join Him in this] make man in our image [a shadow of Himself not the real substance] and in our likeness [of the same character].*”

**God is in the process of creating children who are a reflection of Himself.**

**Galatians 5:22-25** [NIV] “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. **Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.***”

As we allow the Holy Spirit in us change us, by producing the fruits of that union in us.

**John 7:37-39** [NIV] “*On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, **streams of living water will flow from within him.**” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*”

That same Holy Spirit that produced God-like fruits in us can then flow through us to others that they too can become children of the great Creator God.

**That new life we will find to be exhilarating and totally satisfying.**