

# Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

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## ***“Eternal, Living Water”***

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**John 4:7-15 (NIV)** *When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.). Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 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." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."*

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The account of the Samaritan woman at the well with Jesus, is an amazing story of the contrast between ordinary well water and spiritual “living” water. Or we could say, it is the contrast between the physical and the spiritual. Jesus, the Son of God (the holiest of men), was listening to the problems of a woman who was considered to be a social outcast.

Considering the long standing quarrel between the Jews and the Samaritans, Jesus shouldn't even be talking to a Samaritan woman, let alone asking her to give him a drink from Jacob's well.

For a Jewish leader (a Rabbi) to speak to a woman in public, was to go against the social customs of the day, and to run the risk of losing his reputation.

Yet, Jesus spoke to this woman. He wasn't concerned about his reputation. Nor was he concerned about quenching his own physical thirst.

His greatest desire was to get her attention. He had something more important He wanted to talk with her about, her spiritual needs.

His plan was to use his physical need for a drink of water, as an object lesson in trying to reach the woman with her need for the “living” spiritual water from Heaven.

As I minister to prison inmates and parolees I find myself relating first-hand to the persistence of Jesus. Jesus kept pressing the woman to look beyond the physical, “familiar” water she was used to drinking.

His ultimate goal was to motivate her to look beyond the “familiar” physical country and even the “familiar” world in which she lived. Jesus came nothing short of promising her eternal life -- with conditions placed upon that promise. We should keep in mind, that with every promise Jesus makes, a condition must first be met to receive that promise.

**The first condition** - the woman of Samaria had to recognize Jesus for who He was, the Christ, and the only one who could give her this gift of “living” water.

**John 4:25-26 (NIV)** - *The woman said, "I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."*

**The second condition** - the woman of Samaria must receive the gift (“living” water) He was offering her. A gift that is not received, is a gift that can't be used. What a blessing this gift was to the woman. She not only received the gift, she went out and told others where they could find this gift of “living” water.

**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 Savior of the world."*

The "Spiritual Growth Ministry" of Christian Ambassadors is all about facing up to the eternal truth of the gospel. Until prisoners and parolees can stand in the presence of Jesus, as the woman of Samaria did, and see themselves in their fallen spiritual condition, they will continue to be thirsty.

Until Jesus came along and she could see a living example of righteousness, she didn't know how depraved and thirsty she really was. This shocking truth, "He [Jesus] told me *everything* that I ever did," compelled her to go and witness to the folks in her home town.

Jesus laid everything about her ugly past out in plain view for her to examine. Then he offered her something that a Samaritan outcast, was not expected to be offered. He invited her to live in His Kingdom, inclusive of eternal "living" water. The promise of never being thirsty again was an offer she could not refuse.

Although Jesus loves the world, His love alone cannot save everyone in the world. Why Not? That love still has to be received. Some people will always place more value on this physical, natural world and its enticements, then they will in the eternal Kingdom of God. As an ambassador for Christ, I will continue to challenge you to take a look at your spiritual condition, because I know what is ahead of us, if we don't.

An inmate recently shared with me how crazy his life was out on the streets. He often gets flashbacks and nightmares about the crimes he committed. Out on the streets, he was much too involved in drugs and alcohol and the sins that go with it, to take the time to listen to God. Looking back on it now, he confessed that his life wasn't just a crazy life, "it was a sick life."

I thought his use of the word "sick" is an accurate description of the spiritual condition of someone who is willfully living their life separated from God's Spirit.

One day I was sitting at a table talking with a parolee, while he was making excuses for why he was living on the dark side. When I questioned

him he became even more evasive. Suddenly God showed me this man's spirit and what I saw caused extreme sadness to engulf me. Sitting in front of me was a man whose spirit was so weakened, that he was literally in a state of "spiritual malnutrition." It was painfully obvious that his broken, spiritual condition existed, because he did not have God's Word living inside of him.

The Lord made it known to me, that if I were to reach across the table and touch this man with my little finger, his spirit was so fragile, he wouldn't be capable of holding himself up and he would fall over in the chair.

"Spiritual neglect" is the number one reason why prisoners are recycled through the prison system. Some inmates are getting fed up with repeating this process and are determined to do something about it. By bucking the odds and standing up to the negative prison environment, things are likely to change for the better.

One inmate speaks his convictions for those with like mind. "A lot of people do good and read the Bible and go to church, while they are in prison. But as soon as they get out they go back to the same old ways. I don't want to do that. I want to be a Christian so badly, so that Jesus can be proud of me. I want Him to help me live a good life, not just in prison, but out there also. I want Him to give me what I need."

Welcome to the eternal "living" water. May God add his blessings to prisoners, reaching out to prisoners in the name of Jesus Christ.

**John 4:14 (NIV)** - "...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."