



Lesson 8 ~ shine, Jesus, shine!

John 8

Discussion Starter

- Tell of a time in when someone tattled on you. What was the outcome?

Introduction

Does your Bible include a footnote about or make special mention of the story found in John 8:1-12? Almost all Bible scholars agree that the story of the *woman caught in adultery* was not written by the Apostle John, author of this Gospel. The language and style in this narrative are different from the rest of the Gospel and the account does not seem to "fit" into the flow of John's Gospel because it "interrupts" the flow of Jesus speaking to the crowds at the *Feast of Tabernacles* in John 7 and 8.

Over the years, as more ancient manuscripts of the Bible have been found, it was discovered that this story was not included in the oldest and earliest manuscripts of the Gospel of John. It is generally agreed to be a later addition to the Gospel. The story was probably an independent

account that circulated orally for some time and was later attached to the Gospel of John by some scribes who were making copies of the manuscript.

However, to say that this story doesn't belong in the Gospel of John is not to dismiss it. Even those who exclude this narrative from the Gospel on textual grounds, agree that the story reflects the tone and character of Jesus and his ministry and that it is a **genuine account**. It is the *placement* of this story that is doubted, not its *historical truthfulness*.

It is for these reasons that we include this event in our study of the Gospel of John and most of this lesson will center on this wonderful story.

Preparation

1. Before you read John 8, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (John 16:13). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Spirit of the Living God, the One who comforts, strengthens and encourages me.

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,
with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

I ask this in the powerful Name of Jesus (as if Jesus were asking it).

Amen

2. Read John 8 slowly and thoughtfully in your own Bible. As you read and reread, **underline or highlight** any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a **question mark** beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read this chapter in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *Amplified Version* of the Bible. It is important, however, that you don't try to answer the questions in the lesson from just the *Amplified Version*. The questions are phrased to be answered from the *New International Version (NIV)*, the *New Living Translation (NLT)*, or something similar. Using **only** the *Amplified Version* may be confusing. It is given only as a supplementary text.

QUESTIONS

Read the *Introduction* to this lesson and **John 8:1-12**.

1. What elements of this story convinces you that this incident is "authentic Jesus"?
 - ♥ Can you see anything in **John 8:12-18** that might explain why scribes chose to insert this story about Jesus at this place in the Gospel of John?
 - ♥ How do you feel when someone exposes a sin or failure in your life or when you are caught in a wrongful act? How do you usually react to the situation?
2. The religious leaders refer to the Law of Moses (**8:5**) as their basis of wanting to stone this woman. Read **Leviticus 20:10** and **Deuteronomy 22:22**. What is missing in their accusations against this woman that reveals the Pharisees hypocrisy?
 - ♥ What does the Pharisees' treatment of this woman in **8:3-4** reveal about their beliefs and values? Can you think of another course of action they could have taken?
 - ♥ Are you quick to "throw stones" at others when you discover they have done something wrong? Why or why not? Is your standard the same for everyone? Why or why not?
3. In what ways was this situation a "trap" for Jesus? What accusations were the religious leaders hoping to make against Jesus in this "no-win" situation (**8:6**)?
 - ♥ **John 8:6** is the only record we have of Jesus writing. We are not told what he wrote, but we are told that he wrote "with his finger." For the religious leaders who knew the Scriptures and the Law of Moses well, what might Jesus have been inferring (**Exodus 31:18**)?
4. How did Jesus' answer to the religious leaders in **8:7** skillfully "spring the trap" that had been set for him?
 - ♥ In what areas of your own life do you tend to be self-righteous?
 - ♥ What is the difference between confronting a person with their sin and condemning a person for their sin? Should we do either? Why or why not?
 - ♥ What affect would your coming to a true awareness of your own sins and failures have on your relationships with others?
5. Jesus never said the woman was not guilty or that she should not be punished. Why did her accusers "go away, one at a time, the older ones first" (**8:9**)? What were some things they were admitting by leaving the scene?

- ♥ What is the difference between judging a person and judging their sin? Why is only God capable of judging a person (**1 Samuel 16:7**)?
 - ♥ Which do you find more difficult: to forgive or to ask for forgiveness? Why?
6. Read **John 8:10-11**. How does Jesus' response to the woman reflect what we have already learned about him in **John 1:17** and **John 3:16-18**?
 - ♥ How does Jesus judge the woman's sin and at the same time show mercy?
 - ♥ Do you relate to people and their sin like Jesus did or like the religious leaders did? Is there anything you need to ask God to change in you?
 - ♥ What can you learn from Jesus about helping a friend who is caught in a failure or sin?
 7. What two different types of sinners do you see in the *Pharisees* and in the *woman*? Why does Jesus treat the woman caught in adultery gently while having stronger words for the religious leaders?
 - ♥ What do you learn about forgiveness from Jesus' actions and words? In what situation do you need to apply Jesus' example and teaching on forgiveness?
 8. How do the words of Jesus in **Matthew 7:1-5** relate to this story? What personal application can you make?
 - ♥ What do you usually do when you "blow it"? a) crawl into a hole? b) try to be extra good? c) confess it to God and move on? d) confess it to another person? e) shrug it off?
 - ♥ Jesus accepts you "as is." What effect does this fact have on your behavior? Do you find that it encourages change or complacency? How so?
 - ♥ How does the way Jesus treated this woman help you face the sins you struggle with? What does it mean to you that Jesus does not condemn you but invites you to abandon your sin?

John 8:12-58 is a continuation of the dialogue Jesus was having with the religious leaders and the crowd at the Festival of Tabernacles and is meant to follow **John 7:52**. (It might be helpful to re-read the Introduction to Lesson 7.) Jesus continues to use this dialogue to reveal his true identity and mission. He does this by using the images of the Festival, such as water and light, and Old Testament titles, such as I AM, to make statements about himself and the reason he was sent by the Father into the world.

9. Fill in the chart below to discover the claims that Jesus makes about himself.

SCRIPTURE	WRITE A PHRASE THAT SUMMARIZES WHO JESUS SAYS HE IS
John 8:12	
John 8:23	
John 8:25-30	
John 8:31-36	
John 8:54-58	

10. Jesus gives a conditional promise in **8:12**. What does he promise and what is the stipulation?

11. How do you know if you are following Jesus? What differences would you see in the lives of two people, one who is following Jesus and the other who is not?

♥ How has following Jesus brought light into your life?

Light ceremonies were an important part of the *Festival of Tabernacles*, just as were water ceremonies (see Introduction to Lesson 7). Jesus' statement that he was the **Light of the world** was made against the backdrop of torches that lit up the city as well as giant lights that were lit in the courts of the temple. Sixteen golden bowls (reached by ladders) were filled with oil. When they were lit at night, all Jerusalem was illuminated. In a world that did not have public lighting after dark, this light shining from Jerusalem's yellow limestone walls must have been spectacular. On the last day of the Festival, under these giant bowls of light, Jesus stood and declared that he was not only the true light of Jerusalem, but of the whole world!

♥ What visual images come to mind when you think of Jesus being the *Light of the world*?

♥ What is your most vivid memory of darkness? What feelings do you associate with darkness?

♥ What is the importance of light to physical life? To spiritual life?

12. Describe what it would be like to live your life *as if you were walking in darkness*. Where would you have difficulty? What things would you not be sure of? How would it feel?

How does Jesus bring light into this darkness? What difference does he make?

13. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament law and prophecies. What claims was Jesus making about himself when he said, "I am the light of the world?"

Exodus 13:21-22 -

Psalms 27:1 -

Isaiah 42:6-7, 16

Psalms 119:105

Response

John 20:31 - But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. Share with your group what *words, events* or *dialogue* in **John 8** you find most convincing in supporting John's dual purpose for writing this gospel?

Encounter with Jesus

We all have failures and sins that have been our undoing time and time again. Do you truly believe that Jesus does not condemn and shame you because of your failures, no matter how many times they happen? Envision the story of the woman caught in adultery and put yourself in her place. Let the story play out in your mind as you experience the sights and sounds of the scene. See Jesus looking into your eyes saying, "Neither do I condemn you . . ." What else do you see Jesus saying and doing? What is your response?