

How to Effectively Contend for the Faith by Following Jesus' Example (Joh 4:3-42)

- I. We are commanded to earnestly contend for the faith (**Jud 1:3**).
- II. How do we effectively contend for the faith?
 1. We must follow the example of Jesus Christ (**1Co 11:1**).
 2. We should walk as He walked (**1Jo 2:6**).
- III. An example of how Jesus taught and defended the truth is found in (**Joh 4:3-42**).
 1. In the course of His travels, Jesus ended up passing through Samaria (**Joh 4:3-5**).
 - A. Evangelistic opportunities don't have to be planned out.
 - B. Just live your life and take advantages of opportunities as they happen.
 2. Being wearied, Jesus sat on a well and there met a Samaritan woman and asked her for a drink (**Joh 4:6-8**).
 - A. Being social and initiating small-talk is often the beginning of a chance to preach the gospel.
 - B. If Jesus were on His smartphone texting or reading His Facebook feed, He would have missed a great opportunity.
 3. Being a Samaritan, the woman was surprised that a Jew such as Jesus would speak to her (**Joh 4:9**).
 - A. Samaritans were half-breed Jews (**2Ki 17:24,41**) that were looked down upon by the Jews (**Joh 8:48**).
 - B. Jesus did not let racial or ethnic distinctions keep Him from sharing the gospel.
 - C. Neither did Jesus let the fact that she was a woman keep Him from sharing the gospel with her.
 4. She asked Jesus a direct question: "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." (**Joh 4:9**).
 - A. Questions are good if they are pertinent to the topic under consideration.
 - B. Questions that divert the conversation away from the direction that we want it to go should be ignored.
 - C. For example, if you are discussing the proper mode of baptism with a man and he asks why you believe that God hates some people, you must ignore his question if you are to stay on point.
 - D. This is difficult to do, but it is essential if we are going to effectively communicate truth to another.
 5. Jesus answered the woman by ignoring her question and making a statement that would elicit a more useful question (**Joh 4:10**).
 - A. If Jesus would have answered her question concerning why a Jew would ask for a drink of a Samaritan, He could have ended up in an argument about their ethnic backgrounds.
 - i. This would have been unprofitable.
 - ii. Since she knew nothing about Him, she would likely not have been open to hearing the gospel after having a racial argument.
 - B. Jesus instead made a leading statement that guaranteed a follow-up question.
 - C. Notice a few things about Jesus' response:
 - i. It was short, so as to not overwhelm her.
 - ii. He didn't give her direct instruction yet.

- iii. His statement implied that she didn't know certain things, which might arouse her curiosity.
 - iv. He suggested that if she knew something she would be asking questions.
 - D. Jesus' statement should have prompted one of following three questions if the woman was a seeker of truth.
 - i. "What is the gift of God?"
 - ii. "Who are you?"
 - iii. "What is living water?"
- 6. She responds with a question, but not the right question (**Joh 4:11**).
 - A. She is thinking naturally and wonders how and from where Jesus will get the water.
 - B. She didn't consider that Jesus was obviously referring to spiritual water by calling it "living water" and speaking of it in connection with "the gift of God" (**Joh 4:10**).
 - C. Her question showed that she was not well versed in the scriptures which spoke of God as "the fountain of living waters" (**Jer 2:13; Jer 17:13**).
- 7. She then continues with yet another question more foolish than the first (**Joh 4:12**).
 - A. She essentially makes an ad hominem argument, asserting that Jesus thought that He was greater than Jacob.
 - B. Jesus was greater than Jacob, but that had nothing to do with the subject at hand.
 - C. Jesus was not going to be like unto the fool that asked the question by answering it (**Pro 26:4**).
- 8. Jesus wisely ignored her questions again and continued with His original line of thought (**Joh 4:13-14**).
 - A. Jesus completely ignored her question about being greater than Jacob because it would have been a waste of time to address it.
 - B. While Jesus didn't answer her questions, He did use one of them as an impetus to go deeper with her.
 - C. Jesus used her reference to the physical water in the well as a comparison with the spiritual water that He was speaking of.
 - D. The water that she had in mind would only temporarily quench natural thirst, but the water that Jesus gave would eternally quench spiritual thirst.
 - E. It's always wise to listen to the questions or statements that our opponents respond with so that we can use them as inroads for further instruction or questions.
- 9. The woman responds again with another statement that shows her ignorance of the spiritual truth that Jesus was teaching (**Joh 4:15**).
 - A. She still thinks that He is speaking of natural thirst and natural water.
 - B. Witnessing to people requires patience when they don't understand plain statements.
 - C. Notice that Jesus did not get frustrated with her.
- 10. Instead of trying to explain again what He already plainly stated, Jesus switches gears and tries to get through to her from a different angle (**Joh 4:16**).
 - A. He doesn't bother explaining how that He was talking about spiritual water because the concept was clearly over her head at that time.
 - i. This is important to remember when witnessing to others who have a very elementary understanding of the Bible.
 - ii. If you overload them, they will mentally shut down and stop listening.
 - B. Jesus told her to go call her husband to come to him.

- i. Jesus was "playing dumb" because He already knew that she didn't have a husband (**Joh 4:17-18**).
 - ii. There's nothing wrong with playing dumb by asking a question that you already know the answer to and pretending that you don't (**Luk 24:18-19; Joh 6:5-6**).
 - iii. If you have figured out something about someone, asking him about it and explaining what you know about him can give you credibility with him.
- 11. She tells Jesus that she doesn't have a husband and Jesus tells her that she had been married five times and that she was now living with a man she wasn't married to (**Joh 4:17-18**).
 - A. Since Jesus was God, He supernaturally knew these things about her.
 - B. We do not have that ability, but we do have knowledge that God has revealed to us in His word that we could not know on our own.
 - C. We could share this information with someone and it could have a similar effect on them.
 - i. For instance, we could explain to a man how he thinks based on what God has told us about human nature in the Bible.
 - ii. This would have a profound effect on a man and might make him listen to what else we have to say.
- 12. The woman recognizes that Jesus is a prophet (**Joh 4:19**).
 - A. She didn't realize that Jesus was a prophet when He was teaching her spiritual truth, but she did when He told her about herself.
 - B. Jesus did this with Nathanael also (**Joh 1:47-49**).
 - C. If we can tell someone something about themselves that the Bible reveals to us, that will cause them to stop and listen to what we have to say.
- 13. She is now ready to talk about religion (**Joh 4:20**).
 - A. She recognizes that there is a difference between Jesus' religion and her own.
 - B. By this point she is ready to hear the truth.
- 14. Jesus begins to explain that there is a change coming in the religion of God and that in the future the Jews and the Samaritans will be worshipping God in a different place and manner than they are now (**Joh 4:21**).
 - A. He is warming her up to the fact that her religion is in error and is not acceptable with God.
 - B. He uses these words to soften the blow that He is about to deliver.
- 15. Jesus then plainly tells her that her religion is false and is based on ignorance (**Joh 4:22**).
 - A. Remember, this was not the first thing that Jesus told her.
 - B. He only did so after having established credibility with her.
 - C. He didn't stop at telling her that she was wrong.
 - D. Rather, He finished by telling her what was right.
- 16. Jesus finishes His short response to her by telling her that the time has come that God demands that they that worship Him must do so in spirit and in truth (**Joh 4:23-24**).
- 17. The woman responds that she believes that the Messiah is coming and that He would tell them all things (**Joh 4:25**).
 - A. Jesus has already established credibility with her by telling her things about herself.
 - B. She was then open to hearing the hard truth.
 - C. She knew enough of the Bible to know that the Messiah was coming.

- D. Therefore, she knew that changes were coming and Jesus' statements were not too shocking to her.
18. Jesus finally reveals to her that He is the Messiah (**Joh 4:26**).
 - A. Being the Messiah means that he was God manifest in the flesh (**Mic 5:2; Isa 9:6**).
 - B. This is what Jesus was initially telling her when He said that He gives living water (eternal life) to men (**Joh 4:14**), but she was not ready to receive that truth at that time.
 - C. Now she believes.
 19. The disciples come and want to know why Jesus was talking with a Samaritan woman (**Joh 4:27**).
 20. Jesus told them that He was doing the work the Father gave him to do (**Joh 4:34**).
 - A. He tells them that the fields are white unto harvest and that they will reap where another sowed (**Joh 4:35-38**).
 - B. We likewise can reap where other men have sowed.
 - C. Other men often are used to bring a child of God to a partial knowledge of the truth.
 - D. By God's grace, we can be used to bring them the rest of the way.
 21. The woman went back to her people and told them about Jesus (**Joh 4:28-30**).
 22. Many ended up believing that Jesus was the Messiah because of her, either by her telling them or bringing them (**Joh 4:39-42**).
 - A. By taking time and having patience with an ignorant and simpleminded woman, and by not being sidetracked by her distracting questions, Jesus ended up converting her.
 - B. In turn, she ended up being instrumental in the conversion of many others.
 - C. Remember these things the next time you have an opportunity to witness the truth to someone.