

CHARLES R. SWINDOLL



SWINDOLL'S
NEW TESTAMENT
INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS ON

JOHN

As you seek to apply these three principles, beware of two common traps: envy and jealousy. People often confuse these two fears because both are fueled by the dread of not having.

Envy has empty hands and wants them full.

Jealousy has full hands and never wants them empty.

Envy languishes in self-pity because it doesn't have what others have.

Jealousy rants in paranoia because it fears losing what it feels worthless to own.

John the Baptizer avoided both traps. He clutched nothing and released everything to the Lord: his following, his popularity, his will. He recognized that God owns it all and deserves all the glory; therefore, we find the greatest joy in fulfilling our purpose: "to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever."¹⁷ Is it any wonder Jesus considered him great?

Water for a Thirsty Woman (John 4:1-42)

"Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ²(although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), ³He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. ⁴And He had to pass through Samaria. ⁵So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; ⁶and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered and said to her, "if you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." ¹¹She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?" ¹²You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?" ¹³Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

¹³The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw." ¹⁴He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here." ¹⁵The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁶for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly." ¹⁷The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet." ¹⁸Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." ¹⁹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²⁰You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²¹But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. ²²God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." ²³The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." ²⁴Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

²⁵At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?" ²⁶So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, ²⁷"Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" ²⁸They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.

²⁹Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³⁰But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³¹So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" ³²Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. ³³Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. ³⁴Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁵For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁶I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."

³⁷From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." ³⁸So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ³⁹Many more believed because of His word; ⁴⁰and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."



Jews traveling between Judea and Galilee usually avoided Samaria, a land they considered defiled by Gentile intermarriage and religious syncretism. Rather than walking on impure soil, they descended the mountains surrounding Jerusalem to the Jordan Plain, journeyed along the eastern shore of the Jordan River, and then turned west into Galilee. Jesus, however, chose a direct route from Jerusalem to Cana, which took Him through the Samaritan town of Sychar.

Expert instructors know that if a student is to master a new skill, his or her training must include balanced portions of three essential elements: theory, practice, and inspiration. These can come in any order and through a variety of means, but no training is complete without all three. Theory without practice is pointless. Practice without theory is frustrating. Theory and practice without inspiration is drudgery. Leave out any one element and students will almost certainly fail or quit.

Once John the Baptizer announced Jesus as the Messiah, the Lord wasted no time calling disciples. Within forty-eight hours, five hand-selected students had begun training for nothing less than transformation of the world. They had seen Jesus perform miracles (2:1–12), they had experienced His passionate desire for revival (2:13–25), and they had heard Him preach and teach (3:1–36). The time had come for them to glimpse their future as evangelists. Jesus, the Jewish reformer, would become Jesus, the missionary, and show His students how to reach the world outside of Judaism. Between Galilee to the north and Judea in the south, a lost and forsaken people lived in a spiritual no-man's-land called Samaria—and they, too, needed to hear the good news.

— 4:1–3 —

Trying to trace Jesus' movements as described in the gospel of John is not as helpful as it is in Luke, who provided a more chronological account. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), however, don't tell us nearly as much about the Lord's ministry in Judea as does John. We learn from John that Jesus traveled frequently between Galilee and Judea, for widely varied reasons. In this case, He sensed that His ministry in Judea was attracting attention for the wrong reasons. While truth will always stir controversy, Jesus was not interested in squaring off with the Pharisees—at least not yet, not until it served His ultimate purpose (15:22–25).

— 4:4 —

The phrase "had to" translates a Greek verb meaning "to be necessary." Anyone unfamiliar with Samaria's history would not see anything peculiar about John's word choice. Draw a straight line from Jerusalem to Cana (4:46), account for the hilly terrain, and a stopover in Sychar appears perfectly reasonable.

John's choice of words, however, would have been provocative to any Jewish reader. Jews despised Samaritans. To them, Samaritans were idolatrous half-breeds—ethnically polluted, religiously confused, and morally debased. During a particularly

dark period in Israel's history, the Hebrew inhabitants of this region intermarried with Gentiles and established their own temple to rival the one in Jerusalem. Consequently, Jews—particularly Pharisees—would not set foot on Samaritan soil, and frankly, there was no love lost on the part of the Samaritan people.

To avoid "contamination," most Jews traveling between Galilee and Judea chose to cross the Jordan River and go around Samaria to the east rather than journey straight through. So to say, "*It was necessary to pass through Samaria,*" suggests some need other than geographical.

— 4:5–6 —

John locates the Samaritan city of Sychar, not in terms of its geographic location, but by its historic relevance. This parcel of land was significant in Israel's history as a place purchased by Jacob (later renamed "Israel") and given to his sons (Gen. 33:18–20). This was also the place where the bones of Joseph were laid to rest after Israel's Exodus from Egypt (Josh. 24:32).

John's mention of the well is no accident either. Samaria had no major rivers to supply water, only wadis (natural drainage channels), which brought seasonal

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TEN "LOST" TRIBES

After the Hebrew nation settled the Promised Land, it thrived for several centuries as twelve tribes united by worship in one tabernacle, located in Shiloh, about ten miles from Mount Gerizim. Eventually, Israel's third king, Solomon, constructed a permanent temple in Jerusalem.

Shortly after Solomon's death, the northern ten tribes rejected the legitimate successor to the throne, chose an idolatrous rebel general to lead them, formed a separate nation, and claimed the name "Israel" for themselves. The southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah remained loyal to Solomon's son and became known as "Judah." North and South fought frequently throughout the next two hundred years, until Israel was distracted by repeated assaults by Assyrian king Pul (2 Kings 15:19–20; 1 Chron. 5:26), also called Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15:29; Isa. 9:1). Finally, Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17:3–6) and his successor, Sargon, finished off Israel by deporting the ten tribes and intermarrying them with other conquered nations, virtually breeding them out of existence. After 721 BC, only a small remnant of the ten tribes remained in the northern territory, and most of them began to intermarry with Gentiles.

After the people of Judah, who became known as "Jews," were exiled to Babylon (606–587 BC) and later returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, they found the northern region inhabited by "Samaritans," of both Hebrew and Gentile heritage. Tensions mounted when the Samaritans opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. The final breach occurred when the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim, claiming that it, and not Jerusalem, was the authentic place of worship.

rains and then dried up for months at a time. Jeremiah used the wadi as an image of deceit (Jer. 15:18). The historic location and the presence of Jacob's well gave Jesus (and therefore, John) another perfect opportunity to draw on the familiar symbol of life: water.

The sixth hour in Jewish reckoning was about noon. Early in May (during the barley harvest), the sun would have been high and the weather hot and dry. Jesus and the disciples had traveled throughout the morning and needed food and water to continue their journey. While Jesus rested by the well, probably in the shade, His students went in search of food (v. 8).

—4:7–8—

As John tells the story—this portion of which he had to have heard from Jesus—the appearance of the woman appears coincidental. Again, those familiar with the customs of the day would immediately notice two ominous details. First, she came alone. Women generally came to the well in groups, not only to share the labor of drawing water, but to socialize. Second, she came during the heat of the day. The best time to carry five gallons (nineteen liters) of water, weighing approximately forty pounds (eighteen kg) was early in the morning or just before sundown. The circumstances appear curious and give the impression that the meeting was accidental. The meaning of “had to” (v. 4) becomes a little clearer now.

As Jesus engaged the woman in conversation, take note of a repeated cycle. Six times Jesus appealed to the woman, and six times she attempted to deflect the discussion:

Jesus appealed to her kindness (v. 7), and the woman responded defensively (v. 9).

Jesus appealed to her curiosity (v. 10), and the woman responded sarcastically (vv. 11–12).

Jesus appealed to her spiritual need (vv. 13–14), and the woman responded with a denial (v. 15).

Jesus appealed to her personal interest (v. 16), and the woman changed the subject (v. 17).

Jesus appealed to her conscience (vv. 17–18), and the woman raised a controversial issue (vv. 19–20).

Jesus appealed to her will (vv. 21–24), and the woman tried to delay any decision (v. 25).

From My Journal

No Good Deed Shall Go Unpunished

I landed at a packed airport. Claiming my luggage was more tedious than usual and I dreaded the shuttle ride to the car rental lot. As soon as the little bus arrived, I took a seat behind the driver as a small army crammed in after me. I quickly noticed that some women were left standing in the center, holding a strap in one hand and steadying their luggage with the other. I thought, What a shame. So I stood up to offer my seat to the closest lady.

I met her eyes and said, "Would you li ..."

"What's wrong?" she snapped.

"Nothing. Would you like ..."

"No, I can stand!"

I need to mention that the year was 1974, not long after Bobby Riggs lost "the battle of the sexes" tennis match to Billie Jean King.

I glanced toward another woman for a moment, but when she gave me the evil eye, I decided to sit down and shut up. That's the day I learned that with some people, you can never win. Even the kindest deed done with the purest motivation can blow up in your face. Don't take it personally; most of the world is braced for impact and just doesn't know what to do with a simple act of kindness.

Jesus broke with the tradition of His day by speaking to the woman and politely asked her to draw Him some water from the well. While Jesus would never break a commandment or behave immorally, He routinely flouted (and sometimes appeared to take special delight in flouting) the nonsensical customs of religion. He had come to redeem this woman and He knew how to reach her. She wore the emotional armor of a woman beaten down by the morality of the righteous. He honored her closely guarded vulnerability by appealing to her kindness.

— 4:9 —

She responded defensively. The way John records the woman's words reveals how shocked she felt. Literally, she said, "How You, being a Jew, from me ask to drink? — a woman, a Samaritan!" The tone of her question asked, in effect, "What are you doing asking me for a drink? Don't you know the rules? I'm beneath you as a non-Jew, as a woman, and as a Samaritan. You can't instantly overcome centuries of barriers like that."

John underscores the racial prejudice for anyone who might have missed the source of her tension.

— 4:10 —

Jesus didn't react to the woman's defensiveness. Instead, He said in effect, "If you really knew whom you were talking to, you would be asking *Me* for a drink, and I would have given you *living* water." The structure of the sentence in Greek emphasizes the adjective "living."

"Gift of God?" "Know who He is?" "Living water?" What an enigmatic statement! He deliberately laced His comment with enticing phrases and then delivered it with casual ease. This was no less outrageous than if I were to drop the following line into normal conversation: "Well, back on Mars, where I'm from, everyone has free cable TV." People would think I was joking.

He clearly intended to excite her curiosity.

— 4:11-12 —

The Samaritan woman shows a quick wit by responding with sarcasm, which the dictionary defines as "a mode of satirical wit depending for its effect on bitter, caustic, and often ironic language that is usually directed against an individual."¹⁸

A modern version of her line might be, "Hey, man, the waters in this well run deep and, clearly, your bucket doesn't go all the way down! So, where do you plan to get this water, the *living* kind?" She also reacted to Jesus' insinuation that He's someone special by drawing on the history of the site.

This is an intelligent woman with a delightful sense of humor, but a rough life had ground her wit to a razor's edge. Undoubtedly, many men had charmed her and then left her broken. Now, any man who thinks he's God's gift should be careful. Most men would have gotten the message and backed off. But Jesus didn't want her like other men wanted her.

— 4:13-14 —

Jesus bypassed her sarcastic assault and then appealed to her spiritual need. She needed new life. Sin had destroyed her old life, both in the theological sense and in the emotional sense. She had long since stopped living and was merely existing. Furthermore, her death-like life would soon end in eternal death.

Jesus played on images of well water, which is stagnant, and running water, which is "living," to describe the kind of life available to those who believe in Him. Those who trust in Christ never need to look outside themselves for satisfaction because He dwells within them, supplying every emotional and spiritual need. They will never be without water again.

— 4:15 —

Either the woman was spiritually tone-deaf, or she was deliberately avoiding the real issue. Often people avoid talking about spiritual matters because physical needs are easier to satisfy and frequently provide the illusion of deeper satisfaction. That's what drives all sorts of compulsions and addictions. They also avoid spiritual discussions because they are too painfully personal and they have learned to cope with their hopelessness; they don't want anyone upsetting the delicate balance they have worked so hard to achieve.

Regardless, the woman took the conversation back into the shallows, where she felt more comfortable.

— 4:16 —

Jesus put an end to her coy bantering with an innocent request. At the surface level, He appealed to her personal interest. In most any other conversation, no one could

have taken offense. But Jesus knew the dilemma it posed for her. She undoubtedly felt stung and probably made the connection between “thirst” and her current living arrangements.

Of course Jesus knew her situation. He knew all about her sexually promiscuous life. And He went directly for her need. He appealed to her deepest personal longing.

The woman responded by changing the subject. She hoped to shift the topic of conversation to the acceptable side of her half-truth: “I don’t have a husband (in the traditional sense of the word).”

— 4:17–18 —

Jesus used His supernatural knowledge to take the conversation below the surface. He set aside all fun and games in order to appeal to her conscience. It is noteworthy that He didn’t condemn her or shame her or exploit her sinfulness. He merely stated the truth and let it stand on its own. The man she was living with was not her husband, but the sixth temporary man in a long line of temporary men. Despite that ugly reality, Jesus found a way to commend her for the truthful half of her half-truth.

— 4:19–20 —

The woman obviously didn’t feel so threatened as to run away. Exposing the source of someone’s shame too quickly leaves him or her feeling emotionally stripped naked, and the only natural response is to run for cover. But Jesus’ timing was perfect. He established a rapport. He allowed the woman to see His genuine concern for her as a person, not an object. He treated her with uncommon dignity and spoke compassionately to her spiritual need. He didn’t allow her to distract Him from the real issues involved, including her attempt to flatter Him and then engage in a pointless theological debate.

“Oh, you’ve been to seminary. You must be extremely smart. Let me ask you something I’ve always wondered about. How do you reconcile the great existential problem of God’s sovereignty and the free will of man?” Only in her culture, the great debate revolved around the most appropriate place to worship an omnipresent God.

— 4:21–24 —

I wish I could think on my feet as quickly as Jesus. He neither indulged her ruse nor ignored her question. He used her distraction to get the conversation back to

the real issue. Her problem—as with most people in John's account—was not intellectual, but volitional. Jesus responded by appealing to her will. He presented three issues to challenge her.

1. *The earthly location of worship is of secondary concern in heaven.* A temple is given for the benefit of human beings, not God. A temple merely serves to focus our wandering attention. Many Jews faithfully worshiped God even when taken thousands of miles from the Jerusalem temple, even as it lay in ruins.
2. *The object of worship is primary in heaven and secondary in Samaria.* Make no mistake, the Samaritan temple was designed and built in direct opposition to the reconstruction efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah. And the men who built it did not know the one, true God. Jesus didn't shy away from the uncomfortable truth. The Samaritans were indeed idolatrous.
3. *The quality of worship is the true measure of devotion to God.* Even as Jesus spoke to the woman in Samaria, the Jewish religious leaders were polluting the temple with their money-changing schemes. Therefore, the temple in Jerusalem was no better or worse than the one on Mount Gerizim. The Lord wants genuine, Spirit-empowered worship.

—4:25–26—

The woman fell back to her last line of defense, one commonly used today: delay. She tried to backpedal out of the conversation, claiming that all matters of theology are moot until the Messiah comes to resolve them. The Samaritans expected a Messiah to be like Moses, more teacher and prophet, less ruler and priest (Deut. 18:15–18). According to this line of reasoning, "No one can really say what is truth and what isn't until this great Teacher comes to reveal all things."

The woman's attempt to back out of the conversation played perfectly into Jesus' hands. John's description of the encounter builds toward a climax. The Lord successfully bypassed all of her defenses in order to lay the ultimate truth before her. He said, in effect, "Good! You don't have to wait any longer. I am the Messiah, and I am here just as promised."

In the Greek, the phrase "I am" is particularly emphatic: *ego eimi*. It harkens back to God's self-identification to Moses: "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14). Both Jews and Samaritans understood Jesus' meaning. In fact, the religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy for claiming to be God because of His repeated use of the "I am" formula (6:48; 8:18, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5–8).

—4:27–30—

The return of the disciples and their apparent shock over an obvious breach of Jewish etiquette could have felt awkward, at least for the woman. We aren't told. All we know is that the woman forgot all about her original task and ran back to the town to confer with her own religious authorities.

The construction of the Greek sentence in verse 29 anticipates a negative response: "He couldn't possibly be the Christ, could He?" But then the woman presented evidence to suggest that she, in fact, did believe Jesus to be the Messiah. Remarkably, the details she so painfully avoided discussing had become a joyful confirmation of her spiritual hope.

Her testimony had a positive effect. The men of her town felt compelled to meet the man who might possibly be their Savior.

—4:31–34—

The interlude between Jesus' discussion with the woman and His ministering to the rest of the town allows us to see why John includes this incident in his gospel. Jesus "had to pass through Samaria" (4:4) to redeem this woman, who brought her entire town to Christ with her testimony. And, just as important, He "had to pass through Samaria" in order to give His disciples crucial training in evangelism. This was Jesus' purpose for coming to earth and the destiny of His disciples. Moreover, it was a tangible lesson on the first rule of the new kingdom: *Obedience to the Word of God is more important and more satisfying than fulfilling any mere physical need* (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4).

—4:35–38—

Jesus then turned toward the fields of barley (the poor man's grain) and noted how their color had faded from green to light brown. "White for harvest" is an exaggeration, meaning "extremely ripe." If the grain isn't harvested in time, the seed pods fall off the stalks, which is a tragic and humiliating blunder by the farmer.

Some commentators suggest Jesus looked across the fields as he quoted a farmer's proverb, "Four months and then the harvest," before turning to see the Samaritans arriving in their white robes. "Lift up your eyes . . . they are white for harvest." This is perhaps true, but we can only speculate. We do know for certain Jesus thought of evangelism as harvesting what God had nurtured and ripened. We also know He had called the disciples to harvest the men and woman God had prepared.

—4:39–42—

John, a master storyteller, turns from Jesus' lecture back to the living illustration He had orchestrated. The entire town of Samaritans followed the woman's witness to discover the Savior for themselves. What an unusual "evangelist" the woman was! She had no wholesome roots. She had no seminary training. She knew little theology. She couldn't explain why Jesus must be the Messiah. She merely reported her personal encounter.

The response of the Samaritans stands in sharp contrast to that of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Unlike the theologically sound Jews running the temple, the hated "half-breeds" welcomed Jesus and asked Him to teach. And, as a result of hearing Him, "many more believed."

John concludes the lesson on evangelism with a telling statement by the newly harvested Samaritans. While the woman's testimony brought them to hear Christ, it was their own encounter with the Word that caused them to trust Jesus as their Savior.

Application

The Few, the Humble, the Reapers

As John told the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, he consciously emphasized the sharp distinction between the attitudes and actions of Jesus and those of His disciples. Their dissimilarity is especially clear in the interlude between His conversation with the woman and His greeting the townspeople. While the woman witnessed to the town leaders, the Lord impressed on His disciples the urgent need for laborers to harvest souls ripened by the Holy Spirit. The disciples illustrate several attitudes that frequently keep us from entering the fields of harvest. Three come to mind.

1. *We are put off by prejudice or bigotry.* The disciples saw Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman—to them, she was as low on the social ladder as one could descend—and they simply could not believe it. Let's face it; we care about the salvation of some people more than others. And though it's hard to admit, we hope that some despicable souls never escape the darkness of hell. Our Creator, however, doesn't rank people on a scale of worthiness. We are *all* unworthy of salvation, yet equally loved by Him.

2. *We are consumed with the mundane details of life.* The disciples couldn't stop thinking about food long enough to notice their Master's excitement. They left Him weary, hungry, and thirsty from travel; they returned to find Him brimming

with energy. Anyone the least bit perceptive should have set aside the food and asked the Lord what made Him so cheerful. But not those self-serving, shortsighted disciples.

We spend most of our day dealing with the so-called necessities of life: fixing meals, keeping schedules, making a living. When was the last time you set aside time and made specific plans to share the good news at work or with someone you'd befriended in your neighborhood?

3. *We are lulled into inaction by the promise of tomorrow.* The disciples didn't appreciate the urgency of their call. Jesus used a popular catchphrase among farmers in His day, "Four months, and then the harvest," to rouse them into action. He said, in effect, "Not four months . . . NOW! The time is now!"

We procrastinate. We presume upon tomorrow. In the meantime, death continues to reap. Moreover, the time before the end of days grows shorter.

I notice that people actively engaged in evangelism lack many of the attitudes that destroy churches. The joy of their call keeps them from arguing over the worth of people. The priority of their call inspires them to handle the details of life quickly and move on to more pressing matters, such as the ingathering of souls. The urgency of their call prods them to overcome procrastination and to make the most of their opportunities. These people have neither the time nor the energy to waste on anything but the call to reap the harvest. They didn't, however, overcome negative attitudes and *then* heed the call.

If you will allow me to switch metaphors, people actively engaged in evangelism are like people on the front lines of battle. One of my Marine Corps friends, who had seen more than his share of combat, once remarked, "The men on the front lines never complained about the food; it was the guys farthest from the battle who grumbled the most when standing in the chow line!" Life-and-death struggle has a way of keeping things in perspective.

Admittedly, evangelism isn't war. Nevertheless, the principle remains the same. If we wait until prejudice, pettiness, or procrastination is no longer an issue, we will never enter the harvest. We are called to reap; therefore, we must obey. Once we have moved into the front lines, nagging hindrances quickly fade away.

Healing at a Distance (John 4:43-54)

⁴³After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. ⁴⁴For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. ⁴⁵So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.