

Chapter 5
Lesson Plan Enrichment Ideas
Fork in the Road
Jesus and the Adulterous Woman

Warm Up

The adulterous woman was being offered a chance to leave her former life behind and follow Jesus. Can you remember a time in your life when you stood at an important crossroad? What decision did you make?

Things to teach for enrichment

1. "He who is without sin, cast the first stone." Jesus was quoting a law that would have been well-known by the Pharisees. Read Deuteronomy 13:9 and 17:7. Why do you think God included this law for His people?

The New Testament is also careful to warn those who would stand in judgment of others. Read Romans 2:1-4. What does Paul caution his readers about here? How should our appreciation for the grace we have been given temper our response to the sin of others? How can we balance between discernment and grace?

There is a risk in standing in judgment. Those who came to shame the woman and ultimately Jesus left in shame themselves.

2. The Pharisees were not interested in the truth. They were driven by their own personal agenda. They viewed Jesus as a threat to the brotherhood of religious leaders as he rapidly gained followers.

See Matthew 12:9-14, 15:10-14, 21:23-27, 22:15-22, 28:11-15. What do each of these passages reveal about their true motives?

There were a few who did investigate Jesus with an open mind. Read John 3 which tells of an encounter between Jesus and the Pharisee Nicodemus. Note he approached Jesus under the cover of the dark of night. Note his honest questions, asked without accusation and no alternative motive. Later he speaks up for Jesus (John 7:43-52) and is cited for assisting another Pharisee, Joseph of Arimathea, in taking the body of Jesus down from the cross and burying him (John 20:38-40). When a person is sincerely seeking God, God has promised to reveal Himself to them (Proverbs 2:1-6, Hebrews 11:6). The vast majority of religious leaders never believed in Jesus Christ. What does that tell you about the motives of most religious leaders that encountered Him?

What does the negative example of the religious leaders teach us about approaching God? How can having a self-centered agenda keep us from finding the truth? How can we know if we have this problem?

3. *Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.* Jesus was inviting the woman to a life of freedom from the guilt of sin. We don't know how she responded. But she surely was struck by His forgiveness and willingness to restore.

Do you think she was able to let go of the shame of this very public incident? Was there residual guilt for her adulterous activity? While we know we are forgiven, it is not easy to let go of the guilt for our sinful past. What does the Bible have to say about this? What role should guilt play in the life of a Christian?

First, we must understand that in the Bible, guilt is not an emotion, but a state of being. It describes our standing with God. Read Ephesians 5:25-27. Jesus has washed us clean from our sin. He presents us to God as holy and blameless. Our record has been expunged. Read Romans 5:18. The word translated *justification* is a judicial term. The heavenly Judge has banged His gavel and delivered a verdict: the previously condemned has been declared innocent of all charges. We are no longer guilty.

This is not to say that we can then ignore sin. Part of the Holy Spirit's job as He indwells us is to warn us away from sin. His guidance is similar to when we put our hand on a hot stove. Immediately our nervous system demands a response, which is good, for it guards us from further damage. The Holy Spirit's prompting is this kind of a healthy warning, for sin is destructive in nature and opposes God.

Conviction is a healthy thing. Guilt, however, is not. Guilt is an inward focus, a concentration on our frailties and faults, rather than on Christ and the forgiveness He has given us. Guilt is destructive: it is what our accusing enemy (see Zechariah 3:1, Revelation 12:10) uses to incapacitate us.

Know the difference between conviction and guilt. We are no longer guilty! We have been redeemed. When guilty feelings plague us, we should respond to the accusation with the liberating truth: we have been declared innocent of all charges. We are no longer condemned. In Christ we have been set free. We must get our eyes off ourselves and onto the One who saved us.