



**February 11-12, 2023**

**John 7:1-24**

### **Ice Breaker Questions**

- In John 7, Jesus' character is being debated. Think back on your own life, and your own first impressions of people you know well now! Is there someone who is a good friend (or spouse!) now, who you didn't think would be a good fit the first time you met? What did you learn about them which changed your first impressions?

### **Understand Their Story**

Read John 7:1-24 in your group.

1. This passage divides up into three main scenes, which each have their own setting and conflict, and yet tie together with a uniting theme.
  - a. Scene 1: What is the first setting and conflict?
  - b. Scene 2: What is the second setting and conflict?
  - c. Scene 3: What is the third setting? This story has two conflicts or central questions. What are they and who initiates each?
    - i. What theme ties all three stories together? What are they all about?
2. How would you describe the mood or tone of the narrative?

### **Connect to His Story.**

3. John 7 and John 8 all take place during the Feast of Booths, so its important for us to know a bit about this feast.
  - a. Read Leviticus 23:33-44. What do you learn about the Feast of Booths in these verses? (eg. How long is it? What does it commemorate? What are they supposed to do during this Feast?)
  - b. Read Zechariah 14:16-19. How important is this feast to God? Why do you think this is the case?

## Apply to Our Story

4. In John 7:1-24, John repeatedly draws attention to the fact that his own family, the “Jews” and the crowds are divided as they see Jesus’ signs and hear his words. The only command that we can apply from this text is found in verse 24: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” Jesus is chastising people for judging him based on their own self-righteous legalism, rather than the right judgment which would come if they evaluated his claims in light of the rest of scripture (John 7:17).<sup>1</sup>
    - a. As the New Testament story unfolds, the ‘Bereans’ become an example of how people should evaluate the message that Jesus proclaimed, and the message(s) of any teacher(s) who claim to come in his name. Read Acts 17:10-15. What do you learn about the Bereans?
    - b. In Acts 17:10-15, Luke (the author of Acts) mentions that the Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica! Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 (focussing on v 19-21). What does Paul later tell the church of Thessalonica to do?
      - i. Do you feel well-equipped for evaluating the truthfulness of someone’s teaching? Do you have any resources or strategies you could share with your group?
      - ii. Has there been a specific time where you have been challenged to evaluate your own thinking or actions or teaching (!) in light of scripture? If you’re comfortable, share what happened and what you learned through the process.
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## God’s work and our Work

### How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 7:1-24

As we noted above, Jesus encourages the crowd to examine his claims based on God’s will as revealed in the scriptures (John 7:17). As he continues to speak, he also brings in a character piece: the difference between people with a true and false profession of faith is whether they seek their own glory or God’s glory.

This is obviously evident in the context of the church and christian ministry. We’ve seen many pastors and ministry leaders ‘crash and burn’ in the past few years, and often they seem to be people seeking their own glory. This is not an issue which is only found in the church, however. It is a character piece which plagues every area of life - including the places at which you work or volunteer, and your neighbourhoods and families.

- Think of one situation this week in which you may have felt overlooked or unappreciated, or simply tempted to draw attention to yourself and your own efforts, seeking your own glory! If you’re comfortable, share this situation and struggle with your group.
- Why do you think you desired recognition so much? What thoughts or emotions are underneath this desire?
- What is one practical way you can seek God’s glory rather than your own this week: at the place you work or volunteer, in your neighbourhoods or families?

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<sup>1</sup> DA Carson. The Gospel of John: The Pillar New Testament Commentary series, p 316-317.