

2

A Throwaway Woman

Redeemed by Christ

John 8:1-11

In a complex society, some people just don't make it. They are mentally ill, or low in intelligence, or uneducated, or socially inept, or lacking self-confidence, or physically disabled, or stuck in various forms of addictions. Whatever the cause, they can't cope. Capable people move around them, rushing off to work or school or church. But these "throwaway people" hover at the edges of society largely unnoticed and undervalued by their busy counterparts.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What kinds of people does your own society tend to "throw away"? Name or describe some specific people who seem unnoticed or undervalued.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Bring to mind several types of people that you tend to avoid. In God's presence, do a little soul-searching. Why do you avoid these people? Are you refusing to help even a little bit because you know that you can't solve their big problems? Are you protecting yourself? From what? How could you show that you value these people in the same way that you hope God values you?

In all of his relationships Jesus showed a different value system from that of the society in which he lived. Read John 8:1-11.

1. Notice each person or group of people mentioned in this event. Using the point of view of the Pharisees, create a "respectability scale." Where would you place each person or group of people on that scale?

2. What events led to Christ's meeting with the woman (vv. 1-6)?

3. What evidence do you see that the temple leaders were using this woman for their own purposes?

4. Most of us have had at least one occasion when we felt that we were being treated like trash. What effect does that kind of experience have on you?

5. Leviticus 20:10 ("If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death") is the law these religious leaders had in mind. In view of that law, why do you think that they brought the woman but not the man?

6. Verse 6 refers to a trap. Why was their question a trap?
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7. What underlying problems were not being addressed by the accusations against the woman?
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8. How did Christ's actions show that the woman was **not** a "throwaway person" in his sight (vv. 6-11)?
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9. Jesus spoke to both the woman and the religious leaders about sin. Why?
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10. Jesus showed that he valued the woman even though the temple leaders did not. What words or actions **help** you to feel **valued**?
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11. What difference does it make to you that Christ values you—no matter what you have done?

12. The religious leaders used the woman to gain what they thought was a greater good. What is wrong with using people in this way?

13. Many people are almost faceless to us. We see them only for what they can do for us. We avoid other people because their problems are too big for us to fix or because they embarrass us. Think of some of the "throwaway people" who enter your life. How might you treat these people in a way that mirrors Christ?

Prayerfully read aloud verses 10-11 as if Jesus were speaking directly to you. Pause to let God search your own heart, and receive his forgiveness. Pray, responding to Christ's words in whatever way is appropriate.

Now or Later

Review some of your thinking in question 13. In the days ahead, make a conscious effort to notice several people that you tend to avoid. Try to mirror the way that Jesus has accepted you as you connect with these people.