

As we enter **chapter 8 of John**, I'd like to change my approach a little bit; I'd like to make the notes in the form of a letter written by me to you. One of the most interesting accounts in the life of Jesus on earth is recorded in **John 7:53-8:11**.

Now, these verses were not found in the earliest manuscripts. Some question as to whether this account really occurred at the time we find it in John's Gospel. When we think about it, Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World in **8:12** follows logically after His claim to be the source of living water in **7:37-52**. "Most scholars agree that this event did actually occur, and that it was part of our Lord's ministry; the story was most likely history, a piece of oral tradition that circulated." It's a most enlightening look at our Lord and Savior.

Read 7:53-8:11. 7:53 Everyone went to his home. 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. :2 Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. Whether the Lord slept out on the mountainside or stayed at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany is unknown, but on the next morning Jesus came again into the Jerusalem Temple. Notice the crowd! Such was the depth and power and simplicity of Jesus' teaching (**7:46, Mt. 7:28-29; Lk. 4:22**) that all the people were coming to Him (**Mk. 2:13; Lk. 21:37-38**). Jesus assumed the seated teaching position and began to instruct them.

Some religious leaders—men who copied, interpreted, and taught the Law—entered and created a disturbance. **:3-5 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, :4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery (moicheia, inferring she's a married woman), in the very act. :5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"**

The Rabbis said "Every Jew must die before he will commit idolatry, murder, or adultery." Adultery was punishable by death (**Lev. 20:10, Dt. 22:13-24**). The scribes (sometimes called lawyers) were the experts in interpreting the Law. They were usually, but not always, Pharisees. The Pharisees were noted chiefly for their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law and their oral traditions. Though few in number (about 6000 at the time of Herod the Great), they were the dominant religious influence among the Jewish people, especially away from Jerusalem.

In John's Gospel, with the exception of Nicodemus (**3:1f, 7:50-52, 19:39-40**), the Pharisees are always presented as hostile to Jesus. Later, some would come to believe in Jesus, most notably Saul of Tarsus. "The Pharisees viewed Jesus' popularity with alarm. They feared both losing their influence with the people, and retaliation by the Romans if Jesus' followers started a revolt." See **11:48**.

They brought this married woman who was unfaithful to her mate and set her in the center of Jesus' listeners. They gave the charge: "She was caught in the very act of adultery. The Law of Moses commanded us to stone such women; what do You say?" She was guilty; there is no doubt about that. And what she did was sin. Did you notice, the guilty man was not brought? The OT law actually required the execution of both parties. It's just a trap to snare Jesus!

The 7th commandment forbids adultery (**Ex. 20:14, Dt. 5:18**), and **Lev. 20:10**

prescribes the death penalty for those who commit it. Jesus Himself upheld the OT condemnation of adultery (**Mt. 5:27-28** Sermon on Mount, **19:18**, where Jesus asked about divorce and teaches on marriage). In fact, He made the prohibition stronger, condemning not only the physical act, but also the lustful attitude that mentally considers it (**Mt. 5:28**)!

In his book Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis wrote, "If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity (sexual sin) as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: putting others in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing, backbiting, power, hatred, pride. That is why a cold self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But of course it is better to be neither!" The shame or fears of this guilty woman, in being publicly exposed, meant nothing to the leaders. If justice was all they sought, why bring the woman to Jesus at all? Their goal was to discredit Jesus.

If Jesus said that the woman ought to be stoned to death: 1st, He would lose the reputation He had gained for love and for mercy, and would never again be called 'the friend of sinners' (see **Mt. 9:11, Lk. 7:34, 15:2, 19:7**). 2nd, He would come into collision with the Roman law which said only Romans can inflict the death penalty. If He said that the woman should be pardoned, it could immediately be said that He was teaching people to break the law of Moses and He was condoning adultery. What would we have done with her and them? The scribes and Pharisees thought they finally had Jesus in an impossible dilemma. An emphatic question: "**You, there! What do You say?**" The leaders and the crowd were "hushed, watching intently to see how Jesus would react. But He, for the moment, surprisingly did nothing" but started writing on the ground with His finger!

:6 They were saying this, testing (to try, tempt) Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. This is the answer to their question "**What do You say?**" They didn't really care about the woman; they wanted to stone Jesus! For some time, Jesus remained silent, simply writing on the ground.

3 times the finger of God did some writing. The 1st time, the finger of God wrote the 10 Commandments on stone tablets which were given to Moses (**Ex. 31:18**). The 2nd time, at the feast of Belshazzar there came a finger of God in the form of a man's hand (**Dan. 5:5-28, read :24-28**). So with this incident with the Pharisees, for the 3rd time we have God writing something. Perhaps names and sins of the men...part of the Law...words of warning...(stalling)!

The response of Jesus shows how divine justice and mercy are harmonized. We know God is holy and His Law is holy also. So how does a holy God deal with sinners and sins? **Rom. 3:24-26, 8:3, 1 Pet. 2:24, 2 Cor. 5:21** give us God's solution (**read**). Our Lord Jesus' sacrificial death fully satisfied the demands of God's justice and revealed His mercy and forgiveness. God poured out His wrath against sin and sinners on Jesus. This resulted in providing His grace and mercy on those who believe. **Read Titus 2:14.** Yet Jesus hadn't died on the cross yet, so how would He respond to the religious leaders & the woman?

:7-8 But when they persisted (continued on) in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin (sinless) among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” To add weight to His answer, Jesus arose. “Let him who is ‘sinless’” (that’s the word used). “All right! She’s guilty. The Law says to stone her. But let anyone among you that is without sin (this is the only time Jesus ever employed this word in the NT) be the first to cast a stone.” **Dt. 13:9, 17:7** where the witnesses of a crime are to start the execution.

It is important to notice that Jesus does uphold the Law. Adultery is sin; it violates marriage; it destroys society; it attacks everything that God holds dear. He did not make light of her sin. But the qualification for throwing stones prevented anyone there from acting. His words upheld the Law, since He did not deny the woman’s guilt. They also avoided the charge of instigating an execution in violation of Roman authority, since the Lord put the responsibility back on the accusers. And, they mercifully spared the woman from being stoned for her sin. “Jesus’ masterful answer neither minimized the woman’s guilt, nor denied the Law’s sanctity. But it cut the ground out from under the scribes and Pharisees by revealing that they were unfit to be her judges and executioners.” **Read Rom. 2:1 and Mt. 7:1-5.**

This was a **James 1:2-5** test. Jesus, totally dependent on His Father, in line with the OT, received the Father’s wisdom to deal with this situation. “If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God (the source!), who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” May we follow His example. **:8 Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.** After making that startling statement (:7), He stooped down once more and wrote on the ground and said nothing. Nothing more needed to be said.

:9 When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. What a tremendous disappearing act took place here. The eldest were the first to realize what was involved. Perhaps they realized they had suffered defeat, but probably “they were more keenly aware of their sins and the impossibility of meeting Jesus’ challenge.” Jesus was the only One who had any right to cast a stone at that woman; He was the only one who was sinless. The religious leaders went out! But notice, the woman stayed!

:10 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” “Woman!” He called her by the same name He used for His mother at Cana and on the Cross (**2:4, 19:26**; also see **4:21 and 20:13**). **Read Rom. 8:31-34.** Here for the first time, someone addressed the woman. “Woman, where are your condemners? Did no one judge against you?”

:11 She said, “No one, Lord (or Sir).” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more. I’m not going to judge against you either. I know you have made a mess of things, but life is not finished yet.” Jesus was looking 6 months down the road at Passover, where He would provide forgiveness of sins & new hearts & the indwelling Holy Spirit. The sins of the people who lived in OT days were also forgiven on the basis of the death of Jesus on the cross (**Rom. 3:23-26**). The new covenant was coming!

The religious leaders only cared about strict adherence to Law; they wanted to condemn her (and Him!) on that basis. Jesus cared about people; He wanted to forgive and give her another way. He gives her another way, one of walking in victory over sin. Does she repent and believe? It appears she did, within her heart, since the heart is the real issue!

Forgiveness does not imply license to sin. Jesus did not condemn her, but He did command her to abandon her sinful lifestyle. “Live from this point on differently.” Encountering Jesus has always demanded the transformation of life, the turning away from sin. Sinners were offered the opportunity to start life anew. **Rom. 6:1-2 Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?**

Forgiveness and new hearts and receiving the Holy Spirit to live in our bodies are designed to set us free. When our sins are forgiven and we’ve received new hearts and the Spirit has taken up residence in our fleshly bodies, it is to free us that we might begin to live a different lifestyle, to never go back to the things we have left behind. Like the without-strength man in **5:14**. Jesus died that we may live. **Read Lk. 7:36-50. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).** And that’s not referring to justification; it’s referring to walking by the Spirit.

He did not say that what she had done did not matter, but everyone has a future as well as a past. He believed that with God and based on His upcoming work on the cross, sinners could receive forgiveness and become saints and live a life pleasing to Him. Leave your life of sin. The power of sin has been broken. He never tells anyone to do something that He does not enable him/her to do by the Spirit. This story is unfinished, for every life is an unfinished story until this earthly life ends. How will yours and mine unfold? Lessons you learned from this passage? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus? Love, Joel

Practical Ways to **Apply** God’s Word:

1. Start with Jesus (**Mt. 11:28-30**) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play as a husband, wife, parent, child. Be sure you’re remaining true to who you are.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, & serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (**1 Pet. 4:7-11**). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (**Heb. 10:24-25**).
4. Then as an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you’re continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there’s a steady input from God’s Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there’s a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.

As we enter **chapter 8 of John**, I'd like to change my approach a little bit; I'd like to make the notes in the form of a letter written by me to you. One of the most interesting accounts in the life of Jesus on earth is recorded in **John 7:53-8:11**.

Now, these verses were not found in the earliest manuscripts. Some question as to whether this account really occurred at the time we find it in John's Gospel. When we think about it, Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World in **8:12** follows logically after His claim to be the source of living water in **7:37-52**. "Most scholars agree that this event did actually occur, and that it was part of our Lord's ministry; the story was most likely history, a piece of oral tradition that circulated." It's a most enlightening look at our Lord and Savior.

Read 7:53-8:11. 7:53 Everyone went to his home. 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. :2 Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. Whether the Lord slept out on the mountainside or stayed at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany is unknown, but on the next morning Jesus came again into the Jerusalem Temple. Notice the crowd! Such was the depth and power and simplicity of Jesus' teaching (**7:46, Mt. 7:28-29; Lk. 4:22**) that all the people were coming to Him (**Mk. 2:13; Lk. 21:37-38**). Jesus assumed the seated teaching position and began to instruct them.

Some religious leaders—men who copied, interpreted, and taught the Law—entered and created a disturbance. **:3-5 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, :4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery (moicheia, inferring she's a married woman), in the very act. :5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"**

The Rabbis said "Every Jew must die before he will commit idolatry, murder, or adultery." Adultery was punishable by death (**Lev. 20:10, Dt. 22:13-24**). The scribes (sometimes called lawyers) were the experts in interpreting the Law. They were usually, but not always, Pharisees. The Pharisees were noted chiefly for their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law and their oral traditions. Though few in number (about 6000 at the time of Herod the Great), they were the dominant religious influence among the Jewish people, especially away from Jerusalem.

In John's Gospel, with the exception of Nicodemus (**3:1f, 7:50-52, 19:39-40**), the Pharisees are always presented as hostile to Jesus. Later, some would come to believe in Jesus, most notably Saul of Tarsus. "The Pharisees viewed Jesus' popularity with alarm. They feared both losing their influence with the people, and retaliation by the Romans if Jesus' followers started a revolt." See **11:48**.

They brought this married woman who was unfaithful to her mate and set her in the center of Jesus' listeners. They gave the charge: "She was caught in the very act of adultery. The Law of Moses commanded us to stone such women; what do You say?" She was guilty; there is no doubt about that. And what she did was sin. Did you notice, the guilty man was not brought? The OT law actually required the execution of both parties. It's just a trap to snare Jesus!

The 7th commandment forbids adultery (**Ex. 20:14, Dt. 5:18**), and **Lev. 20:10**

prescribes the death penalty for those who commit it. Jesus Himself upheld the OT condemnation of adultery (**Mt. 5:27-28** Sermon on Mount, **19:18**, where Jesus asked about divorce and teaches on marriage). In fact, He made the prohibition stronger, condemning not only the physical act, but also the lustful attitude that mentally considers it (**Mt. 5:28**)!

In his book Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis wrote, “If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity (sexual sin) as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: putting others in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing, backbiting, power, hatred, pride. That is why a cold self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But of course it is better to be neither!” The shame or fears of this guilty woman, in being publicly exposed, meant nothing to the leaders. If justice was all they sought, why bring the woman to Jesus at all? Their goal was to discredit Jesus.

If Jesus said that the woman ought to be stoned to death: 1st, He would lose the reputation He had gained for love and for mercy, and would never again be called ‘the friend of sinners’ (see **Mt. 9:11, Lk. 7:34, 15:2, 19:7**). 2nd, He would come into collision with the Roman law which said only Romans can inflict the death penalty. If He said that the woman should be pardoned, it could immediately be said that He was teaching people to break the law of Moses and He was condoning adultery. What would we have done with her and them? The scribes and Pharisees thought they finally had Jesus in an impossible dilemma. An emphatic question: “**You, there! What do You say?**” The leaders and the crowd were “hushed, watching intently to see how Jesus would react. But He, for the moment, surprisingly did nothing” but started writing on the ground with His finger!

:6 They were saying this, testing (to try, tempt) Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. This is the answer to their question “**What do You say?**” They didn’t really care about the woman; they wanted to stone Jesus! For some time, Jesus remained silent, simply writing on the ground.

3 times the finger of God did some writing. The 1st time, the finger of God wrote the 10 Commandments on stone tablets which were given to Moses (**Ex. 31:18**). The 2nd time, at the feast of Belshazzar there came a finger of God in the form of a man’s hand (**Dan. 5:5-28, read :24-28**). So with this incident with the Pharisees, for the 3rd time we have God writing something. Perhaps names and sins of the men...part of the Law...words of warning...(stalling)!

The response of Jesus shows how divine justice and mercy are harmonized. We know God is holy and His Law is holy also. So how does a holy God deal with sinners and sins? **Rom. 3:24-26, 8:3, 1 Pet. 2:24, 2 Cor.5:21** give us God’s solution (**read**). Our Lord Jesus’ sacrificial death fully satisfied the demands of God’s justice and revealed His mercy and forgiveness. God poured out His wrath against sin and sinners on Jesus. This resulted in providing His grace and mercy on those who believe. **Read Titus 2:14.** Yet Jesus hadn’t died on the cross yet, so how would He respond to the religious leaders & the woman?

:7-8 But when they persisted (continued on) in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin (sinless) among you, let him *be the first to throw a stone at her.*” To add weight to His answer, Jesus arose. “Let him who is ‘sinless’” (that’s the word used). “All right! She’s guilty. The Law says to stone her. But let anyone among you that is without sin (this is the only time Jesus ever employed this word in the NT) be the first to cast a stone.” **Dt. 13:9, 17:7** where the witnesses of a crime are to start the execution.

It is important to notice that Jesus does uphold the Law. Adultery is sin; it violates marriage; it destroys society; it attacks everything that God holds dear. He did not make light of her sin. But the qualification for throwing stones prevented anyone there from acting. His words upheld the Law, since He did not deny the woman’s guilt. They also avoided the charge of instigating an execution in violation of Roman authority, since the Lord put the responsibility back on the accusers. And, they mercifully spared the woman from being stoned for her sin. “Jesus’ masterful answer neither minimized the woman’s guilt, nor denied the Law’s sanctity. But it cut the ground out from under the scribes and Pharisees by revealing that they were unfit to be her judges and executioners.” **Read Rom. 2:1 and Mt. 7:1-5.**

This was a **James 1:2-5** test. Jesus, totally dependent on His Father, in line with the OT, received the Father’s wisdom to deal with this situation. “If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God (the source!), who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” May we follow His example. **:8 Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.** After making that startling statement (:7), He stooped down once more and wrote on the ground and said nothing. Nothing more needed to be said.

:9 When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. What a tremendous disappearing act took place here. The eldest were the first to realize what was involved. Perhaps they realized they had suffered defeat, but probably “they were more keenly aware of their sins and the impossibility of meeting Jesus’ challenge.” Jesus was the only One who had any right to cast a stone at that woman; He was the only one who was sinless. The religious leaders went out! But notice, the woman stayed!

:10 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” “Woman!” He called her by the same name He used for His mother at Cana and on the Cross (**2:4, 19:26**; also see **4:21 and 20:13**). **Read Rom. 8:31-34.** Here for the first time, someone addressed the woman. “Woman, where are your condemners? Did no one judge against you?”

:11 She said, “No one, Lord (or Sir).” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more. I’m not going to judge against you either. I know you have made a mess of things, but life is not finished yet.” Jesus was looking 6 months down the road at Passover, where He would provide forgiveness of sins & new hearts & the indwelling Holy Spirit. The sins of the people who lived in OT days were also forgiven on the basis of the death of Jesus on the cross (**Rom. 3:23-26**). The new covenant was coming!

The religious leaders only cared about strict adherence to Law; they wanted to condemn her (and Him!) on that basis. Jesus cared about people; He wanted to forgive and give her another way. He gives her another way, one of walking in victory over sin. Does she repent and believe? It appears she did, within her heart, since the heart is the real issue!

Forgiveness does not imply license to sin. Jesus did not condemn her, but He did command her to abandon her sinful lifestyle. “Live from this point on differently.” Encountering Jesus has always demanded the transformation of life, the turning away from sin. Sinners were offered the opportunity to start life anew. **Rom. 6:1-2 Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?**

Forgiveness and new hearts and receiving the Holy Spirit to live in our bodies are designed to set us free. When our sins are forgiven and we’ve received new hearts and the Spirit has taken up residence in our fleshly bodies, it is to free us that we might begin to live a different lifestyle, to never go back to the things we have left behind. Like the without-strength man in **5:14**. Jesus died that we may live. **Read Lk. 7:36-50. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1)**. And that’s not referring to justification; it’s referring to walking by the Spirit.

He did not say that what she had done did not matter, but everyone has a future as well as a past. He believed that with God and based on His upcoming work on the cross, sinners could receive forgiveness and become saints and live a life pleasing to Him. Leave your life of sin. The power of sin has been broken. He never tells anyone to do something that He does not enable him/her to do by the Spirit. This story is unfinished, for every life is an unfinished story until this earthly life ends. How will yours and mine unfold? Lessons you learned from this passage? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus? Love, Joel

Practical Ways to **Apply** God’s Word:

1. Start with Jesus (Mt. 11:28-30) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play as a husband, wife, parent, child. Be sure you’re remaining true to who you are.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, & serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (**1 Pet. 4:7-11**). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25).
4. Then as an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you’re continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there’s a steady input from God’s Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there’s a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.

As we enter **chapter 8 of John**, I'd like to change my approach a little bit; I'd like to make the notes in the form of a letter written by me to you. One of the most interesting accounts in the life of Jesus on earth is recorded in **John 7:53-8:11**.

Now, these verses were not found in the earliest manuscripts. Some question as to whether this account really occurred at the time we find it in John's Gospel. When we think about it, Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World in **8:12** follows logically after His claim to be the source of living water in **7:37-52**. "Most scholars agree that this event did actually occur, and that it was part of our Lord's ministry; the story was most likely history, a piece of oral tradition that circulated." It's a most enlightening look at our Lord and Savior.

Read 7:53-8:11. 7:53 Everyone went to his home. 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. :2 Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. Whether the Lord slept out on the mountainside or stayed at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany is unknown, but on the next morning Jesus came again into the Jerusalem Temple. Notice the crowd! Such was the depth and power and simplicity of Jesus' teaching (**7:46, Mt. 7:28-29; Lk. 4:22**) that all the people were coming to Him (**Mk. 2:13; Lk. 21:37-38**). Jesus assumed the seated teaching position and began to instruct them.

Some religious leaders—men who copied, interpreted, and taught the Law—entered and created a disturbance. **:3-5 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, :4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery (moicheia, inferring she's a married woman), in the very act. :5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"**

The Rabbis said "Every Jew must die before he will commit idolatry, murder, or adultery." Adultery was punishable by death (**Lev. 20:10, Dt. 22:13-24**). The scribes (sometimes called lawyers) were the experts in interpreting the Law. They were usually, but not always, Pharisees. The Pharisees were noted chiefly for their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law and their oral traditions. Though few in number (about 6000 at the time of Herod the Great), they were the dominant religious influence among the Jewish people, especially away from Jerusalem.

In John's Gospel, with the exception of Nicodemus (**3:1f, 7:50-52, 19:39-40**), the Pharisees are always presented as hostile to Jesus. Later, some would come to believe in Jesus, most notably Saul of Tarsus. "The Pharisees viewed Jesus' popularity with alarm. They feared both losing their influence with the people, and retaliation by the Romans if Jesus' followers started a revolt." See **11:48**.

They brought this married woman who was unfaithful to her mate and set her in the center of Jesus' listeners. They gave the charge: "She was caught in the very act of adultery. The Law of Moses commanded us to stone such women; what do You say?" She was guilty; there is no doubt about that. And what she did was sin. Did you notice, the guilty man was not brought? The OT law actually required the execution of both parties. It's just a trap to snare Jesus!

The 7th commandment forbids adultery (**Ex. 20:14, Dt. 5:18**), and **Lev. 20:10**

As we enter **chapter 8 of John**, I'd like to change my approach a little bit; I'd like to make the notes in the form of a letter written by me to you. One of the most interesting accounts in the life of Jesus on earth is recorded in **John 7:53-8:11**.

Now, these verses were not found in the earliest manuscripts. Some question as to whether this account really occurred at the time we find it in John's Gospel. When we think about it, Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World in **8:12** follows logically after His claim to be the source of living water in **7:37-52**. "Most scholars agree that this event did actually occur, and that it was part of our Lord's ministry; the story was most likely history, a piece of oral tradition that circulated." It's a most enlightening look at our Lord and Savior.

Read 7:53-8:11. 7:53 Everyone went to his home. 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. :2 Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. Whether the Lord slept out on the mountainside or stayed at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany is unknown, but on the next morning Jesus came again into the Jerusalem Temple. Notice the crowd! Such was the depth and power and simplicity of Jesus' teaching (**7:46, Mt. 7:28-29; Lk. 4:22**) that all the people were coming to Him (**Mk. 2:13; Lk. 21:37-38**). Jesus assumed the seated teaching position and began to instruct them.

Some religious leaders—men who copied, interpreted, and taught the Law—entered and created a disturbance. **:3-5 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, :4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery (moicheia, inferring she's a married woman), in the very act. :5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"**

The Rabbis said "Every Jew must die before he will commit idolatry, murder, or adultery." Adultery was punishable by death (**Lev. 20:10, Dt. 22:13-24**). The scribes (sometimes called lawyers) were the experts in interpreting the Law. They were usually, but not always, Pharisees. The Pharisees were noted chiefly for their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law and their oral traditions. Though few in number (about 6000 at the time of Herod the Great), they were the dominant religious influence among the Jewish people, especially away from Jerusalem.

In John's Gospel, with the exception of Nicodemus (**3:1f, 7:50-52, 19:39-40**), the Pharisees are always presented as hostile to Jesus. Later, some would come to believe in Jesus, most notably Saul of Tarsus. "The Pharisees viewed Jesus' popularity with alarm. They feared both losing their influence with the people, and retaliation by the Romans if Jesus' followers started a revolt." See **11:48**.

They brought this married woman who was unfaithful to her mate and set her in the center of Jesus' listeners. They gave the charge: "She was caught in the very act of adultery. The Law of Moses commanded us to stone such women; what do You say?" She was guilty; there is no doubt about that. And what she did was sin. Did you notice, the guilty man was not brought? The OT law actually required the execution of both parties. It's just a trap to snare Jesus!

The 7th commandment forbids adultery (**Ex. 20:14, Dt. 5:18**), and **Lev. 20:10**

prescribes the death penalty for those who commit it. Jesus Himself upheld the OT condemnation of adultery (**Mt. 5:27-28** Sermon on Mount, **19:18**, where Jesus asked about divorce and teaches on marriage). In fact, He made the prohibition stronger, condemning not only the physical act, but also the lustful attitude that mentally considers it (**Mt. 5:28**)!

In his book Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis wrote, “If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity (sexual sin) as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: putting others in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing, backbiting, power, hatred, pride. That is why a cold self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But of course it is better to be neither!” The shame or fears of this guilty woman, in being publicly exposed, meant nothing to the leaders. If justice was all they sought, why bring the woman to Jesus at all? Their goal was to discredit Jesus.

If Jesus said that the woman ought to be stoned to death: 1st, He would lose the reputation He had gained for love and for mercy, and would never again be called ‘the friend of sinners’ (see **Mt. 9:11, Lk. 7:34, 15:2, 19:7**). 2nd, He would come into collision with the Roman law which said only Romans can inflict the death penalty. If He said that the woman should be pardoned, it could immediately be said that He was teaching people to break the law of Moses and He was condoning adultery. What would we have done with her and them? The scribes and Pharisees thought they finally had Jesus in an impossible dilemma. An emphatic question: “**You, there! What do You say?**” The leaders and the crowd were “hushed, watching intently to see how Jesus would react. But He, for the moment, surprisingly did nothing” but started writing on the ground with His finger!

:6 They were saying this, testing (to try, tempt) Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. This is the answer to their question “**What do You say?**” They didn’t really care about the woman; they wanted to stone Jesus! For some time, Jesus remained silent, simply writing on the ground.

3 times the finger of God did some writing. The 1st time, the finger of God wrote the 10 Commandments on stone tablets which were given to Moses (**Ex. 31:18**). The 2nd time, at the feast of Belshazzar there came a finger of God in the form of a man’s hand (**Dan. 5:5-28, read :24-28**). So with this incident with the Pharisees, for the 3rd time we have God writing something. Perhaps names and sins of the men...part of the Law...words of warning...(stalling)!

The response of Jesus shows how divine justice and mercy are harmonized. We know God is holy and His Law is holy also. So how does a holy God deal with sinners and sins? **Rom. 3:24-26, 8:3, 1 Pet. 2:24, 2 Cor.5:21** give us God’s solution (**read**). Our Lord Jesus’ sacrificial death fully satisfied the demands of God’s justice and revealed His mercy and forgiveness. God poured out His wrath against sin and sinners on Jesus. This resulted in providing His grace and mercy on those who believe. **Read Titus 2:14.** Yet Jesus hadn’t died on the cross yet, so how would He respond to the religious leaders & the woman?

prescribes the death penalty for those who commit it. Jesus Himself upheld the OT condemnation of adultery (**Mt. 5:27-28** Sermon on Mount, **19:18**, where Jesus asked about divorce and teaches on marriage). In fact, He made the prohibition stronger, condemning not only the physical act, but also the lustful attitude that mentally considers it (**Mt. 5:28**)!

In his book Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis wrote, “If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity (sexual sin) as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: putting others in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing, backbiting, power, hatred, pride. That is why a cold self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But of course it is better to be neither!” The shame or fears of this guilty woman, in being publicly exposed, meant nothing to the leaders. If justice was all they sought, why bring the woman to Jesus at all? Their goal was to discredit Jesus.

If Jesus said that the woman ought to be stoned to death: 1st, He would lose the reputation He had gained for love and for mercy, and would never again be called ‘the friend of sinners’ (see **Mt. 9:11, Lk. 7:34, 15:2, 19:7**). 2nd, He would come into collision with the Roman law which said only Romans can inflict the death penalty. If He said that the woman should be pardoned, it could immediately be said that He was teaching people to break the law of Moses and He was condoning adultery. What would we have done with her and them? The scribes and Pharisees thought they finally had Jesus in an impossible dilemma. An emphatic question: “**You, there! What do You say?**” The leaders and the crowd were “hushed, watching intently to see how Jesus would react. But He, for the moment, surprisingly did nothing” but started writing on the ground with His finger!

:6 They were saying this, testing (to try, tempt) Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. This is the answer to their question “**What do You say?**” They didn’t really care about the woman; they wanted to stone Jesus! For some time, Jesus remained silent, simply writing on the ground.

3 times the finger of God did some writing. The 1st time, the finger of God wrote the 10 Commandments on stone tablets which were given to Moses (**Ex. 31:18**). The 2nd time, at the feast of Belshazzar there came a finger of God in the form of a man’s hand (**Dan. 5:5-28, read :24-28**). So with this incident with the Pharisees, for the 3rd time we have God writing something. Perhaps names and sins of the men...part of the Law...words of warning...(stalling)!

The response of Jesus shows how divine justice and mercy are harmonized. We know God is holy and His Law is holy also. So how does a holy God deal with sinners and sins? **Rom. 3:24-26, 8:3, 1 Pet. 2:24, 2 Cor.5:21** give us God’s solution (**read**). Our Lord Jesus’ sacrificial death fully satisfied the demands of God’s justice and revealed His mercy and forgiveness. God poured out His wrath against sin and sinners on Jesus. This resulted in providing His grace and mercy on those who believe. **Read Titus 2:14.** Yet Jesus hadn’t died on the cross yet, so how would He respond to the religious leaders & the woman?

:7-8 But when they persisted (continued on) in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin (sinless) among you, let him *be the first to throw a stone at her.*” To add weight to His answer, Jesus arose. “Let him who is ‘sinless’” (that’s the word used). “All right! She’s guilty. The Law says to stone her. But let anyone among you that is without sin (this is the only time Jesus ever employed this word in the NT) be the first to cast a stone.” **Dt. 13:9, 17:7** where the witnesses of a crime are to start the execution.

It is important to notice that Jesus does uphold the Law. Adultery is sin; it violates marriage; it destroys society; it attacks everything that God holds dear. He did not make light of her sin. But the qualification for throwing stones prevented anyone there from acting. His words upheld the Law, since He did not deny the woman’s guilt. They also avoided the charge of instigating an execution in violation of Roman authority, since the Lord put the responsibility back on the accusers. And, they mercifully spared the woman from being stoned for her sin. “Jesus’ masterful answer neither minimized the woman’s guilt, nor denied the Law’s sanctity. But it cut the ground out from under the scribes and Pharisees by revealing that they were unfit to be her judges and executioners.” **Read Rom. 2:1 and Mt. 7:1-5.**

This was a **James 1:2-5** test. Jesus, totally dependent on His Father, in line with the OT, received the Father’s wisdom to deal with this situation. “If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God (the source!), who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” May we follow His example. **:8 Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.** After making that startling statement (:7), He stooped down once more and wrote on the ground and said nothing. Nothing more needed to be said.

:9 When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. What a tremendous disappearing act took place here. The eldest were the first to realize what was involved. Perhaps they realized they had suffered defeat, but probably “they were more keenly aware of their sins and the impossibility of meeting Jesus’ challenge.” Jesus was the only One who had any right to cast a stone at that woman; He was the only one who was sinless. The religious leaders went out! But notice, the woman stayed!

:10 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” “Woman!” He called her by the same name He used for His mother at Cana and on the Cross (**2:4, 19:26**; also see **4:21 and 20:13**). **Read Rom. 8:31-34.** Here for the first time, someone addressed the woman. “Woman, where are your condemners? Did no one judge against you?”

:11 She said, “No one, Lord (or Sir).” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more. I’m not going to judge against you either. I know you have made a mess of things, but life is not finished yet.” Jesus was looking 6 months down the road at Passover, where He would provide forgiveness of sins & new hearts & the indwelling Holy Spirit. The sins of the people who lived in OT days were also forgiven on the basis of the death of Jesus on the cross (**Rom. 3:23-26**). The new covenant was coming!

:7-8 But when they persisted (continued on) in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin (sinless) among you, let him *be the first to throw a stone at her.*” To add weight to His answer, Jesus arose. “Let him who is ‘sinless’” (that’s the word used). “All right! She’s guilty. The Law says to stone her. But let anyone among you that is without sin (this is the only time Jesus ever employed this word in the NT) be the first to cast a stone.” **Dt. 13:9, 17:7** where the witnesses of a crime are to start the execution.

It is important to notice that Jesus does uphold the Law. Adultery is sin; it violates marriage; it destroys society; it attacks everything that God holds dear. He did not make light of her sin. But the qualification for throwing stones prevented anyone there from acting. His words upheld the Law, since He did not deny the woman’s guilt. They also avoided the charge of instigating an execution in violation of Roman authority, since the Lord put the responsibility back on the accusers. And, they mercifully spared the woman from being stoned for her sin. “Jesus’ masterful answer neither minimized the woman’s guilt, nor denied the Law’s sanctity. But it cut the ground out from under the scribes and Pharisees by revealing that they were unfit to be her judges and executioners.” **Read Rom. 2:1 and Mt. 7:1-5.**

This was a **James 1:2-5** test. Jesus, totally dependent on His Father, in line with the OT, received the Father’s wisdom to deal with this situation. “If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God (the source!), who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” May we follow His example. **:8 Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.** After making that startling statement (:7), He stooped down once more and wrote on the ground and said nothing. Nothing more needed to be said.

:9 When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. What a tremendous disappearing act took place here. The eldest were the first to realize what was involved. Perhaps they realized they had suffered defeat, but probably “they were more keenly aware of their sins and the impossibility of meeting Jesus’ challenge.” Jesus was the only One who had any right to cast a stone at that woman; He was the only one who was sinless. The religious leaders went out! But notice, the woman stayed!

:10 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” “Woman!” He called her by the same name He used for His mother at Cana and on the Cross (**2:4, 19:26**; also see **4:21 and 20:13**). **Read Rom. 8:31-34.** Here for the first time, someone addressed the woman. “Woman, where are your condemners? Did no one judge against you?”

:11 She said, “No one, Lord (or Sir).” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more. I’m not going to judge against you either. I know you have made a mess of things, but life is not finished yet.” Jesus was looking 6 months down the road at Passover, where He would provide forgiveness of sins & new hearts & the indwelling Holy Spirit. The sins of the people who lived in OT days were also forgiven on the basis of the death of Jesus on the cross (**Rom. 3:23-26**). The new covenant was coming!

The religious leaders only cared about strict adherence to Law; they wanted to condemn her (and Him!) on that basis. Jesus cared about people; He wanted to forgive and give her another way. He gives her another way, one of walking in victory over sin. Does she repent and believe? It appears she did, within her heart, since the heart is the real issue!

Forgiveness does not imply license to sin. Jesus did not condemn her, but He did command her to abandon her sinful lifestyle. “Live from this point on differently.” Encountering Jesus has always demanded the transformation of life, the turning away from sin. Sinners were offered the opportunity to start life anew. **Rom. 6:1-2 Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?**

Forgiveness and new hearts and receiving the Holy Spirit to live in our bodies are designed to set us free. When our sins are forgiven and we’ve received new hearts and the Spirit has taken up residence in our fleshly bodies, it is to free us that we might begin to live a different lifestyle, to never go back to the things we have left behind. Like the without-strength man in **5:14**. Jesus died that we may live. **Read Lk. 7:36-50. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1)**. And that’s not referring to justification; it’s referring to walking by the Spirit.

He did not say that what she had done did not matter, but everyone has a future as well as a past. He believed that with God and based on His upcoming work on the cross, sinners could receive forgiveness and become saints and live a life pleasing to Him. Leave your life of sin. The power of sin has been broken. He never tells anyone to do something that He does not enable him/her to do by the Spirit. This story is unfinished, for every life is an unfinished story until this earthly life ends. How will yours and mine unfold? Lessons you learned from this passage? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus? Love, Joel

Practical Ways to **Apply** God’s Word:

1. Start with Jesus (Mt. 11:28-30) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play as a husband, wife, parent, child. Be sure you’re remaining true to who you are.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, & serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (1 Pet. 4:7-11). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25).
4. Then as an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you’re continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there’s a steady input from God’s Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there’s a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.

The religious leaders only cared about strict adherence to Law; they wanted to condemn her (and Him!) on that basis. Jesus cared about people; He wanted to forgive and give her another way. He gives her another way, one of walking in victory over sin. Does she repent and believe? It appears she did, within her heart, since the heart is the real issue!

Forgiveness does not imply license to sin. Jesus did not condemn her, but He did command her to abandon her sinful lifestyle. “Live from this point on differently.” Encountering Jesus has always demanded the transformation of life, the turning away from sin. Sinners were offered the opportunity to start life anew. **Rom. 6:1-2 Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?**

Forgiveness and new hearts and receiving the Holy Spirit to live in our bodies are designed to set us free. When our sins are forgiven and we’ve received new hearts and the Spirit has taken up residence in our fleshly bodies, it is to free us that we might begin to live a different lifestyle, to never go back to the things we have left behind. Like the without-strength man in **5:14**. Jesus died that we may live. **Read Lk. 7:36-50. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1)**. And that’s not referring to justification; it’s referring to walking by the Spirit.

He did not say that what she had done did not matter, but everyone has a future as well as a past. He believed that with God and based on His upcoming work on the cross, sinners could receive forgiveness and become saints and live a life pleasing to Him. Leave your life of sin. The power of sin has been broken. He never tells anyone to do something that He does not enable him/her to do by the Spirit. This story is unfinished, for every life is an unfinished story until this earthly life ends. How will yours and mine unfold? Lessons you learned from this passage? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus? Love, Joel

Practical Ways to **Apply** God’s Word:

1. Start with Jesus (Mt. 11:28-30) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play as a husband, wife, parent, child. Be sure you’re remaining true to who you are.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, & serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (1 Pet. 4:7-11). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25).
4. Then as an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you’re continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there’s a steady input from God’s Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there’s a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.