

The Gospel of John  
Lesson 12 – John 8  
**Knowing Jesus**

Chapter 8 picks up many of the themes that we have already addressed, such as Jesus being from above and humans from below, that Jesus has come to save and condemn, and faith in Jesus leading to life and a lack of faith leading to death. What will be offered in this lesson though is that what holds this section together is knowing or not knowing/understanding or not understanding.

**Jesus knows people better than they know themselves (vs.1-11):** This is the famous story about the woman caught in adultery. While this story can be mined for multiple insights, the core of the story is that the scribes and the Pharisees thought that they knew more (or were wiser) than Jesus. They believed that they were wise enough to entrap Jesus and cause him to fall out of favor with his followers. Jesus however knew that the scribes and Pharisees were not without sin, and so when he writes in the sand, he is in fact writing a list of their sins for which they ought to be condemned.

**Jesus knows who he is and where he has come from (vs.12-20):** Jesus refers to himself as the light of the world; the one who can show people the way to life. This took place during the lighting of the great cauldrons during the Festival of Booths. These would shine light miles away. The light was also a way in which rabbis referred to the coming messiah. So, Jesus testifies to his identity, and he can do so first because of where he has come from (heaven) and second because God also testifies on Jesus' behalf.

**The people do not know where Jesus is going or who he is...but they will (Vs.21-30):** Jesus declares that he is going away (back to heaven) but the people cannot comprehend this reality. After Jesus tells his audience that they will die in their sins unless they believe in him, they ask "Who are you?" Jesus then reminds them that all that he says to them has come from God (this is how Jesus knows what he knows). Ultimately though, all people will know who Jesus is when he is "lifted up" (crucified and risen). Some people then believe.

**Jesus' disciples will know the truth and be free (vs.31-38):** Jesus tells these new believers that by believing in him they will know the "truth" and that truth will set them free from sin. Jesus uses the image of the people being slaves to sin...which is not well received because Jews believed that following Torah (the truth and light of God) set them free. He knows this is a difficult teaching but still encourages them to listen and know what God is telling them.

**Jesus wants the people to know the difference between the truth and lies (vs.39-47):** in this conversation Jesus makes the claim that the people wanting to kill him are illegitimate children who do what their father, the devil, tells them to do (meaning they know only lies). And what the devil does is lie, so the people only know lies and not the truth. What the people need to do is to listen to Jesus because he is one who tells the truth because he is the Son who comes from the Father.

**Jesus knows God but the people do not (vs.48-59):** the chapter closes with conversation about knowing and not knowing God. The audience declares that Jesus must be a demonically filled Samaritan (remember he spent time in Samaria). Jesus' response is to remind them that he only seeks God's glory, that he alone can offer eternal life, and that he knows that Abraham knew that one day the Messiah would come. Jesus then returns to the opening of the Gospel by telling the people that he was "before Abraham." The result is that once again the people are out to stone him.

Questions:

1. How do you hear the story of the woman caught in adultery speaking to you?
2. How do you know what you believe is true?
3. When you think of Jesus, do you think of him as more divine (the one come from heaven) or human (the one who ate, drank, suffered, and died)?