



# Near and Now

*When My Calling Is a Second Chance - The Woman Jesus Did Not Condemn*  
By Allison Grainger

## Warm-up Question

*Have you ever experienced someone unexpectedly sticking up for you?  
Describe your experience.*

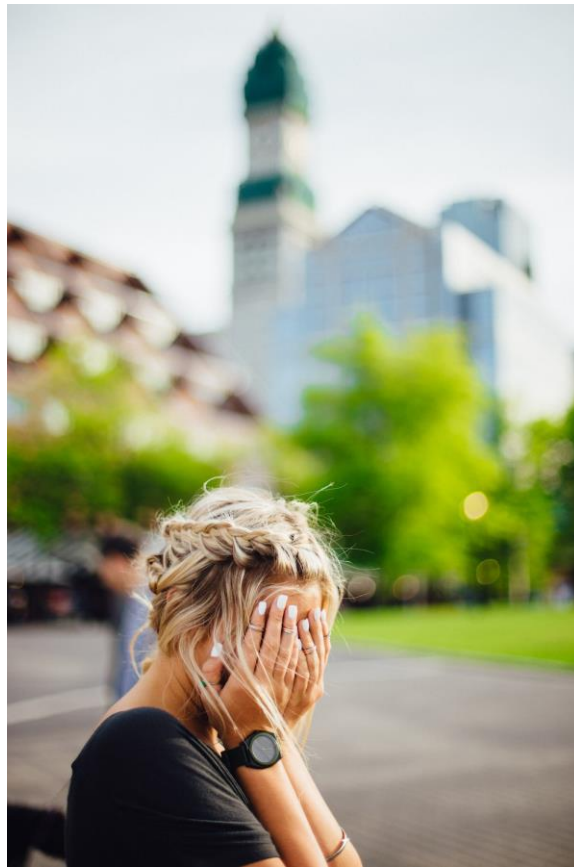


Photo by Abigail Keenan on [Unsplash](#)

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## Neither Do I Condemn You

Read [John 8: 1-11](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

In John 8, a woman's sin breaks the law. Much to her shame and embarrassment, the teachers of the law bring her before the crowds, divulge her actions publicly, and advocate for her death. It seems her fate has been sealed.

Unfortunately, the woman is a pawn in a larger scheme to publicly discredit Jesus. But Jesus will have none of it. When he finally speaks up, his concise response deflates the egos of her prosecutors. Jesus does not entertain their idea of punishment nor condone their tactics to shame and embarrass the woman. Rather he levels the playing field, implying that all people are sinful and therefore should not cast judgement on others.

Later, Jesus privately addresses the woman and tells her she will not be condemned. He then invites her to leave her life of sin to start anew. Jesus' compassion reveals that the sin brokenness and of her life will not ultimately define her.

There will be times when our shortcomings and flaws lead others to condemn us or lead us to condemn ourselves. Though our sin is real, God's purposes and calling for our lives is greater than our sin. We too are invited to start anew and to let go of all that weighs us down, so that we might boldly follow Jesus' example of mercy, justice, and love.

### Discussion Questions

1. Has there ever been a time where you have felt like the woman in this story? If so, when?
2. When this encounter with Jesus is over and the woman returns to her home, how do you think she relays what has happened to her to those close to her?
3. Talk about a time when you have condemned yourself. What have you been judgmental about within yourself?
4. Talk about something that needs to be released in your own life for you to start anew.
5. The second chance this woman received was a turning point in her life. Talk about a major turning point in your own life and the outcome.
6. How are you called to be the presence of God for those who need a second chance? Be specific.
7. How does it feel knowing you and everyone you meet are equally bound to sin but also equally loved by God?
8. How does this story change or challenge your understanding of forgiveness? Give examples.

### **Activity Suggestions**

On a piece of paper, write a word, phrase, or sentence that identifies a shame, a sin, or something that weighs you down. Then turn the paper over and write the counter idea for that condemnation. For example, the woman in this story may write “adulterer” on the front and “loved by the one who is always faithful” on the back. Share, in silence, what you have written with others by going around the circle and slowly flipping your papers from front to back for others to read.

Remember your baptism by making the sign of the cross on your forehead. Reflect on the second chance you were given when you were baptized into new life in Christ.

Write the phrase “neither do I condemn you” and on a small piece of paper or sticky note. Place this message where you will see it daily. Remind yourself that God’s mercy is bigger than your sin.

### **Prayer Concerns**

Those who are isolated, those who are weighed down by their past, those who struggle to forgive themselves.

### **Closing Prayer**

You raise me up when the world has knocked me down, O God. Renew me in the joy of your calling for me. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

