

# Pick a Path

## Talking to Strangers



Reflection Guide | Week 3

### Connect (5 to 10 minutes)

***If in a group, come together for fellowship and sharing about your week together.***

- What is the happiest you've ever been? Saddest? Angriest?

### Context (30 to 40 minutes)

***Dig deeper into the videos and scripture for this week through questions and discussion***

***Discuss Section 3 (Introduction and Chapters 6-8) of Talking to Strangers. As a group, share your thoughts and feelings about the stories themselves. Have you been reading the book or listening to the audiobook format?***

- What section or story stood out to you most?
  - In reflection, what made it so impactful? Have you done any further research on that study yourself?
  - Were there any stories you had already been aware of before reading these chapters? If so, do you think Gladwell did an accurate job portraying the events? Did he add in anything or omit anything of note for you?
- Are you good at reading the emotions of others?
  - We understand empathy as a way for us to engage someone in their emotional state and relate to them in this way. Is this an easy skill for you or a difficult skill? Why? What is the secret to doing this effectively?
  - Do you ever feel like someone has misjudged your emotions? How does that make you want to react?
- Gladwell indicates that part of what makes our interactions with strangers difficult is the fact that we often don't fully understand each other's emotions. How can we learn to do a better job of engaging with others' emotional states? What responsibility do we have to do so appropriately as human beings? As Christians?
  - How can we do a better job of helping others engage in our emotional states? (What can we do differently when someone asks us, "How are you doing?")

- Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. This passage comes from a section of wisdom literature that offers us insight into how we ought to live. Too often we believe that Christians are supposed to be happy and feel good at all times. However, this scripture flies in the face of that notion. How is the full range of emotions a gift from God? When did we see Jesus experience all of these emotions?
    - How does our call to love others as Christians depend upon our ability to understand their emotions, their inner desires, and their intentions? When in doubt, how can we choose to love others if any of these are obscured?
    - In living into all of these emotions, we live into the fullness of life that God has envisioned for us. Can you think of a time when you experienced negative emotions that actually gave you a positive feeling overall afterward? Could that time have been improved by being more transparent with those emotions with others?
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### **Closing (5 minutes)**

- Share joys and concerns with one another.
- Close in prayer, either by inviting a group member to pray or by using the prayer provided below.

#### **Closing Prayer**

Glorious God, you have made us beings with full hearts and minds. This offers us the experience of a full life with you and with others; a life where we are both more able to be seen and more able to see those around us. In the spirit of this, allow us not to shy away from emotions. Let us not settle for the easiest description of emotions. Let us not settle for our own interpretations of others' inner feelings. Let us be willing to have deep conversations, ask difficult questions, and challenge ourselves to think differently about with whom we interact. Let us do this in the way your son did it before us. Amen.