Pick a Path

Talking to Strangers

Reflection Guide | Week 4

Connect (5 to 10 minutes)

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

- What is the best trip/vacation you've ever taken?

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Context (30 to 40 minutes)

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

Discuss Section 4 (Chapter 9) 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?

- Page 261: "We need to accept that the search to understand the stranger has real limits. We will never know the whole truth. We have to be satisfied with something short of that. The right way to talk to strangers is with caution and humility." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
  - Have you ever become frustrated with someone because they shared something that turned out not to be true? Did you ever ask yourself why they did that in retrospect?

- In this chapter, we see a lesson taught about the methods we use to gather information. Most of us probably have never had to use torture or other intense methods of interrogation in our daily job. We have likely, however, worked to garner information from others (going on a first date, performing a job interview, etc.). How do we fail to appropriately love our neighbors as ourselves if we do not engage with them in the way that we ourselves would like?
  - Have you ever "put someone through the wringer" to learn more about them? How did they respond?

- There is something to be said in this chapter about the importance of self-care. When we go through particularly trying times, we are unable to communicate effectively. How do you practice self-care on a physical level? Emotional level? Spiritual level?

- Read Acts 3:1-10. You might notice that in this passage, Peter (newly commissioned leader of the earliest version of the Church) interacts with a lame beggar. He doesn't seem to question the man. He doesn't seem to work to understand where the man might be coming from. Can we truly say he loved the man without doing these things? Why? (Bonus Question: Could Peter have ever truly understood the man fully?)
  - In this passage, Peter offers what he can. What does it mean to treat someone with that kind of dignity and respect?
  - How can you combine the lessons of this chapter/section with the lesson of the Gospel on how we are interacting with the world and those in it?
  - There seems to be a reminder in this section that one doesn't have to have all the information to effectively treat someone the way one can/should be treated. How can we couple this lesson with our faith? Must we have all the knowledge and right answers to make an impact through Christ on those around us?

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

Merciful God, you made each of us unique. You made each of us knowing that we could never truly come to know each other fully. And yet, you've placed a call on our lives to go forth and treat others with kindness and humility in the spirit of Christ. Encourage us to realize that we need not always know all the answers to do so. Allow us to be modern-day Peters. Allow us to see that we don't have to always fully understand someone to treat them how we are called to through you. Help us to recognize that sometimes our desire to know someone can create more harm than we intend. Forgive us and empower us to ask forgiveness of those whom we hurt. Then inspire us to go forth into the world as stewards of you. Amen.