

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

STUDY TWO

CONNECTION



FOUR STUDIES FOR SMALL GROUPS

LIVING AS CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS

COMMUNICATING TRUE HOPE IN A BROKEN WORLD

REFLECT

INTRO

Were you able to keep praying for your friend last week?

Did you approach anything differently in the light of what we explored together?

- Share reflections and pray that God would use this study to make us even more effective ambassadors for Him.

CONNECTION

"They just know where I'm at." Has anyone ever said this of you? It's a statement from a heart that trusts. A heart that is prepared to listen.

How connected are we with those around us? Do we know what questions they are asking? What longings drive them? How often do we stop to ask or listen?

Let's read as Philip meets a government official from Ethiopia travelling across the desert.

ACTS 8:29-35 - PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." 30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth. "

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

BIBLE

- Philip is listening "in stereo" - whose are the two voices he is hearing? (29, 30)
- How would you describe Philip's first communication with the man? (30)
 - How does Philip's approach challenge us as Christ's ambassadors?
- How would you describe the man's attitude? (31)
 - How would you feel about such an invitation?
 - What words of this passage may have touched this eunuch? (32, 33)
- As Philip begins to answer questions, what is emphasised about his approach? (35)

TRY

- Describe to the person next to you how Philip might have explained "the good news about Jesus" as he "began with that very passage..." (It might be helpful to turn to Isaiah 53. Also, recall last week's language of "exchange".)

REFLECT

- How can we cultivate "stereo listening"?
 - What helps you to be open to the Spirit's prompting in your normal day?
- What current sources in our culture carry echoes of the Gospel or ask questions that the message of Jesus is poised to answer? (Examples of films, poetry, art, news stories...)

In his book, "Sharing your Faith with a Friend" Michael Green describes Western society in terms that may be surprising...

- not irreligious - just looking somewhere else;
- not immoral - just don't think God is vital for morality;
- not intelligently dismissing Bible - only an echo of it;
- not preoccupied with life after death - rather, life now;
- they are more conscious of doubt than guilt;
- have a negative image of church;
- alienation is central to their experience;
- many have low self-esteem;
- and little hope for future;
- many are deeply puzzled.

REFLECT

PRAYER

- How does this analysis fit with what you see?
 - What can we be asking those around to gain a better connection with them - a clearer understanding of their worlds?
- The eunuch had already been exposed to God's message. Whose doing was this?
 - How aware are you of God's "work so far" in the lives of those around us?
- Pray that we would be those who "connect" with God and with those around us: that we would "listen in stereo" this week.
 - Pray that as we listen, we would then be able to show how the Gospel meets our friends at their deepest need.
- Pray specifically for those named last week...