

Session 3—Having Vulnerable Conversations

The Skin You Live In

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NOTES:

• What is a vulnerable conversation?

- Free to ask gnawing questions about race or ethnicity (EX: How do you tell one Asian person from another?)
- Socio-exchange/economic theory: I will cross into your world because I gain something from your world that isn't in my world
- What's going on in YOUR life that's attractive to others different from you? What are they gaining? What do you have to offer?
- Honest, truthful perspective
- Opens up new information

- **Video** by Nigerian woman named Asanaoshi on “the skin she lives in”: everyone sounded different ... she decided not to speak so they wouldn't hear her accent ... “She made me fall in love with African-Americans” ... Must look at people individually.

• A vulnerable conversation on race:

- Includes honest questions: Must also be an advocate/cross-cultural bridge-builder . . . able to articulate your worldview
- Creates emotional safety
- Has a thankful appreciation for the conversation
- Centers around a student-teacher dialogue that is relationally-based (be a humble learner)

• Are you racially attractive? Are people different from you attracted to you?

- **John 4:4-9**—Jesus was racially attractive to Samaritan woman
- Accepts others despite their racial differences, so our friendliness and normal personality are released
- **John 4:27**—even Jesus' disciples had racial issues
- Makes accommodation for their racial differences ... don't ask them to be like me
- Respects and makes space for our differences; makes us comfortable



REFLECT and DISCUSS

Take some time for individual reflection. Then discuss these questions:

1. Consider your own current relationships with people different from you, especially ethnically.
 - a. How attractive is your life?
 - b. What are you gaining?
 - c. What are you offering?

2. Read the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman again from **John 4**. Jot down anything you notice about what made this a vulnerable conversation about race or ethnicity.

3. Please recognize that all *personal* conversations need not be ethnically *vulnerable* conversations. What would you say is the difference between a *personal* conversation and a *vulnerable* one?

4. Identify someone in your social circle (job, school, church, neighborhood, etc.) with whom you would like to have some vulnerable conversations.
 - a. What would you need to make you feel comfortable?
 - b. What gnawing questions would you like to ask him/her?
 - c. Describe how you could set the stage and approach that person as a humble learner.
 - d. How would you pray in anticipation of your conversation?

5. “For the Holy Spirit, God’s gift, does not want you to be afraid of people, but to be wise and strong, and to love them and enjoy being with them.”—2 Timothy 1:7, *The Living Bible*
 - a. How can others in your group pray for you?
 - b. How does 2 Timothy 1:7 encourage you to believe, pray, and live?

6. What is your best take-away from this session?

