

Getting Connected

Describe a person you consider one of your closest friends.

When did the two of you first meet, and how has your relationship developed over time?

Have you ever had a significant relationship disintegrate?

What contributed to this happening, and what impact has this had on you personally?

Highlights and Insights

In your own words, how would you *briefly* summarize Chapter 10?

Was there anything that really caught your attention, challenged or confused you in this chapter? Do you find yourself struggling with applying it to your life in any way?

As a group, brainstorm some words you would use to describe human relationships? When you're done, spend some time commenting on the words you chose, or the words chosen by others.

From this chapter, how would you summarize what the Bible teaches about "mercy"?

What impact have you seen mercy have on relationships?

Why is mercy so difficult to receive? To extend to others?

What's more difficult for you ... receiving mercy or extending it to others?

Biblical Focus

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10.

List the characteristics of the church described in these verses.

What would it be like to be a part of a church like that today?

In contrast, describe a church where mercy is nowhere to be found. You might even have a story to tell.

Good News For Those Trying Harder, by Pastor Alan Kraft

How can our experience with mercy impact our attitude toward the world?

The Heart of the Matter

What's one area in your life where you most need to receive God's mercy right now? (Remember, if you can't accept God's mercy toward you, then it's probably going to be difficult to extend it to other people.)

Who is one person you can extend mercy to this week?

What will it look like and feel like for you to do this?

In Conclusion...

In the Epilogue (pages 199-201), the author invites us to wade a little deeper into the life-giving stream of the gospel.

Where do you see yourself right now in terms of doing this?

- Standing on the shoreline enjoying the view
- Testing the waters
- Standing ankle deep
- Somewhere between knee-high and waist deep
- In over my head and loving it
- Other:

Where would you like to be?

As you conclude, spend some time praying for one another. You might specifically pray for each person's openness to receive God's mercy, and for your small group to be a place where mercy abounds. In addition, pray for an eagerness in each person's heart to more fully embrace the adventure of living the gospel.

***"I'm not okay.
You're not okay.
And that's okay."***

From Page 190,
Good News for Those Trying Harder

What was your initial response to this quotation when you first read it? How about now?

How does it get at the heart of what the gospel is really all about?