

## D-Cycle 2: Cultivating Healthy Cross-Gender Relationships

Unhealthy patterns and cultural narratives around gender dynamics are common realities in South Asian communities. What might it look like to follow Jesus who doesn't accept broken cultural norms, but shows us a new way forward?

### Hear the Word

#### DISCUSS

For male students: How have you seen your South Asian community show respect (or lack thereof) to women (friends, aunties, sisters, cousins, etc.)?

For female students: How have you seen your South Asian community show respect (or lack thereof) to men (friends, uncles, brothers, cousins, etc.)?

#### JOHN 4:4-30

*Take 5 mins individually to carefully read this passage then discuss the questions below together.*

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." 11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" 13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 15 The

woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” 16 He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” 17 “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” 19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” 21 “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” 25 The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” 27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

## DISCUSS

1. How do you see Jesus respect the Samaritan woman through this passage?
2. What do you learn from the disciples’ reaction to this interaction? Why might Jesus’ actions be considered counter-cultural?
3. How would an interaction like this be perceived among South Asian cultures?

## REFLECT

Men: Reflect on friendships, family, and ministry relationships with women. How have you ignored, overlooked, or disparaged women? What would you have to change or continue doing to cultivate healthy relationships with women? Pray for Jesus to meet you in repentance and give you discernment if there are ways you need to own or apologize for your actions.

Women: Reflect on friendships, family, and ministry relationships with men. In what situations have you felt ignored, overlooked, or disparaged? Pray for Jesus to pour out

healing over those situations and affirmation over your identity. Are there men in your life who have acted counter-culturally in ways that affirmed your voice? Consider sharing feedback on how their actions impacted you in a meaningful way.

*\*Note: Unlike for men, for women there is a cost involved in applying this to their circumstances. As those who have less cultural power, it may be hard to challenge men's behaviors that impact them directly. Men can help by listening well to women's experiences and doing their part to challenge the inappropriate and sexist behaviors of other men.*

## Respond Actively

*Schedule a time to get together to debrief this activity. Debrief questions can be found below.*

This week have a conversation with 2-3 South Asian students from the opposite gender. Explain that you want to get their perspective on gender dynamics in South Asian communities. Your goal is to simply listen and learn from their experience. Be mindful not to refute, debate or minimize the experiences of those you talk to.

### CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

- What was your experience like growing up as a bi-cultural South Asian American person? How did gender impact that?
- What did your parents (or place of worship) teach directly/indirectly about relating to the opposite gender?
- What do you hope that (men / women) would know about what it is like to be a South Asian (woman / man)
- What would healthy gender dynamics look like in the South Asian community? (in families, with family friends, faith communities, etc.)

## Debrief & Interpret

*\*Note: Schedule a time to debrief this experience and continue the conversation.*

### SHARE

- What was that experience like?
- What did you learn that was new to you?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What next steps can you take to continue growing and engaging in healthy relationships with the opposite gender?

## LISTENING PRAYER

God can speak to us in many ways: through community, Scripture, images, inklings, and more.

Spend a few moments in quiet, listening for the voice of God. Ask God: How can I emulate the counter-cultural model of Jesus (like in the John 4 passage we read) in my interactions with the opposite gender? Ask for the Holy Spirit to empower you to go and do likewise.

## EXPAND THE INFLUENCE

- What practical ways can you bring this cultural shift to others?
- Who could you convey this value to next?