

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT

“THE FOURTH MAN” Small Group Discussion Guide

LESSON 1 | Incurable Optimism

- 1) In what ways has your perspective changed since the September 11, 2001, attack and the rise of Islamic terrorism?
- 2) Samuel Zwemer wrote, “Opportunism is not the last word in missions. The open door beckons; the closed door challenges him who has a right to enter.” What “open doors” and opportunities do you see in your own life? What “closed doors” challenge you?
- 3) What were some of the hardships Dave and Gloria faced after moving to Dubai, and how did their perspective shift from depression to joy?
- 4) How does Gloria’s “incurable optimism” challenge you?
- 5) A crisis of health has a way of bringing out the best or the worst in people. How did Dave find God’s grace through his physical disabilities?
- 6) What does it mean to be multi-ethnic but not multi-cultural in the context of the church? Why is that an important distinction?

LESSON 2 | Streams in the Desert

- 1) Consider the idea of multiplication as a goal of Christian mentorship and how you can apply that to your own church or community.
- 2) Alvin, Gloria, and other Christians found practical ways to serve the Filipino community in their city after a fire left them homeless. Alvin explained, “We are recipients of grace, and so we give grace.” What grace have you received in your life, and how can you pay it forward to others?
- 3) Describe Steve’s “old school” approach to mission work. What personal qualities are important for this long-term type of ministry?
- 4) How are the Christians in this region helping to fulfill the words of Isaiah: “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 43:19)?
- 5) How do you view immense challenges, even so-called impossibilities, in regards to missions?

LESSON 3 | Glimmers of Light

- 1) Jeremy and Kylie keep their home open to refugees and neighbors. In what ways can you use the gift of hospitality to share the love of Jesus?
- 2) Read Nahum 1:1-8 and 2:13-3:7. How is the prophecy of Nahum against the Assyrians relevant to today’s world?

- 3) Public Scripture reading is a neglected gift, according to Jerry. But the words of Scripture are powerful and hearing it effectual. Can you think of unique ways to utilize this gift?
- 4) Storytelling is a simple, joyful act that Kylie uses to bring happiness to the lives of the people she serves. What simple ways can you show Christ to people?
- 5) Children in this region today have experienced and witnessed more evil than most will in a lifetime. How does this impact your thinking and propel you to act?
- 6) Jeremy and Kylie have dedicated themselves to helping the refugees in their community in Iraq. But Muslim refugees have been displaced and scattered all over the world recently. How can you help the refugees and other marginalized people in your own backyard?

LESSON 4 | The Fourth Man

- 1) The story of Jonah took place in this land. What similarities can you draw between the Nineveh of Biblical times and present-day Iraq? What aspects of Jonah's personal journey are relevant in our attitudes toward this region today?
- 2) God's grace spared the city of Nineveh in Jonah's day. How is God's grace still at work in the people of Iraq?
- 3) The Iraqi believers embrace their fellow refugees and show them Jesus' love through "dirty servants' hands." In what ways do you "get your hands dirty" in order to serve and love others the way Jesus loves them?
- 4) The Psalms of lament ring especially true for these believers, yet they still find joy and confidence in God. How does this challenge you in your own life? Does your sense of security come from your circumstances or your trust in God?
- 5) In suffering, Jesus says He walks with us through the fire. He was the Fourth Man in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who walked with them and kept them unharmed (Daniel 3). How does this story change your thinking about your own suffering and the pain and evil in the world today?