

Chapter 20

Discussion:

1. Some people feel that cemeteries are morbid, but the young refugee felt great peace and comfort as he strolled through the cemetery. Why do you think this is?
2. The young refugee was shocked to find all the church doors in America closed during the week; in Turkey, the church doors remained open all week. What do you think? Is there any good reason for churches to remain open during the week in America?

Reflection:

3. One of the young refugee's reactions to what he saw in the large American church was that he saw the power of money. Where or how have you seen the power of money? Does money always carry a degree of power? Does money always deliver what it promises? Where do you think the desire for money and power comes from?

Application:

4. The young refugee met Mike and Mary in his new American city; they were apparently waiting to meet anyone who might need a little help or encouragement, a smile or a prayer. This week, explore the largest city near you. Take a walk through it during the day. What do you notice? Who do you notice? Are the buildings and businesses open and welcoming? Do any of the people seem approachable if you needed help? Are you able to be an encouraging presence while you're there?

Chapter 21

Discussion:

1. Consider the extreme pain and heavy pain killers the young refugee was subjected to; at the same time, he spent several weeks in the hospital and rehabilitation. What effect do you think all of this had on his mental health?
2. Consider some of the differences you see between the ways different people helped the young refugee. He was appreciative of any help, but did he seem more comfortable with some forms of help than with others? Why?

Reflection:

3. The young refugee says things that had been irritating before now sparked his anger; he lashed out when he would have usually maintained his composure. Have you ever been in circumstances where you became angrier than you normally would have? What would cause a typically composed person to lose his composure?

Application:

4. The young refugee spent a considerable amount of time on heavy pain medications. This week, do a little research and identify several pain medications that are typically prescribed for various kinds of pain. Name the medication, what it's prescribed for, how long it is safe to take the medication, a list of possible side effects, and whether or not the medication can be addictive.

Chapter 22

Discussion:

1. In an effort to advocate for himself, the young refugee relayed to his doctor that there were Iranian surgeons who felt he needed surgery. This attempt proved ineffective in changing his doctor's mind. What do you think the doctor may have thought regarding his patient's attempt to persuade him?
2. Consider all the emotions the young refugee felt from the time he first tried to make himself go to campus and take the placement test to the time he entered his classroom for the first time. No one else around him had any idea what he was feeling on the inside. How important was it that he had a contact person, Sharon, who could help him through all of this?

Reflection:

3. In his online article, the pastor twisted the young refugee's words and misrepresented his message. Has this ever happened to you? Has anyone ever repeated something you said but did it in such a way that they gave the wrong impression about you to others? If so, why do you think they did this? How did this affect you or your relationship with other people? How did you try to resolve the matter?

Application:

4. Students from other countries sometimes adopt a name that sounds more familiar to the ears of the people they're now living among. This week, choose several different languages, and then do a little research and find some names that are native to those languages. Choose a name from each language that you would call yourself if you were living in a country where that language was spoken. How difficult is it to choose a name? What influences how you make your choice?

Chapter 23

Discussion:

1. There was a great amount of tension between the refugee and Sahar. He says at one point he ended the call rather than say something ugly; the next time they talked they simply ignored the issue that caused their disagreement and talked about other things. Are these healthy ways of dealing with serious disagreements? Why or why not? What do you think happens when an issue is left unresolved for too long? How could they have handled their disagreement instead?
2. The refugee finally understands Sahar lied to him. Now he wonders when she started lying, and he begins to doubt all that she has said to him. As he recalls the conversations that are now in doubt, maybe he should have seen the red flags sooner, but he didn't. Why do you think he never saw the lies until now?
3. Think about the small gestures Dana and the refugee's instructor made when they understood he was struggling with something very personal and private. What might have happened to him if they had not made these small gestures?

Reflection:

4. The refugee didn't appreciate the attitude he thought he saw in Michelle. That changed when he felt she truly listened. Has anyone truly listened to you when you had something important to say? Is there someone in particular you go to when you just want someone to listen?

Application:

5. Are you a good listener by nature, or is there maybe some room for improvement? Whether it comes naturally to you or not, spend some time this week listening to someone who needs to share what's on their mind. Maybe it's someone you're in a current disagreement with; maybe it's someone who doesn't get a lot of visitors, like an elderly person. After that, consider what you learned while listening that you wouldn't have learned otherwise; or ask yourself if you understand the person a little better now after having listened to them.

Chapter 24

Discussion:

1. The refugee finally called his old friend Ali when he knew he needed to talk to someone. Describe the techniques Ali used to help and encourage him.
2. The refugee heard from his old friend Cyrus. How was his conversation technique different from Ali's? Do you think this technique will work for everyone who is trying to recover from trauma? Why did it work for the refugee?
3. What do you think of Deborah's very direct advice to the refugee about finding another woman to love? Do you agree or disagree with her approach and her views?

Reflection:

4. The refugee described to Cameron and Michelle the way the underground church in Iran is structured. In your experience—or even if you've never been to church—how does this description seem unusual to you? Do you think this structure could be effective in churches outside of Iran?

Application:

5. This week do a little research about Iranian Nowruz. Learn about its origin, when it occurs, the symbolism, how long it lasts, and how it is typically celebrated today in Iran.

Chapter 25

Discussion:

1. Discuss the difference between the Iranian friends who missed the refugee because they needed his help and Cameron and Michelle who annoyed the refugee when they waited outside his door. How did Cameron and Michelle possibly have an advantage over the Iranian friends in expressing their love and concern?
2. When it comes to our health, second opinions can be important. Why do you think one doctor would be willing to do surgery while another doctor wouldn't even touch the patient for a physical examination? How much does medical insurance dictate what a doctor will or won't do for a patient?

Reflection:

3. The refugee says his Iranian friends were shocked at the news of his wife leaving because such emotional issues were almost never addressed. Think about the specific culture group you were raised in or live in now. Do you feel freedom to discuss emotional topics? Why or why not? How does this positively or negatively affect your mental health in coping with troubling personal issues?

Application:

4. The people at the church donated many things to help new refugees establish a home and a life. Have you ever donated anything to help someone? This week, locate a local food pantry that accepts food donations and give what you can. Maybe you can even make this a habit and donate periodically.

Chapter 26

Discussion:

1. Describe the feeling of hope the refugee experienced once his extreme pain disappeared after surgery.
2. What was the difference between the American soldiers in Iraq that the refugee had seen and the homeless veteran he was getting to know? Why do you think it's not uncommon for military veterans to become homeless?
3. Do you think a government has any responsibility for its veterans? How does your general culture group treat its military veterans? What resources are available to help them resume their lives after having served in war? What are some typical problems veterans encounter after war?

Reflection:

4. How do you define "forgiveness"? What steps are involved in forgiving? Is there anyone who doesn't deserve forgiveness? What is the benefit to offering forgiveness or receiving forgiveness ourselves?

Application:

5. Adoption is a beautiful concept; it gives a person a place to belong. Do a little research this week and find out the process and resources available in your community for someone who would like to adopt.

Part Three

1. Opioids are highly addictive. Do a little research and find out how prevalent opioid abuse is in your community. How does a person acquire opioids? How, exactly, are they abused? What happens to many people who become addicted to opioids? What is the treatment for opioid abuse? What measures are being taken/could be taken to lessen the occurrence of this abuse?
2. What are some typical communication barriers in intimate relationships? What creates these barriers? What makes these barriers seem insurmountable? What are some healthy ways to overcome these communication barriers?
3. How important is it to discuss emotional issues with someone who may be interested in or affected by your emotions? What kind of environment were you raised in? Were you permitted to have open discussions about your emotions? Why or why not? Was this—or would this have been—a healthy practice?
4. This book shines a light on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and it is something that affects many people today. This includes veterans, refugees, domestic violence survivors, abused children, and many more. What might be some reasons for PTSD among these demographics? What are some common behaviors among people with PTSD? What kind of help is available for someone with PTSD?
5. Adoption is a beautiful concept; it is meant to give everyone a loving place to belong. Maybe you have first-hand experience with adoption. Tell your story, if you're comfortable with that. Or do some research and find out more about adoption in your culture. How many adoptions take place annually? What are some situations that make adoption necessary? What is the process for adopting a child? Why are some adoptions domestic, yet others are international? What does the adoption process cost? What organizations help with adoption? Do people prefer to adopt children of a certain age?