

Week Three - *Connecting in a Digital Age*
Genesis 2:5-9, 15-25

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. What are the different tools that you use to connect with people throughout your day?
2. Do you think that human beings are more connected to each other in this era of history, or were we more connected in the past? Why do you think so?
3. Mark Zuckerberg, the inventor and CEO of Facebook, says that the point of Facebook is to “help people connect and communicate more efficiently.” How well does Facebook do at that goal?
4. Read Genesis 2:18. Everything about this human that God created was “good.” But there was one thing wrong. What was it?
5. The human need for connection is something that God has called out since the moment he made us. Is it possible for this need to result in bad connections? Why?
6. Take a few moments to evaluate the quality of your own connections to others. How does the quality of these relationships correlate to the quality of your life?
7. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Thank God for the good connections he’s placed in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

8. On Facebook, social media, or just life in general, are you more likely to share the good things that happen in your life or the bad? Which things (good or bad) do you think other people tend to share more?
9. The movie *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* features an image-obsessed teenager, Bethany. Check out this short clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2S-7TILC3c>. What is the difference between what she claims about her selfie and the behind-the-scenes reality?
10. What do you think Bethany’s hopes for connection are? Why is she sharing this selfie?
11. What do you think she’s afraid of, causing her to lie about how much effort she put into looking pretty?
12. Read Proverbs 17:17. How would you restate this proverb in your own words?

13. Which kinds of connecting do you think would help create this kind of friend? Does social media reinforce these kinds of bonds, or does it require a different method?

14. Spend the rest of your FIFTEEN with God, meditating, and ask him to help you evaluate your own methods of connecting. Are you connecting with people in ways that are growing to create real acceptance, or in surface-y ways that require you to pretend that everything is better than it is?

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

15. In the movie *While You Were Sleeping*, Sandra Bullock falls in love with a man who she sees every day — for the 15 seconds when he buys a subway token to go to his work! How well does she really know him?

16. In a similar way, technology today helps us create lots of “sound bites” where people get tiny glimpses into our lives. Stephen Colbert asked technology expert Sherry Turkle this question: “Don't all those little tweets, don't all those little sips of online communication, add up to one big gulp of real conversation?” What do you think?

17. Read Genesis 2:18-23. God made Adam straight from the dirt. What did God use to make woman?

18. What level of intimacy would that seem to imply between people?

19. What kinds of interactions has it taken for you to feel like you really know someone deeply?

20. How can you intentionally create more of those moments?

21. End your FIFTEEN by praying to God and ask him to help you find the deep connections he designed for you.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

22. Here's an interesting hypothetical. Computers and A.I. are getting better every month. So which would you prefer in a local restaurant: your food is cooked by robots and made perfectly every time, or your food is prepared by humans, which means sometimes they burn it, lose your order, or take too long making it?

23. Why might someone prefer the robot version?

24. Sherry Turkle has a poignant observation: <https://youtu.be/t7Xr3AsBEK4?t=10m7s>. What is her opinion of the situation between the woman and the robot baby seal?

25. Read Genesis 2:18-20. Adam first tried to find meaningful connection through which things?
26. If you've ever owned a pet, you know that it is far simpler to connect with a dog or cat than a fellow human being. A dog never complains about you — it just loves that you're around!
27. But what ultimate conclusion does God make about relying on pets (or, in our current context, "sociable robots") for our deepest level of connection?
28. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to reveal to you the ways that you have settled for connections that are easier to maintain than deep relationships with the people in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

29. If you could live in any human era, which one do you think would be the most conducive to living a quality life? What factor of that time period matters the most in helping you choose it?
30. Continue by reading Genesis 2:8-17. This is a description of the "perfect" Garden of Eden. What is it about the garden that you think made it "perfect"? Was the weather ideal? Did the fruit taste better than hamburgers? Was it because of the relaxed pace of life?
31. We maybe get a hint a little later in the text. Read Genesis 2:25. What surprising detail is shared at the very end about Eden?
32. I wonder if the thing that made Eden perfect is that there was nothing hindering a true and intimate connection between Adam and Eve. Work didn't get in the way. There were no facades (or clothes!) that either of them had to hide behind. No social landmines they had to avoid. Does that sound idyllic or scary to you?
33. How could you begin to create that kind of environment for the people around you? What would it look like to make someone feel that they could be real with you "and feel no shame"?
34. As you finish your final FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to help you recreate Eden for the people in your life. To mold you to be a safe place where people could connect freely and authentically.