

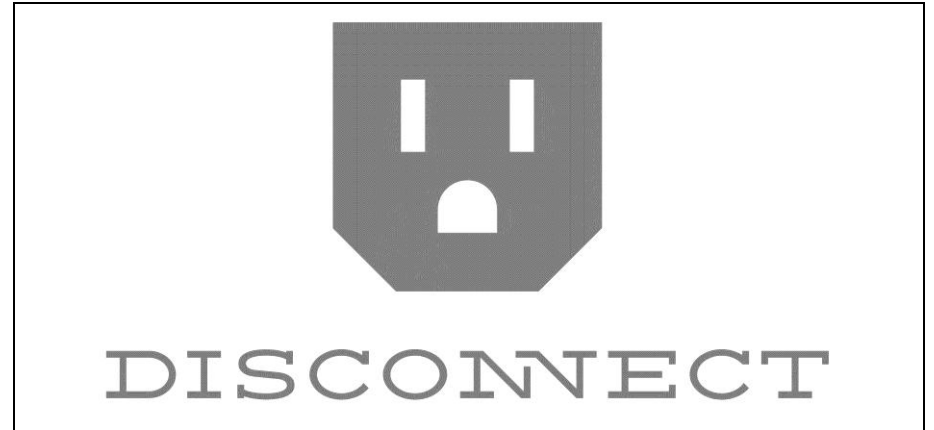
### Questions for Individual Study and Reflection:

Don't rush through this exercise. Plan on *at least* an hour to work through it. Take a morning or even a day alone with God. Write down your answers, think them through.

1. Read Psalm 139. Pray the words of Psalm 139 yourself.
2. On another sheet of paper, write down the truth about you.
3. On the back of that paper, confess the ways you market yourself (i.e. what you want others to believe about you).
4. How are the two "selves" different?
5. How has your "marketing" affected the important relationships in your life? (List each relationship and take the time to answer this specifically for each one.)

Read John 3:19-20 and 1 John 1:5-10.

6. According to John, what is "light?" What does it mean to walk in the light?
7. How are light and truth related?
8. In 1 John, what is the result of "walking in the light?"
9. What is one thing you wish someone else knew about you? Who would be a safe person to share this with?
10. What is one thing you will change about how you interact with others as a result of this study?



"The truth that many people never understand, until it is too late, is that the more you try to avoid suffering the more you suffer because smaller and more insignificant things begin to torture you in proportion to your fear of being hurt." –Thomas Merton

"The truth may hurt for a little while but a lie hurts forever."

### The Truth about Me

The number one reason we feel disconnected is because we don't want people to know the \_\_\_\_\_ about us.

- We spend a large amount of energy \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves.

#### John 1:1-18

John takes us back to \_\_\_\_\_. "In the beginning..."

The story in the garden of Eden is a story of \_\_\_\_\_.

- Jesus came to repair it.

Two characteristics of Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. (vs 14 & 17)

**Truth:** what \_\_\_\_\_ says is reality.

...about Himself. (Creator, the only God, worthy of first priority, faithful, He revealed Himself through Jesus.)

Most Christians \_\_\_\_\_ there.

If we don't *know* and *present* the truth about \_\_\_\_\_, we can never connect in life-giving ways.

Why is it so hard to admit the truth about ourselves?

- We long for \_\_\_\_\_.
- We're afraid if people knew the truth, they would \_\_\_\_\_ us.

Sharing our sin and struggles doesn't push people away, it \_\_\_\_\_ them.

**Grace:** not counting our \_\_\_\_\_ against us. (2 Cor 5:17-19)

- Jesus is involved in our re-\_\_\_\_\_.

A "law-only" culture breeds \_\_\_\_\_.

A "grace-only" culture breeds \_\_\_\_\_.

Grace makes the truth \_\_\_\_\_.

**Three BIG questions:**

1. Can you admit the truth about yourself?

2. Can you tell others the truth?

3. Are you a safe place for others to be honest with you?

**Questions for discussion:**

1. Do you agree that humans long for connection? What evidence do you see of this?
2. In what ways do we "market" ourselves? What are some things we "hide" behind? (e.g. humor, anger, sarcasm, shyness, etc.)
3. What are some things you want people to believe about you? How do you accomplish this?
4. Why is it so hard for us to present ourselves as we actually are?
5. Do you agree with the statement, "If we don't *know* and *present* the truth about ourselves, we can never connect in life-giving ways?" Why or why not?
6. Do you think everyone really *knows* themselves?
7. Why is it important to understand that Jesus reveals both the truth about God and who we are intended to be?
8. What do you think John means when he says Jesus is "full of grace and truth?" Why does he point out these particular characteristics?
9. What happens when you have truth without grace? Grace without truth?
10. Is it easier for you to give truth or grace?
11. How does grace make truth safe?