



More Curious than Certain: Seeing and Loving One Another Cheryl Mullis

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit . . . Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. — Philippians 2:3-4

There she was again. Walking towards me in the church hallway. With that scowl on her face. Why did she look at me like that? What did I do to offend her? Why doesn't she like me? Am I wearing the wrong clothes? Did I say the wrong thing? Why can't we be friends?

If you are anything like me, you can relate to these thoughts. There are people in our lives who we don't understand and who are hard to get to know. Our interactions are marked by awkward conversations and seemingly critical looks. We are constantly afraid of rejection.

When this happens to me, I tend to look inward and focus on myself and how the other person perceives me. This self-absorption keeps me from "seeing" the other person. I make assumptions that create barriers to engaging with and moving toward the other person. Because of my insecurity and self-focus, we both miss out on an opportunity to build a deep and lasting friendship.

So, how do we break this cycle? Our women's small group recently studied the Gospel of Luke. We learned a lot about how Jesus interacted with other people. He was questioned, opposed, and rejected. I am quite certain that he saw a few scowling faces. Yet these obstacles did not keep Jesus from moving toward others in love. Rather than focusing on himself, he saw others and their needs. He asked questions. He had compassion. And he moved out in love.

We break this cycle by looking up—first fixing our eyes on Christ and then setting our eyes on others. A bright smile. A kind greeting. Asking a question and actively listening to the response. A friend once encouraged me to be more curious than certain in my interactions with others. Being more curious than certain means my focus is on the other person, not myself. It keeps me from jumping to conclusions about the other person's thoughts or feelings. Rather, I invest in the other person as I learn about her. As I turn my eyes outward, the Spirit works in my heart to show me ways to love and serve another, creating an opportunity to cultivate a new friendship.

Let's Chat!

- Describe a time when your self-focus kept you from seeing another person. What impact did that have on your relationship with the other person?
- How might making generous assumptions about others build relational bridges that strengthen the church?
- What are some ways that you can be more curious than certain in your interactions with others? Think of specific things you might say or do.

Take-Away Truth

Being more curious than certain helps me build gospel friendships that point others to Jesus.

Find more conversation starters: <https://women.pcacdm.org/made-for-more>

