Getting Started

Share a time when you felt out of place, when it was clear that your values did not align with the values of the others who were there—whether socially or professionally or even in your family. What did it feel like? How did you handle it? What would it have taken for you to feel 'at home'?

Into the Bible

Read two stories about Abraham: Genesis 12:10-20 and Genesis 23:1-20. Describe the situations Abraham found himself in. How did it become apparent that he was 'a stranger in a strange land' (Ex. 2:22)? How did he handle it? In your opinion, did he handle it well?

David also experienced that sense of strangeness. Describe his circumstances in 1 Samuel 27:1-6, 28:1-2, 29:1-11. What compromise was David almost forced to make? Do you think he would have made it? Do you think he could have come back from that choice if he had made it?

One more example from the Old Testament—Daniel 3:1-30. (It's a familiar story; you can probably just skim it.) What choice was thrust on the young men? What compromise could have spared them the trouble? Do you think they seriously considered the compromise? Would you have considered it in their place?

Finally read 1 Peter 2:11-25. What do you think about being called foreigners and exiles? Do you generally think being a church-going Christian is *smiled* on by the world or *frowned* on? Why?

> How does Peter's instruction about willingly suffering unjustly strike you? Does the idea of not fighting back seem cowardly or courageous to you? What difference does it make that he grounds it in the conduct of Jesus?

Digging Deeper

Under what circumstances can you compromise with the world around you? When can you *not*? How do you tell the difference in real time?

How do you see the church compromising itself with the world? Are there good ways? Bad ways?