

≡ RECLAIMING ≡ FRIENDSHIP



Mallory Smyth



walking with purpose

~ SO MUCH MORE THAN A BIBLE STUDY ~



Foreword



Lisa Brenninkmeyer

From the time we are little girls, we long for true friendship. We want to be seen, known, and valued no matter what. Knowing a friend has your back can give you the confidence to press on or to get out of a situation that has grown unhealthy. Friends make us laugh when we take ourselves too seriously and are there to brush off the dust when we've been down on the mat. They show up at the right time and commiserate with us over our disappointments, but also know when to encourage us to rise again out of the ashes. We weren't meant to journey alone, and friends can be one of God's greatest gifts to us.

Can you remember a time in your life when friendship seemed to come easier than it does now? When I think back to early elementary school, it just seemed like things unfolded naturally. My friendship with one of my best friends, Megan, had everything to do with where we both happened to live. We lived on the same block so it was easy to spend time together because we didn't need a parent to arrange a playdate or drive us anywhere. She was interested in playing "pretend" which turned into a love of the theater, and that mutual interest carried us through high school. It was the sheer number of hours logged that formed our friendship, that and the fact that she never stabbed me in the back and always stood up for me. I never worried about what she was saying about me when I wasn't around.

But things have gotten more complicated the older I've become. In my adult years, I have experienced my fair share of toxic friendships. And the thing that has caused me pause in recent years is the fact that I have fallen into the same patterns with female relationships time and time again. There was something I was missing—key indicators that this was not a good place for me to be investing my time—but I wouldn't pick up on it. And even if I did have a gut feeling that a friend wasn't good for me, I wasn't sure how to get out of the relationship.

This is why Mallory Smyth's Bible study, *Reclaiming Friendship*, has meant so much to me personally. She has unpacked what to look for in a friend, what the purpose of friendship is, and how to get out of unhealthy friendships. Her wisdom and grasp of Scripture

Reclaiming Friendship

make her a wonderful teacher and guide. She's had some excellent life experience as a FOCUS missionary on college campuses, which gives her additional insight into what it takes for women to relate to one another and truly connect.

There are points in our lives when we are wise to take stock of the state of our friendships. Are we investing our time in the right places? Are our motives pure, or are we looking at friendship from a selfish perspective? Have we fallen into comfortable patterns in terms of who we hang out with, but they are not bringing out the best in us? Are we at a crossroads where we realize that we don't have good friends, and the loneliness is starting to take a toll?

Proverbs 13:20 tells us that "he who walks with the wise grows wise but a companion of fools suffers harm." We are influenced by our friends, whether we like it or not.

Even Jesus gave careful thought to the choosing of his friends. He spent all night in prayer before choosing his twelve disciples, asking God to help him to discern whom he should surround himself with. He then chose three of the twelve (Peter, James and John) to be the closest of all.

What is it that attracts you to a woman? Is it her style? Her vibrant personality? Her graciousness? Her kindness? Her obedience to God? Are the qualities you are drawn to superficial ones, or ones that really matter in the long run? When we notice that someone is living the Christian life in a way that we admire, that's a good reason to consider going a little deeper with her.

It can be a costly mistake to choose someone who has a very different spiritual or moral foundation than you for your *best* friend. When the chips are down and you are in a crisis, you need a friend who can speak the truth in love and guide you to the right path. Too often, our friends just say what makes us feel good when they could have been used as instruments in molding us into women of wisdom and maturity.

One of the purposes of best friends is to help one another recognize blind spots. Proverbs 27:9 says, "The pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel." And then Proverbs 15:31–32 teaches, "He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding."

When we find a truly wonderful friend who is willing to speak truth in love and meets certain needs in our hearts, we need to check that we keep things healthy. True friendship is different from being codependent or needy. It was when reading the book

Friendships of Women by Dee Brestin that I first heard the term “relational idolatry.” Relational idolatry takes place when we allow a person to take a place of importance in our life that was meant only for God. We can become so dependent on a friend that we cease to be dependent on God. That is not a healthy balance.

Author Larry Crabb talked about how in a fallen world we wrongly associate certain things as breeding life or death to our souls. The dynamics of a relationship can feel like a “source of life.” Then, when that person withdraws slightly, it feels like death. Depending on a friend as your source of life ultimately leads to bondage. God is the true source of life. And when a relationship has Him in the middle of it, there is freedom.

In a healthy friendship, we point our girlfriends to Christ, not to us. Our friendships should be like a braid, three pieces woven together—the two friends and God. Dee Brestin writes of 3 warning signs that things are out of balance:

- You experience frequent jealousy, possessiveness, and a desire for exclusivism, viewing other people as a threat to the relationship.
- You prefer to spend time alone with this friend and become frustrated when this does not happen.
- You become irrationally angry or depressed when this friend withdraws slightly.¹

Let’s check ourselves to make sure that we don’t allow anyone the place in our hearts that has been reserved for God alone. He is the only one who will never let us down. If we place a friend in that position, we are sure to be disappointed.

One thing we know about God, He is always willing to help us experience a fresh start. You do not need to content yourself with the status quo. It is within your power to make new friends, walk away from unhealthy ones, and chart a new path towards meaningful connection, accountability, and joy.

It is my prayer that as you go through *Reclaiming Friendship*, your relationships with women will become more life-giving and your relationship with God will deepen further still. I pray that you would connect with sisters in Christ who share your goal to become a woman of purpose, supporting and encouraging you on that journey. I pray that each one of us would follow God’s pattern for friendship and experience the deep satisfaction that comes from His love being made complete in us (1 John 2:5).

¹ Dee Brestin, *Friendships of Women* (Victor Books, 2008), 86.



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Dear friend,

What has been your experience with friendship? Some of us have great, life-long, loyal friendships. Others of us have been wounded by the women we trusted the most. For some of us the word friendship brings up fond memories, fun, and laughter. For others it brings up drama and conflict that we would rather forget. Most of us have experiences that are in between. No matter your experience, I wrote this study with you in mind and have been praying for you every step of the way.

Sister, you were created in the image of God. This is a big deal. You reflect a unique part of Him to the world. You are a gift to your friends and your friends are a gift to you. You reflect God's goodness to the world in your own unique way. God invites us to live our lives in holy, joy-filled friendships with other women. Too often, we forgo this invitation and allow the culture to dictate the terms of our friendships. Because of this, our friendships never quite reach the potential for which God designed them. But I am convinced that the Lord has a plan for our friendships that goes beyond what we can ask or imagine.

In this study, we are going to dive into God's purpose for friendship, the wounds that we experience, the ways we can heal, and then ultimately how we can become the type of women who have flourishing, God-centered friendships. I believe that God wants to reveal himself to the world through friendship. I also believe that God wants us to grow deeper into friendship with Him.

Do you know that His love for you goes beyond mere obligation from Creator to creature? He loves you with the perfect love of friendship. He delights in you and finds joy in who you are. He thinks that you are funny and creative, and He wants you to reclaim the gift of friendship so that you can experience more of His joy with others here on earth in a way that will bring you closer to Him in heaven. He wants to redeem you, He wants to redeem your friendships, and I am honored to dive into His word with you.

In His heart,

Mallory Smyth, Walking with Purpose

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IMPRIMATUR + William E. Lori, S.T.D., Archbishop of Baltimore

The recommended Bible translations for use in Walking with Purpose studies are: The New American Bible, which is the translation used in the United States for the readings at Mass; The Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition; and The Jerusalem Bible.

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Reclaiming Friendship: God's Plan for Deep Connection

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Lesson 1: Connect Coffee Talk

TRUE FRIENDSHIP AND ITS FRUITS

Accompanying talk can be viewed by DVD or digital download purchase or access online at walkingwithpurpose.com/videos.

I. A Look at True Friendship

- A. Friendship is a relationship that is not connected through blood or romance but out of a simple desire to _____, _____, and _____.
- B. “Friendship is the only love that is absolutely deliberate.”² –Tim Keller
- C. “There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.”³ –St. Thomas Aquinas
- D. “When you gain a friend, gain him through testing, and do not trust him hastily. For there is a friend who is such at his own convenience but will not stand by you in your day of trouble. And there is a friend who changes into an enemy and will disclose a quarrel to your disgrace. And there is a friend who is a table companion but will not stand by you in your day of trouble. In your prosperity he will make himself your equal and be bold with your servants; but if you are brought low, he will turn against you, and will hide himself from

² Tim Keller, “Friendship-Tim Keller [Sermon],” YouTube video, 38:05, October 21, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Tc4VIQrXdE&t=626s>.

³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship to the King of Cyprus* (Canada: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982), book 1, chapter 11, paragraph 77.

Reclaiming Friendship

your presence. Keep yourself far from your enemies and be on guard toward your friends.” (Sirach 6:7–13)

- E. “A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter: he that has found one has found a treasure. There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend, and no scales can measure his excellence. A faithful friend is an elixir of life, and those who fear the Lord will find him. Whoever fears the Lord directs his friendship aright, for as he is, so is his neighbor also.” (Sirach 6:14–17)

II. The Fruits of Intentional Friendship

Loyalty – Ruth and Naomi

Ruth 1:16

Comfort in Sorrow – Jesus, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus

John 11:31–36

“It doesn’t always have to look like tears. It can look like playdates - simply showing up and watching your friend’s kids while she naps or cries or takes a bath. It can look like planning an extra meal a week and delivering it whether she asked for it or not. . . Just being a buffer between her and her grief, a physical reminder that she is not physically alone with her sorrow. Laying down our lives for our friends can translate into a hundred daily inconveniences that simply remind her without using actual words, ‘You are not alone.’”⁴ –Lisa-Jo Baker

Support – Mary and Elizabeth

Luke 1:39–43

⁴ Lisa-Jo Baker, *Never Unfriended* (Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 118.

Foretaste of Eternal Friendship with God – David and Johnathan

2 Corinthians 4:17

1. Write below about the friendship in your life that has brought you the most joy. What about this relationship brought you delight?
2. The Book of Proverbs repeatedly claims that people suffer from the lack of friends or from poorly chosen friends. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. Do you experience loyalty, comfort, and support in your friendships? Are there ever elements of drama and dysfunction? What changes would you have to make for your relationships to resemble the friendship with God that we will experience in heaven?

⁵ Sophie Hudson, *Giddy Up, Eunice* (Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 118.

Faithful friends
are a life-saving
medicine;



Those who fear God
Will find them. SIRACH 6:16

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Lesson 2

WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP?

Introduction

When I was eighteen, I traveled to Franciscan University to watch my brother Jared and his fiancé Katie graduate from college. Franciscan University is known for its vibrant Catholicism and is attended mostly by young men and women who are serious about their faith. After the graduation ceremony, I sat with my parents and watched Jared and Katie visit with their friends. Unable to hear their conversations, I simply observed them. I was struck by the way Katie and her friends interacted. Knowing almost nothing about them personally, it was clear to me that they honored one another with joyful attention. I sensed from them a peace and a joy that I wanted.

Years later, in the courtyard of my sorority house, I remembered Katie and her friends. After spending three years away from my faith in college, I had decided to give Christianity another try. I didn't even know where to start. I looked at the women scattered outside and compared the nature of the friendships around me to what I had seen years ago at my brother's graduation.

I had to ask myself, "Do I have friends like Katie did? Do I share something with my friends that goes beyond a few activities and a slew of acquaintances?" I had friends. I knew that with the exception of a few women, most of my relationships were based on my social scene. Women who were "fun" surrounded me, but I only felt safe enough to fully reveal my heart to a few of them. While we had good intentions, we often affirmed each other in our vices instead of challenging each other to become better. While we certainly had love for one another, our love was often endangered by gossip, comparison, and insecurity. We were never too far from the drama that can instantly turn friends into frenemies. I sat in the courtyard wondering if what we had experienced was *true* friendship.

Can you relate?

Reclaiming Friendship

Have you ever spent years in a friendship only to learn that you had been betrayed? Have you ever thought you had a best friend only to find out that she didn't feel the same? Have you allowed your own insecurities to extinguish the warm feeling you once felt toward someone? Most of us can recall the hours spent replaying a conversation in our head as we try to figure out what we said and what she said. No matter our stage of life, middle school drama plays out on the field of friendship. Most of us have been mortally wounded at one time or another.

It wasn't meant to be this way.

Katie and her friends shared something, or Someone, different than most friendships share. The secret of their friendships was that the foundation of each relationship rested on God. God is the creator of friendship. He meant for friendships to be one of the primary sources of joy in life, places where we can learn to love and be loved.

Could it be that friendship is complicated because modern culture values self and comfort above all else? These are very different from what God values and sets us up for constant conflict. If we are willing to rewire our friendships according to how God designed them to work, then we will find deep love and true joy in our friendships.

Let's find out what God wanted for us when He created the beautiful gift of friendship.

Day One

FROM THE BEGINNING

In order to understand God's plan for friendship, we have to lay some groundwork. Today, we go back to the very beginning to understand why relationships are so important and why we were created in the first place. To do this, we are going to dive into the first chapters of Genesis.

Before we begin reading, we must understand how the Catholic Church interprets the Bible. As Catholics, we believe that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is completely true. The Church teaches that there are different genres and styles of writing throughout the books of the Bible. To understand Scripture, we must pay attention to the type of text we're reading. The first two chapters of Genesis are written in poetic language; they tell us the truth about creation in the form of poetry. We do not take these first two chapters of Genesis literally. Instead, we look for the beautiful truth conveyed by this part of the Bible.

1. Read Genesis 1:1–3.

Who created the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1? Who was hovering over the waters in Genesis 1:2?

2. A. In the beginning, God the Father created the world, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Who else was there according to John 1:1?
- B. What do we learn about the identity of the Word of God from John 1:14?

Many people think of God creating the world and Jesus coming along thousands of years later. But what we learn from the book of Genesis and the Gospel of John is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all together at the beginning of creation.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 234, “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life.” Bishop Robert Barron described the Trinity as an interplay of relationship, “of love, being loved, and shared love.”⁶ God the Father is the lover, God the Son is the beloved, and their perfect exchange of love is personified in God the Holy Spirit. If the relationship of the Holy Trinity is perfect love and perfect intimacy, and if we could add nothing to its perfection, it might cause you to wonder why God created us in the first place.

3. A. Did God need something from us? Read Acts 17:24-25.
- B. If God needs nothing and is not served by humanity, why did He create us at all? Read CCC 1.
- C. According to CCC 221, for what are we destined?

⁶ Bishop Robert Barron, “Bishop Barron on the Meaning of the Trinity,” YouTube video, 9:44, June 22, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5l-Lv9tGQwI>.

Reclaiming Friendship

Some of the deepest questions in the recesses of our hearts are “Why am I here?” and “What is my purpose?” These questions have plagued even the most brilliant thinkers for all of human history, but the answer has always been there. CCC 1 tells us that “God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness, created us to share in his own blessed life.”

4. A. According to CCC 27, where will we find truth and happiness?

B. What does it say that we must do to live fully according to the truth?
5. If we need to accept God’s love and entrust ourselves to Him to live according to the truth, we need to learn how to do that. This process is explained in Appendix 2, *Conversion of Heart*. Read it and reflect on what you’ve read. Is this something you have experienced personally?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . Seek Him first and the rest will be added.

You were not created for restlessness but for peace. You were not created for loneliness but for intimacy. You were not created out of need, but out of desire—God’s desire to bless the world with your unique soul. In Him you will find the truth and happiness for which you are searching.

Saint Augustine said that we will be restless until we let ourselves rest in Him. It should be so simple. Yet, what the Lord requires of us, ourselves, our hearts, seems like too much to ask. We spend our lives on the hamster wheel, searching for love and purpose in all the wrong places. If our life does not flow from our relationship with God, everything else becomes unbalanced. We find ourselves exhausted, hidden, and lonely. Overwhelmed by this emptiness, we put pressure on other relationships to fill us and validate us in a way that only God can.

He offered us more from the beginning and His invitation still stands. In Psalm 139:1–4 King David wrote about just how deeply the Lord knows us. “You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.” Sit with these words in prayer. Ask God to reveal to you the ways that you resist sharing in His life. Surrender those ways to Him.

Day Two

WE BELONG TO EACH OTHER

On Day One, we established that God made us to be in a relationship with Him. First and foremost, we were made to know God and be known by God. Today, we will learn about another relationship God created us to have.

1. Read Genesis 2:7–9, 15–23.
 - A. God created Adam out of the dust and breathed life into him. What did God say in Genesis 2:18?

The Hebrew word for “alone” is “levaddov” which can also mean “separation” or “apart.”⁷ When God said that it is not good for man to be alone, He declared that the human race is distinct from all creatures. We were created with a need to live with other human beings.

- B. What did God do in Genesis 2:21–23 to provide a suitable helper for Adam? How did Adam respond?
2. Pope Saint John Paul II said, “Man becomes the image of God not so much in a moment of solitude but in a moment of communion.”⁸ God’s intention with our creation was always relationship—and not just with Him.
 - A. Read CCC 1878. What is inseparable from the love of God?
 - B. According to CCC 1879, what does the human person need? How will man reach his full potential?

⁷ NSAB Lexicon. Bible Hub. 5/31/2020. <https://biblehub.com/lexicon/genesis/2-18.htm>.

⁸ Pope Saint John Paul II, Theology of the Body. <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/catholic-teaching/theology-of-the-body>. (TOB 9:3)

Reclaiming Friendship

God meant for our relationships with others to give us a foretaste of what we will experience in total intimacy with Him. He meant for us to belong to each other joyfully and completely. In the garden of Eden, that was Adam and Eve's experience. But in our own lives, this is often far from our reality. Right after Adam proclaimed that he had at last found a suitable helper in Eve, the couple fell from grace. At the prompting of the serpent, the couple ate the fruit which God had forbidden. Recognizing their sin, they hid from God.

3. Read Genesis 3:12–14. How does Adam respond when God asks why He ate the fruit from the tree in the garden? How does Eve respond to God's question?

The moment that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, the intended nature of the human relationship was shattered as shame and blame entered the picture. What was supposed to be our greatest source of earthly joy and belonging became our greatest source of earthly pain. Betrayal, manipulation and deceit moved in where there was once only love, self-gift and honesty. Is belonging to each other even worth it? It seems like it would be so much easier to keep people at an arm's length while we embrace our pets. Why not lean on self-sufficiency rather than risk authentic, vulnerable relationships? Refusing relationships can feel good at first, even empowering, but eventually we find ourselves alone and unknown. Instead of belonging to each other, we carry unseen burdens that were never meant to be hidden and never meant to be carried alone.

4. Reflect on the relationships in your life. Have you been bruised by past relationships? Do you find it easier to hide your true self from others? Does hiding part of yourself from others keep you from experiencing the joy that God meant for you to experience in relationships with others?
5. A. If it was through Adam and Eve's sin that the nature of our relationships was broken, where is our hope? See John 3:16–18.

B. How did He model this type of love for us? See John 13:1–12.

C. What new commandment did Jesus give to His disciples in John 13:34–35?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . How good it is when we dwell together in unity.

“If we have no peace, it’s because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”⁹ –Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Everything in our world tends to lead us away from true connection with each other. From the lonely relationships we have with our screens, to our desires to do it “our way,” to our fear of putting ourselves out there only to be hurt again, relationships feel like too much risk. But what about the joy that we experience when we find a true, authentic, and lasting connection?

Vulnerability researcher Dr. Brené Brown defines connection as “the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”¹⁰ This energy is a connection or bond, and “whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion,” (CCC 2347).

This is the kind of connection that we were meant to have in relationships. This is the kind of connection that Jesus redeemed for us in His life, death, and resurrection. So how do we live it? Saint Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:2–3, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Are we humble, gentle, and patient with those around us? Or do we enter into our relationships from a place of selfishness and need for validation? Let us first examine our own hearts when we look at the health of our relationships.

We know that on this side of heaven, we can do everything from a place of genuine love and our relationships may still suffer. Know dear sister, that even in those moments, you are not alone. Jesus sees, understands, and is present. Ask Him to lead you to people in your life with whom you can find genuine connection and then lean in with love.

⁹ Saint Teresa of Calcutta, “Mother Teresa Reflects on Working Toward Peace,” *The Architects of Peace*, Santa Clara University, 07/12/20, <https://www.scu.edu/mcae/architects-of-peace/Teresa/essay.html>.

¹⁰ Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection* (Minnesota: Hazelden Publishing, 2010), 19.

Day Three

DEFINING FRIENDSHIP

We have established that we were made for relationships with God and others. Now let's take our focus to friendship. Friendship is at the heart of all good relationships, but it is a loaded term. Similar to the words "love" and "beauty," "friendship" means vastly different things to different people. Some have experienced friendships characterized by love, joy, and self-sacrifice. Others associate friendship mainly with drama, manipulation, and betrayal. As women, our experiences in friendship are varied. For us to be able to explore God's purpose for friendship, we have to be working from the same definition. So let's define our terms.

1. Read Sirach 6:14–16.
 - A. List below the attributes used to describe a faithful friend.

 - B. Who finds and enjoys these friendships?

2. A true and trustworthy friend is priceless.
 - A. What kind of instructions are we given in Sirach 6:5–6 regarding the ways we should relate to people?

These verses describe gracious and friendly interactions with other people. We should strive to interact with every person this way, even if she is not our close friend. One might describe the relationships with these kinds of people as "acquaintanceships," not friendships. There is something slightly negative about the word "acquaintance," isn't there? So we try not to use it. Since we have weird associations with the word "acquaintance," we call people "friends" when we really don't know them all that well. In the German language, the word for acquaintances doesn't bear any negative

connotation. A woman is a *bekante* until she becomes trustworthy. At that point, she becomes a *freundin*. Being considered a *bekante* isn't an insult; it's an accurate description of the level of intimacy. We lack the equivalent description in English, which sometimes causes our expectations of people who aren't close, trustworthy friends to be unrealistic.

B. In your experience, are all friends faithful? How many close confidants are we advised to have in the second part of verse 6?

C. Why should we be slow to trust new friends according to Sirach 6:7–8?

These verses in the book of Sirach reveal to us what we already know from experience. Not all friendships are equal. There are different levels of goodwill and loyalty shared between friends. Some friends will stick with us through thick and thin, others will disappear at the first sign of trouble, and others will fall somewhere in between. We should absolutely expect there to be variations in our friendships.

Dr. John Cuddeback, professor and author, defines friendship as, “A mutually recognized relationship of affection that occurs between human persons, who have the maturity to bear some kind of goodwill for one another.”¹¹ For example, we can have goodwill toward a baby, but the baby does not have the maturity to recognize, respond, and share the same type of goodwill. While the relationship may be a beautiful one, it is not a friendship. For a friendship to exist, both people need to be at similar maturity levels, and recognize and share well wishes with each other.

Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher, wrote that there are three types of friendship. What the English language lacks (and what the German language offers) Aristotle provides with these descriptions. These distinctions are helpful tools. It's important to be able to define what kind of friendship you are talking about.

Useful friendships: Useful friendships are transactional in nature. Each person in the relationship gets something out of it. Business relationships are an example of useful friendships. Once the transaction ceases to continue, so does the relationship.

Pleasurable friendships: Pleasurable friendships are based on having a good time together. Women who party together are an example of pleasurable friendships.

¹¹ John Cuddeback, *True Friendship: Where Virtue Becomes Happiness* (Denver: Epic Publishing, 2010), 27.

Reclaiming Friendship

Other types of pleasurable friendships may be friendships that spring up from two women attending the same workout class, or their kids playing on the same sports team. This type of friendship runs a bit deeper than a transactional friendship, but the heart of the relationship is based on enjoyment of the other's company. If the framework for enjoying each other's company ceases to exist, such as a workout class or sports season coming to an end, so does the relationship.

Virtuous friendships: Virtuous friendships are not based on a transactional exchange or simply having a good time together. What sets virtuous friendships apart from useful and pleasurable friendships is that the women choose to invest in each other. Useful and pleasurable friendships fall into our laps through the activities in our calendar, but when we decide to invest our lives in each other, a useful or pleasurable friendship can transform into something deeper. The heart of virtuous friendship is the desire for the other person's good. Each person is loved for her own sake. In these friendships, we find the unwavering loyalty and support that we think of when we think of true friendships. In these friendships, each person challenges the other to become better.

3. While all types of friendships can be good, the deepest of these friendships is virtuous friendship. Friends love each other for who they are, and each person wants the best for each other. Jesus took virtuous friendships to another level. What does Jesus say is the greatest way we can love in friendships? See John 15:13.
4. Jesus laid down His life for us when He went to the cross so that we could live in friendship with the Father. He laid down His life for us, whom He called friends, and challenged us to do the same. Saint Paul reflects this type of friendship in his first letter to the Thessalonians. Saint Paul had relationships with Christians in cities across the ancient world, but there was something different about his relationship with the Thessalonians. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8. What was Saint Paul delighted to share with them? What type of friendship did he have with them?

To lead each other to the ultimate and highest good, true friendship must center on Christ. To become our true selves is to become like Jesus, and to find true joy is to submit our lives to God in every relationship. When friendships are viewed in this context, they take on a new depth. This doesn't mean that every conversation becomes

a prayer session. This means that everything in the friendship flows from a desire for each woman to become who God made her to be.

5. Write down the names of some of your closest friends. How would you characterize each friendship? Do you have more useful, pleasurable, or virtuous friendships?

6. Do you have friendships that could be virtuous but aren't? What do you think is keeping your friendship from going deeper? What is one thing that you can work on to bring that friendship to the next level?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . He calls you a friend.

Not all of Jesus' relationships were deep, intimate friendships, but they were all good. From His walking with people on the road, to sitting and laughing with friends at the Wedding at Cana, to sharing the deep mysteries of His Father's Kingdom with his closest apostles, Jesus experienced every form of friendship.

Take solace in the fact that you do not have the capacity to make every single friendship deep, soul sharing, and virtuous. Some of your friendships are meant to be deep and virtuous. Others will be lighter—useful or pleasurable—but in all of them Jesus asks you to follow His example and enter with the gaze of love for the other, exactly the way He looks at you.

Dear Lord,

Thank You for the women that You have placed in my life and for all of the ways that You have shown me Your goodness through my friendships. I know that my friendships should help to lead me to You, but honestly it doesn't always feel that simple. My friendships can feel so messy. Gossip, comparison, and drama seep in. Lord, I ask for Your forgiveness when I have failed to love my friends well. I ask for Your healing in the places of my heart that my friendships have created a wound. I invite You into my friendships. Please make Your home at the center of these relationships. Enable me to love other women well so that in the end, our friendship reflects Your goodness to the world. Amen

Day Four

TRUE FRIENDS ENABLE US TO LIVE A HAPPY LIFE

In virtuous friendships, each person loves the other for who they are, not what they can do for each other or get out of the relationship. They desire the very best for each other and together strive to become the best versions of themselves. This type of friendship is ideal but it's not easy. Most of our friendships rarely progress past the experience of a good time. Pleasurable friendships, as nice as they are, can't make us truly happy. God calls us to more, and He gave us a way to cultivate virtuous friendships. Today we will explore how God enables us to love more deeply in our friendships and how that type of love affects our lives.

Read John 15:4–13.

1. In John 15, Jesus sat with His closest friends at the last supper. He knew that this was the last time that He would sit with the men who had been with Him for the past three years. Jesus used this moment to tell his friends—who certainly would have been in the “virtuous friendship” category—what was most important to Him. Rewrite John 15:4–8 in your own words.

2. Jesus tells His apostles in the first part of John 15:9, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.”
 - A. What does Jesus say in the second part of verse 9?

 - B. How are we able to abide in Jesus? See John 15:10.

 - C. What will we have if we abide in Jesus according to John 15:11?

 - D. In the very next breath (15:12), Jesus gives His apostles a commandment. What is that commandment?

Jesus followed up His command to “Love each other as I have loved you” and said, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” Shortly after He said this, He went to the cross for all of mankind. Jesus called all of us to sacrificial, self-giving love—the kind of love that makes us willing to sacrifice our time, our preferences, our very lives, for the good of another.

He knows that we don’t have it in us to love this way on our own. That is why He told us that we can do nothing apart from Him, absolutely nothing (John 15:5). We can try to love with sacrificial love apart from God, but we will always fall short.

On the other hand, He told us that if we live in His love, we will bear much fruit. When we abide in God, we allow Him to define how we see ourselves and how we see others. His love becomes our love, and it flows out of us and into our relationships. This is the sure way, the only way, for us to experience the type of relationships that God desires for us. If we lean on Him, we’ll experience the transformation that comes to our friendships when we cooperate with Him.

3. God tells us in Scripture that friendship is a good thing, bringing us more joy than the material pleasures in which we often delight. There is something about spending time with virtuous friends that makes us feel safe, refreshed, happy, uplifted, and supported.
 - A. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–12. What do friends do in time of need?
 - B. How do friends help each other to grow according to Proverbs 27:17?
 - C. What two things did the apostles do in Acts 2:46 that gave them glad and generous hearts?
4. We have all had friendships that have gone wrong. Eventually we will dive into the behaviors that cause our friendships to fail, but for today, think of the friendships in your life that have brought you the most joy. What is it about those specific friendships that has been the most satisfying?

Reclaiming Friendship

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence... Two are better than one.

When God said that it is not good that man should be alone, He knew we needed each other to be happy. He knew working together, generously helping each other, brings a type of joy to our hearts that working alone cannot. He knew we would suffer in our broken world, so he gave us friends who would stretch out their hands to help us during hard times. He knew that in true, virtuous friendship we could challenge each other to become better versions of ourselves, closer to the women God created us to be. He also knew that we would find joy and rest in fellowship, enjoying one another's company, and glorifying God in our midst. In friendship, we celebrate the unique way that God placed His very own image into someone else and our friends celebrate how God has placed Himself in us.

Dear Lord,

Thank You for the ways that You have blessed me through my friends and used me to bless others. In my closest friendships, I have the honor of witnessing Your unique glory in others. Give me Your eyes so that I can see my friends the way that You do. Give me Your mind so that I can value these friendships the way that You want me to. Thank You for bringing me joy in these relationships. Help me to become the kind of virtuous friend that loves others the way that You have loved me. Amen.

Day Five

FRIENDSHIP TEACHES US TO LOVE

As we explored yesterday, God wants our lives to be marked by joy and happiness. While we certainly are meant to experience joy in our friendships, God's purpose for friendship goes deeper. Today, we will examine how God uses friendship as a tool to help us to become people who love like He loves.

1. In Ephesians 4:1–2, Saint Paul urges us to live lives that are worthy of the call we have received. How does Saint Paul describe this type of life in verse 2?
2. Becoming people who truly know how to love can be confusing because there are many modern definitions of love. To “love,” according to Saint Thomas Aquinas, is to “will the good of the other.”¹² To will the good means to want the best

¹² Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, (Stanford U.P., 1950), question 26, article 4.

for someone. We understand that the best is not what's immediately pleasurable or easy. Anyone who loves must be willing to encourage others to choose the best, even when it involves difficult interactions and conversations. This can look different in different situations.

- A. Saint Paul defines love in Romans 12:9–13. How does he instruct us to love?
- B. How does Saint Paul encourage us to love one another above ourselves in Philippians 2:1–3?

We can say that we love the “people” of the world. We can pray for them and we should. But a group of “people,” in a general sense, doesn't require our time, energy, and sacrifice. It's “persons” who need that. “Persons” are the flesh and blood individuals who are directly in our lives. They need favors, limit our freedom, hurt our pride, and require our forgiveness. Pope Saint John Paul II said, “Love consists of a commitment which limits one's freedom—it is a giving of the self, and to give oneself means just that: to limit one's freedom on behalf of another.”¹³

This is why friendship is so essential in learning to love. Friends require something of us—some sacrifice, small or large. Friends take up time that we had planned for something else. Friends call us out when we are falling short of who our friends know we are meant to be. They are in the mess, figuring it out with us. It is in these relationships, the imperfect, up close, and personal ones, where we will be transformed. If we want to be selfless, friendship is a great place to start. It provides countless opportunities to choose to follow Saint Paul's challenge to honor others above ourselves. This is hard. At this juncture, at the meeting of our wants and the needs of our personal relationships, we learn how to truly love by laying down our preferences and desires for the sake of honoring others above ourselves.

- 3. Can you think of a time when a friend loved you or you loved a friend in this sacrificial way? Share your experience here.

¹³ Pope Saint John Paul II. *Love and Responsibility*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 135.

Reclaiming Friendship

4. What does it look like when we allow ourselves to be inconvenienced by the needs of a friend? Read Mark 2:1–12 and recount the story in your own words. Explain what Jesus was doing, what the men did to get their paralyzed friend in front of Him, and His response.

The people who brought their friend to Jesus were probably not planning on unlatching a roof and causing a scene in front of a major crowd that day. They saw that the needs of their friend were more important than their pride or their plans. The man on the stretcher was probably not looking to inconvenience his friends, either. Allowing them to bring him to Jesus was an act of love in itself.

5. For some of us it is very difficult to accept acts of love and generosity from others. It is easier to give than receive because receiving love from others makes us feel vulnerable—even worse, needy or clingy. Do you struggle more with giving love or receiving love? Why?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence... His heart is moved by the love of friends.

In the television series about Jesus' life, The Chosen, there is a beautiful scene in which Jesus heals the paralytic. At the beginning of the episode, a young woman happens to come across Jesus as He heals a leper. Seeing His power, her mind immediately turns to her friend who is paralyzed from the waist down. She gathers her group together and they carry their friend on a stretcher only to find Jesus unreachable through the crowds.

As they try to push through the crowds, Peter and Mary Magdalene approach them. Mary tries to help them get to Jesus but sees no way through. She apologizes for the size of the crowd and says, "I don't want to interrupt the Teacher by causing a scene." Desperate, the young woman with the paralytic turns to Mary and asks, "Wouldn't you want your friends to make a scene?"

Mary realizes in that moment that she was once as crippled as the paralytic and is only restored because of Jesus. With her help, the paralytic and his friends get onto the roof, and again, the woman advocates for her friend as she boldly calls down to Jesus, “Jesus of Nazareth. I saw what you did to the leper on the road this morning. My friend has been paralyzed since childhood. He has no hope but You, please do for him what You did for the leper. If You are a willing Rabbi, I know you can do this.”¹⁴

In a dramatic scene, the group carrying the crippled man unbings part of the roof and lowers the paralytic down to Jesus who looks up at them, deeply moved by their audacious faith. Jesus looks at the woman and says, “Your faith is beautiful.” In response to the powerful showing of love, Jesus heals the paralyzed man. God’s heart is moved by the love of friends.

Do you see your friendships as an opportunity to perfect your love? Would you go further for your friends, honoring them above yourself? Do you recognize that Jesus really is your only hope and do all that you can to lay your friendships at His feet? Would you let your friends carry you to Him if you were unable to move? Bring these questions to the Lord today.

Conclusion

In 2019, actors Shia Lebouf and Zack Gottsagen made a heartwarming film called *Peanut Butter Falcon*. The movie is about a young man, Zak, played by Gottsagen, with Down Syndrome who escapes an assisted living facility to chase his dream of becoming a professional wrestler. Completely alone with nowhere to go, Zak hides on a boat that belongs to Tyler, played by Lebouf, a thief and fisherman with a hardened heart. Tyler discovers Zak on his boat and tries to leave him behind. He eventually changes his mind and lets Zak travel with him after he sees Zak being bullied by a young boy.

At first their friendship is purely transactional: Zak needs protection and Tyler doesn’t want the guilt of abandoning a man with Down Syndrome. As the plot progresses, however, so does their friendship. The men get to know each other and start to enjoy each other’s company. Tyler eventually agrees to take Zak to the home of his favorite wrestler.

Their friendship deepens from adventure to adventure. Tyler teaches Zak how to swim and shoot a gun. He even convinces Zak’s favorite wrestler, long retired, to put on his wrestling suit and teach Zak to wrestle. All the while, Zak causes Tyler to let down his guard and discover parts of himself that he had blocked off. By the end of the movie, they have developed a deep love for each other. They both have built a virtuous friendship.

¹⁴ *The Chosen*, “Indescribable Compassion,” 6, directed by Dallas Jenkins, 2020, Vidangelapp.

Reclaiming Friendship

While the movie is endearing, what makes it so special is that the two actors developed a deep friendship in real life. In an interview with HeyUGuys, Labeouf told the audience just how much of an effect Gottsagen had on him. When the interviewers asked Lebeouf how the experience of filming the movie changed him, this is how he replied.

It wasn't so much the experience; it was just being around Zack. He softened me, and if you were around him enough, he'd soften you too. You know, I was raised on Nirvana and the Simpsons. I have a really cynical gene in me that sort of overwhelms the naive cutesy part of me. You get around Zack long enough and you start feeling the effects...the biggest take away from the movie is that I walked away with a dude I love.¹⁵

God knows the power of friendship because He created it. Our earthly friendships are so powerful because they are a foretaste of the joy we will experience when we get to heaven and enter total union with God. While we are on earth, our friendships remind us that we are not alone. Others are here to walk with us. Friendship has the power to smooth out our sharp edges. It teaches us how to live in joy and harmony with others. It challenges us to move outside of ourselves, to love more deeply and enjoy life more fully. If God is the center of your friendships, His goodness and joy will be revealed to you and to those around you.

Want to learn more about this week's topic? Don't miss Lesson 2's short video from Mallory at walkingwithpurpose.com/videos.

My Resolution

"My Resolution" is your opportunity to write down one specific, personal application from this lesson. We can take in a lot of information from the Bible, but if we don't translate our knowledge into action, we have missed the point. In James 1:22, we're told that we shouldn't just hear the word of God, we are to "do what it says." Resolutions inspire us to put our knowledge into action. What makes a good resolution? It should be **personal** (use the pronouns I, me, my, mine), it should be **possible** (don't choose something so far-fetched that you'll just become discouraged), it should be **measurable** (a specific goal to achieve within a specific time period) and it should be **action-oriented** (not just a spiritual thought.)

¹⁵ "Shia LaBeouf & Zack Gottsagen Interview – The Peanut Butter Falcon," YouTube video, 5:52, posted by "HeyUGuys," 10/15/2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8JW-vl3wz4&t=138s>.

Examples:

1. I will take account of my conversations with friends this week and ask myself, “Did this conversation help either of us to reach for the best version of ourselves?” If not, I will write down what we could do better in the future.

2. I will take time to reflect on who has been a true friend to me in my life. I will pray for that person every day this week and send them a note thanking them for how their friendship has impacted me.

3. I will spend an hour in the adoration chapel this week thanking the Lord for His friendship and asking Him to reveal how I can make my friendships more virtuous.

My Resolution:

Catechism Clips of the Catholic Church

CCC 1 God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness, freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

CCC 27 The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: “The dignity of man

Reclaiming Friendship

rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator”.

CCC 221 God’s very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.

CCC 1878 All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbor is inseparable from love for God.

CCC 1879 The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation.

Appendix 2

Conversion of Heart

The Catholic faith is full of beautiful traditions, rituals, and sacraments. As powerful as they are, it is possible for them to become mere habits in our lives, instead of experiences that draw us close to the heart of Christ. In the words of Saint John Paul II, they can become acts of “hollow ritualism.” We might receive our first Communion and the sacraments of confession and confirmation, yet never experience the interior conversion that opens the heart to a personal relationship with God.

Pope Benedict XVI has explained that the “door of faith” is opened at one’s baptism, but we are called to open it again, walk through it, and rediscover and renew our relationship with Christ and His Church.³⁸

So how do we do this? How do we walk through that door of faith so we can begin to experience the abundant life that God has planned for us?

Getting Personal

The word *conversion* means “the act of turning.” This means that conversion involves a turning away from one thing and a turning toward another. When you haven’t experienced conversion of heart, you are turned *toward* your own desires. You are the one in charge, and you do what you feel is right and best at any given moment. You may choose to do things that are very good for other people, but the distinction is that *you are choosing*. You are deciding. You are the one in control.

Imagine driving a car. You are sitting in the driver’s seat, and your hands are on the steering wheel. You’ve welcomed Jesus into the passenger’s seat and have listened to His comments. But whether or not you follow His directions is really up to you. You may follow them or you may not, depending on what seems right to you.

When you experience interior conversion, you decide to turn, to get out of the driver’s seat, move into the passenger’s seat, and invite God to be the driver. Instead of seeing Him as an advice giver or someone nice to have around for the holidays, you give Him control of every aspect of your life.

More than likely, you don’t find this easy to do. This is because of the universal struggle with pride. We want to be the ones in charge. We don’t like to be in desperate need. We

³⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter: *Porta Fidei*, for the Induction of the Year of Faith, October 11, 2011.

Reclaiming Friendship

like to be the captains of our ships, charting our own courses. As William Ernest Henley wrote, “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.”

Conversion of heart isn’t possible without humility. The first step is to recognize your desperate need of a savior. Romans 6:23 states that the “wages of sin is death.” When you hear this, you might be tempted to justify your behavior, or compare yourself with others. You might think to yourself, “I’m not a murderer. I’m not as bad as this or that person. If someone were to put my good deeds and bad deeds on a scale, my good ones would outweigh the bad. So surely, I am good enough? Surely I don’t deserve death!” When this is your line of thought, you are missing a very important truth: Just one mortal sin is enough to separate you from a holy God. Just one mortal sin is enough for you to deserve death.

The Catholic Church teaches that “mortal sin requires full knowledge and complete consent. It presupposes knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God’s law,” (CCC 1859). By contrast, “unintentional ignorance can diminish or even remove the imputability of a grave offense,” (CCC 1860). But before we let ourselves off the hook too quickly, claiming that “unintentional ignorance” is what is at play when we sin, we would be wise to keep reading CCC 1860 which reminds us, “No one is deemed to be ignorant of the principles of the moral law, which are written in the conscience of every man.” The truth is, we all have sinned willfully at certain times in our lives. That means that the starting point for each one of us must be an acknowledgement that we have messed up and we need a savior.

Even your best efforts to do good fall short of what God has required in order for you to spend eternity with Him. Isaiah 64:6 says, “All our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.” If you come to God thinking that you are going to be accepted by Him based on your “good conduct,” He will point out that your righteousness is nothing compared to His infinite holiness.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux understood this well, and wrote, “In the evening of my life I shall appear before You with empty hands, for I do not ask You to count my works. All our justices are stained in Your eyes. I want therefore to clothe myself in Your own justice and receive from Your love the eternal possession of Yourself.”³⁹

She recognized that her works, her best efforts, wouldn’t be enough to earn salvation. Salvation cannot be earned. It’s a free gift. Saint Thérèse accepted this gift and said that if her justices or righteous deeds were stained, then she wanted to clothe herself in Christ’s

³⁹ Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, “Act of Oblation to Merciful Love,” June 9, 1895.

own justice. We see this described in 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

How did God make Him who had no sin to be sin for you? This was foretold by the prophet Isaiah: “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

Jesus accomplished this on the cross. Every sin committed, past, present, and future, was placed on Him. Now, *all the merits of Jesus can be yours*. He wants to fill your empty hands with His own virtues.

But first, you need to recognize, just as Saint Thérèse did, that you are little. You are weak. You fail. You need forgiveness. You need a savior.

When you come before God in prayer and acknowledge these truths, He looks at your heart. He sees your desire to trust Him, to please Him, to obey Him. He says to you, “My precious child, you don’t have to pay for your sins. My Son, Jesus, has already done that for you. He suffered, so that you wouldn’t have to. I want to experience a relationship of intimacy with you. I forgive you.”⁴⁰ Jesus came to set you free.⁴¹ When you open your heart to me, you become a new creation!⁴² The old you has gone. The new you is here. If you will stay close to me, and journey by my side, you will begin to experience a transformation that brings joy and freedom.⁴³ I’ve been waiting to pour my gifts into your soul. Beloved daughter of Mine, remain confident in Me. I am your loving Father. Crawl into my lap. Trust me. Love me. I will take care of everything.”

This is conversion of heart. This act of faith lifts the veil from your eyes and launches you into the richest and most satisfying life. You don’t have to be sitting in church to do this. Don’t let a minute pass before opening your heart to God and inviting Him to come dwell within you. Let Him sit in the driver’s seat. Give Him the keys to your heart. Your life will never be the same again.

⁴⁰ “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

⁴¹ “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” John 8:36.

⁴² “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17.

⁴³ “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:25, 26.

Lesson 2, Day One

1. God created the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1 and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters in Genesis 1:2.
2. **A. John 1:1** The Word of God.
B. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. This is a description of the incarnation of Jesus. This incarnation is a teaching central to the Christian faith that God became a man by becoming Jesus. We believe that because of the incarnation, Jesus is fully God and fully man.
3. **A.** According to Acts 17:24-25, God does not need anything. We need Him for life and breath. He does not need us.
B. CCC 1 God created us so that we can share in His own blessed life. We separated ourselves from Him by our sin, but God is constantly calling us back into His family. To accomplish this, He sent Jesus to redeem us and save us. We can now become His adopted children and heirs to His blessed life.
C. CCC 221 We are destined to share in God's eternal exchange of love.
4. **A. CCC 27** Only in God will we find truth and happiness.
B. To live fully according to the truth, we must accept that love and entrust ourselves to our creator.
5. Answers will vary.

Lesson 2, Day Two

1. **A.** "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a suitable helper for him."
(Genesis 2:18)
B. Genesis 2:21–23 God places Adam into a deep sleep and created Eve from his rib, another person. Adam responds, "Finally, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."
2. **A. CCC 1878** Love of neighbor is inseparable from the love of God.
B. CCC 1879 The human person needs to live in society. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue, man reaches his full potential.
3. **Genesis 3:12–14** Adam responded that Eve gave him the fruit, so he ate it. Eve responded that it was the serpent's deception that made her eat the apple.
4. Answers will vary.
5. **A. John 3:16–18** Our hope is in Jesus who came so that all who believe in Him will have eternal life. God sent Jesus, not to condemn the world but that it might be saved through Him.
B. John 13:1–12 Jesus washes his disciple's feet in humble service.
C. John 13:34–35 Jesus tells his disciples to love one another as He has loved them.

Lesson 2, Day Three

1. A. Sturdy shelter, treasure, priceless, life-saving medicine
B. Those who fear the Lord.
2. A. We should be kind to others in our speech and in our manner. Our tongue should be gracious and courteous. We should seek to be at peace with people.
B. Answers will vary; the second half of verse 6 advises to have one in a thousand.
C. Because some people are only friends when it suits them but run away in times of trouble.
3. **John 15:13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.
4. Saint Paul said that he did not only want to share the Gospel with them, but he wanted to share his very life with them. This is an example of a virtuous friendship.
5. Answers will vary.
6. Answers will vary.

Lesson 2, Day Four

1. Jesus is telling the apostles (and us) to live in Him as He lives in them. He tells them that they can do nothing unless they remain in Him and says that those who don't remain in Him will be like branches that are thrown out. Those who remain in Him will bear much fruit. He says He has loved them as the Father has loved them and again tells them to remain in His love.
2. A. He said to abide in Him. To abide in Jesus means to stay in relationship with Him.
B. He said that they need to keep His commandments.
C. Jesus said that our joy would be in them and that their joy would be full.
D. He commands them to love each other as I have loved you.
3. A. Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor: It says that if one falls down, one can help the other up.
B. They sharpen each other as iron sharpens iron.
C. They had glad and generous hearts because they spent much time together in the temple and they broke bread at home.
4. Answers will vary.

Lesson 2, Day Five

1. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
2. A. Romans 12:9-13 tells us to love each other by honoring one another above ourselves.
B. Philippians 2:3 exhorts us to count each other more significant than yourselves.
3. Answers will vary.

Reclaiming Friendship

4. Jesus was preaching in Capernaum, the crowd was so vast that there was no way to get to Jesus from the outside. Four men were carrying their friend on a stretcher. Unable to get to Jesus, they opened the roof and lowered him down. Jesus, because of their faith, healed the paralytic.
5. Answers will vary.

Lesson 3, Day One

1. **Psalm 103:15–16** A man's days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.
Psalm 90:5–6 They are like a dream, like which is renewed in the morning and fades away in the evening.
Psalm 144:3–5 They are like a breath. Their days are like a fleeting shadow.
Psalm 39:5 Man's days are handbreadths, their lifetime is nothing in God's sight. Man is a breath.
2. We may gain a heart of wisdom.
3. He reveals himself to Peter, James, and John.
4. Answers will vary.
5. For everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven.
6. **A.** Answers will vary.
B. Answers will vary.

Lesson 3, Day Two

1. He was betrayed by his equal companion, his familiar friend. They used to hold sweet converse together; within God's house they walked in fellowship.
2. Answers will vary.
3. He says to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.
4. David calls upon God.

Lesson 3, Day Three

1. **A.** They threw their cloaks down so Jesus could sit on the colt and they spread their cloaks on the road to honor him.
B. The disciples sang praise to Jesus as they said, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
2. Judas told the crowd that He would kiss the one to be arrested. Judas walked up to Jesus and kissed Him. The men then seized Jesus and arrested Him. Once Jesus was arrested, verse 50 says that they all forsook Him and fled.



walking with purpose

*A Prayer For Reclaiming Friendship:
God's Plan for Deep Connection*

Heavenly Father,

You have created me out of Your goodness and love
for a relationship with You and others.

Thank You for the beautiful gift of friendship and for every person
I have ever called a friend.

Thank You for the women who have been a sturdy shelter
and a life-saving medicine in my life—for the women
who have challenged me to become better,
have comforted me in sorrow,
and laughed with me through the joys of life.

Please heal me from friendships gone wrong
and bring comfort to those I have hurt.

Lord, move in me so that I may become the kind of friend
who is a gift to others—who loves at all times.

Lord, become the center of my friendships
so that we would bring glory to You
and reveal Your faithfulness to the world.

Amen.

Prayer Requests

Date:



Date:

