



# **BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIPS**

8 Week Small Group Study

## **LEADER WORKBOOK**

**PURPOSE:**

EQUIP AND ENCOURAGE MEN TO BUILD CHRIST-CENTERED FRIENDSHIPS THAT STRENGTHEN FAITH, FOSTER ACCOUNTABILITY, AND REFLECT HIS LOVE.

**HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK:**

- LET GO OF YOUR EGO
- BE VULNERABLE
- OPEN WITH PRAYER
- MEET WEEKLY/BI-WEEKLY
- READ THE SCRIPTURES
- DISCUSS HONESTLY
- PRACTICE THE WEEKLY CHALLENGE
- MEMORY VERSE EACH WEEK
- CLOSE WITH PRAYER.



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

WEEK 1: GOD'S CALL FOR FRIENDSHIP

WEEK 2: LOVE & SACRIFICE

WEEK 3: LOYALTY & FAITHFULNESS

WEEK 4: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRUTH IN LOVE

WEEK 5: ENCOURAGEMENT & SUPPORT

WEEK 6: FORGIVENESS & GRACE

WEEK 7: SHARED PURPOSE IN CHRIST

WEEK 8: LIVING OUT BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP



## WEEK 1: GOD'S CALL FOR FRIENDSHIP

### Big Idea:

Friendship is part of God's design for human flourishing and discipleship.

### Leader Coaching:

- Open with an icebreaker: Share a meaningful friendship moment from your childhood.
- Normalize vulnerability, model with your own brief story.
- Keep the focus on Scripture; avoid drifting into mere self-help concepts.

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- Genesis 2:18
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
- John 15:12-15

### Teaching Notes:

- From the beginning, God declares it is not good for man to be alone (Gen 2:18).
- Biblical wisdom commends the strength and resilience that come from shared labor and mutual support (Ecc 4:9-10).
- Jesus reframes friendship around covenantal love; He calls us friends and models sacrificial intimacy (John 15:12-15).



## WEEK 1: GOD'S CALL FOR FRIENDSHIP

### Discussion Questions:

- Share a time when you were alone and it was not good.
- How does Jesus' definition of friendship challenge cultural norms?
- What would change in your life if you pursued friendships as a spiritual discipline?

### Weekly Challenge:

Identify one man to intentionally connect with this week (call, coffee, prayer). Put it on your calendar.

### Memory Verse:

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

-John 15:12-

### Prayer Focus:

Lord, open my heart to authentic, Christ-centered friendships. Give me courage to pursue community. Guide me as I seek friendships that glorify You though the fruit they bear.



# **WEEK 1: GOD'S CALL FOR FRIENDSHIP**

## **Reflection Handout**

### **Key Insight from Scripture:**

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### **What God is Saying to Me:**

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### **Action I Will Take This Week:**

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### **Who Will I Share This With / Involve for Accountability:**

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## WEEK 2: LOVE & SACRIFICE

### Big Idea:

Christ-like friendship is measured by self-giving love.

### Leader Coaching:

- Open with an icebreaker: What is easiest for you to give to others; Time, Talent, Treasure? Why do you feel this?
- Normalize vulnerability, model with your own brief story.
- Anticipate resistance around cost, reframe sacrifice as joy and worship.
- Guard against performance; emphasize grace-fueled obedience.

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- John 15:13
- 1 John 3:16

### Teaching Notes:

- Jesus defines the greatest love as laying down one's life for friends. While martyrdom is rare, daily self-denial, time, attention, resources, is the ordinary shape of sacrificial love.



## WEEK 2: LOVE & SACRIFICE

### Discussion Questions:

- What does sacrificial love look like in your weekly rhythms?
- Share a time a friend's sacrifice impacted you.
- Where is God inviting you to give up comfort for the good of a brother?

### Weekly Challenge:

Do one concrete, costly act of service for a friend (time, talent, or treasure).

### Memory Verse:

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

-1 John 3:16-

### Prayer Focus:

Jesus, teach me to love my friends as You have loved me, sincerely, tangibly, and sacrificially. Please give me opportunities to be generous to my brothers, so that I may practice sacrifice often, and give freely the time, talent and treasure that you have given me.



## **WEEK 2: LOVE & SACRIFICE**

### **Reflection Handout**

#### **Key Insight from Scripture:**

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#### **What God is Saying to Me:**

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#### **Action I Will Take This Week:**

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## WEEK 3: LOYALTY & FAITHFULNESS

### Big Idea:

Faithful presence builds trust and stability in friendship.

### Leader Coaching:

- Open with an icebreaker: Can you share a time when you chose to stick with someone or something, even when it was hard or costly? What was it that kept you committed?
- Differentiate loyalty from enabling; Loyalty stands with someone in truth for their good, while enabling shields them from truth and supports harmful choices.
- Invite testimonies of restored friendships.

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- Proverbs 17:17
- Ruth 1:16-17

### Teaching Notes:

- A true friend is always loving, and a brother helps in trying times. A true friend and genuine brother exhibit true love in unfavorable circumstances as well as in favorable ones. (Prov 17:17)
- Ruth's unwavering loyalty to Naomi and her wholehearted embrace of Yahweh demonstrate a profound example of faithfulness and sacrificial commitment, choosing God's people and His ways over personal security. Her story shows that true devotion often requires costly, countercultural decisions rooted in trust in God. (Ruth 1:16-17)



## WEEK 3: LOYALTY & FAITHFULNESS

### Discussion Questions:

- Why is loyalty rare in a convenience culture?
- How can you show up consistently for a friend in a tough season?
- What boundaries help sustain faithfulness over time?

### Weekly Challenge:

Reconnect with a friend you've drifted from; schedule time to listen and encourage.

### Memory Verse:

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

-Proverbs 17:17-

### Prayer Focus:

Lord, make me a steadfast friend who reflects Your faithful love. Cultivate in me a steadfast commitment to stand by my friends in ways that promote their well-being and reflect Your truth and righteousness.



## **WEEK 3: LOYALTY & FAITHFULNESS**

### **Reflection Handout**

#### **Key Insight from Scripture:**

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#### **What God is Saying to Me:**

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## WEEK 4: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRUTH IN LOVE

### Big Idea:

Mutual sharpening requires courage, humility, and love.

### Leader Coaching:

- Open with an icebreaker: What's one thing you're grateful for this week, and how did someone else play a role in it?
- Establish confidentiality and grace before discussion begins.
- Model a simple check-in framework: Confess, Impact, Next Step

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- Proverbs 27:17
- Ephesians 4:15

### Teaching Notes:

- Iron sharpening iron implies heat, friction, and purpose. It is crucially important to carefully choose who we "brush up against." A good friend can lead us to self-improvement and greater godliness.
- Christian maturity is marked by the ability to speak the truth in love—avoiding the extremes of harsh legalism or permissive compromise—so that our words reflect both righteousness and grace to believers and unbelievers alike.
- Healthy accountability is invited, specific, and gospel-centered.



## WEEK 4: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRUTH IN LOVE

### Discussion Questions:

- What makes accountability defeating, and what makes it life-giving?
- Where do you need sharpening right now?
- How can you invite honest feedback without defensiveness?

### Weekly Challenge:

Choose one area (purity, finances, practice) and ask a brother for weekly check-ins.

### Memory Verse:

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

-Proverbs 27:17-

### Prayer Focus:

Lord, grant me the courage to humbly receive correction and a heart of flesh that responds. Give me wisdom and discernment, a spirit of humility and gentleness, as I deliver correction to my brothers.



# **WEEK 4: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRUTH IN LOVE**

## **Reflection Handout**

### **Key Insight from Scripture:**

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### **What God is Saying to Me:**

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## WEEK 5: ENCOURAGEMENT & SUPPORT

### Big Idea:

Encouragement catalyzes perseverance and boldness.

### Leader Coaching:

- Teach the S.O.A.P. Method of encouragement: see it, own it, articulate it, pray it.
- Have each man write and read a personal opportunity to apply Scripture to his life. Use the SOAP method.

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Hebrews 10:24-25

### Teaching Notes:

- We must let the hope of eternity with Jesus drive us to encourage and edify one another. Instead of being dismayed by world events, we remind each other that a better day is coming. In the meantime, we help one another grow in Christlikeness and become equipped to serve Him. Our encouragement must go beyond compliments—it should be prophetic, specific, and anchored in God’s word. The enemy knows we are weaker when isolated, so stay committed to gathering regularly for worship, fellowship, prayer, and study.



## WEEK 5: ENCOURAGEMENT & SUPPORT

### S.O.A.P. Method:

#### 1. See It

- **What it means:** Observe and identify the truth or principle in Scripture or the situation.
- **Goal:** Gain clarity on what God is saying—look for commands, promises, or examples.
- **Example:** Reading Ephesians 4:15, you “see” the call to speak the truth in love.

#### 2. Own It

- **What it means:** Take personal responsibility for applying that truth.
- **Goal:** Move from theory to conviction—acknowledge where you need to change or grow.
- **Example:** “I haven’t always spoken truth with love; I need to change.”

#### 3. Articulate It

- **What it means:** Express the truth clearly—write it down or speak it.
- **Goal:** Cement understanding and make it actionable.
- **Example:** “I will speak truth with grace this week, starting with my family.”

#### 4. Pray It

- **What it means:** Bring it before God—ask for strength, wisdom, and transformation.
- **Goal:** Depend on God to live out what you’ve seen and owned.
- **Example:** “Lord, help me speak truth with love today.”



## WEEK 5: ENCOURAGEMENT & SUPPORT

### Discussion Questions:

- What kind of encouragement most strengthens you?
- Share a story where encouragement changed your trajectory.
- How can our group build a culture of consistent encouragement?

### Weekly Challenge:

Encourage three men this week, be specific about what you see God doing in them.

### Memory Verse:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,  
-Hebrews 10:24-

### Prayer Focus:

God, please make me a man who builds others up with truth and love....



## WEEK 5: ENCOURAGEMENT & SUPPORT

### Reflection Handout

#### Key Insight from Scripture:

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## WEEK 6: FORGIVENESS & GRACE

### Big Idea:

Friendships flourish where grace is practiced and offenses are released.

### Leader Coaching:

- Consider reading Matthew 18:15-35 for Jesus' teaching regarding disputes and the parable of the unforgiving servant.
- Emphasize that forgiveness is both an act of obedience and a lifestyle rooted in humility and dependence on Christ (Matthew 18:35)

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- **Colossians 3:13**
- **Matthew 18:21-22**

### Teaching Notes:

- Forgiveness is a core mark of Christian maturity, modeled after Christ's own grace toward us. Colossians 3:13 calls us to bear with one another's weaknesses and forgive as the Lord forgave us—fully and freely. Matthew 18:21–22 reminds us that forgiveness is not limited by numbers; it's a continual posture of grace. True forgiveness releases the debt rather than keeping score, reflecting God's heart and protecting our own from bitterness.



## WEEK 6: FORGIVENESS & GRACE

### Discussion Questions:

- Where have you struggled to forgive?
- What boundaries might be needed alongside forgiveness?
- How does receiving God's grace empower us to extend grace?

### Weekly Challenge:

Take one step toward forgiveness this week: prayer, conversation, or blessing the person who hurt you. Each person is encouraged to include this in their closing prayer.

### Memory Verse:

bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

-Colossians 3:13-

### Prayer Focus:

Heavenly Father, please give me a heart that forgives fast, so that grace may flow from me freely and repeatedly. Lord, squash my ego, so that I may not respond with anger or judgement, but be inclined to offer understanding and compassion.



## WEEK 6: FORGIVENESS & GRACE

### Reflection Handout

#### Key Insight from Scripture:

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## WEEK 7: SHARED PURPOSE IN CHRIST

### Big Idea:

Friendship anchored in Christ advances the Gospel and deepens joy.

### Leader Coaching:

- Facilitate a brainstorm for a simple missional project the group can do within 30 days.
- Encourage prayer touchpoints. Get suggestions on what would work best for people to see accountability here? ex, group me, text thread...

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- **Philippians 2:2-5**
- **Acts 2:42-47**

### Teaching Notes:

- Biblical community is rooted in Christlike humility and unity. Philippians 2:2-5 calls believers to be of one mind and one love, rejecting selfish ambition and embracing a posture that values others above self. This mindset mirrors the heart of Jesus and shapes relationships marked by sacrificial care. Acts 2:42-47 demonstrates this in action: the early church devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, prayer, and shared life, meeting needs with generosity and worshiping together with glad hearts. Their unity and selflessness not only strengthened their community but also drew others to Christ. Together, these passages reveal that true friendship and fellowship in Christ are grounded in shared purpose, mutual service, and a commitment to glorify God through life together.



## WEEK 7: SHARED PURPOSE IN CHRIST

### Discussion Questions:

- What shared mission(s) could our friendships pursue?
- How does mission deepen friendship?
- Which spiritual rhythms (prayer, Scripture, hospitality) can we adopt together?

### Weekly Challenge:

Plan one spiritual activity with a friend: prayer walk, serve day, or shared Bible reading plan.

### Memory Verse:

complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

-Philippians 2:2-

### Prayer Focus:

Lord Jesus, give us strength and encourage us to always seek your Words as the lamp that guides our steps. Guide this group of men as we align our friendships with Your mission.



## WEEK 7: SHARED PURPOSE IN CHRIST

### Reflection Handout

#### Key Insight from Scripture:

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## WEEK 8: LIVING OUT BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP

### Big Idea:

Biblical friendship is an ongoing commitment to love, bear burdens, and witness Christ.

### Leader Coaching:

- Ask the group, “what do we study next?”
- Follow up on the group’s missional project.
- End with a commissioning prayer; invite men to lay hands on one another.

### Scripture: Read from The Bible

- John 13:34-35
- Galatians 6:2

### Teaching Notes:

- Jesus commands His followers to love one another as He has loved them—a sacrificial, unconditional love that reflects His character (John 13:34-35). This love is not merely an emotion but an active commitment that becomes the defining mark of true discipleship. Galatians 6:2 shows what this love looks like in practice: bearing one another’s burdens. When believers step into each other’s struggles with compassion and support, they fulfill the law of Christ, which is grounded in love. Together, these passages teach that authentic Christian community is demonstrated through selfless care and mutual responsibility, revealing Christ to the world through the way His people love and serve each other.



## WEEK 8: LIVING OUT BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP

### Discussion Questions:

- Which component challenged you most and why?
- Recap weekly challenges and ask for successes to be shared.
- Who outside of the group are you being called to disciple?

### Weekly Challenges:

- Share a picture to the group, of you participating in a healthy physical activity.
- Share a takeaway from your Bible reading with the group.
- Boldly proclaim the truth to someone.

### Memory Verse:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

-John 13:34-35-

### Prayer Focus:

Heavenly Father, may all the glory forever and ever be given to you. I am so grateful for you, the way you move in my life and cultivate my new heart of flesh in Christ Jesus. Thank you for this group of men who commit themselves to a brotherhood in our Lord, who commit themselves to reflect Jesus in their mind's and body's. Father, please guide each of us through our days, with our families, at our jobs, in the midst of our interactions with all people, please help us become more Christlike in everything we do.



# **WEEK 8: LIVING OUT BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP**

## **Reflection Handout**

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### **Action I Will Take This Week:**

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