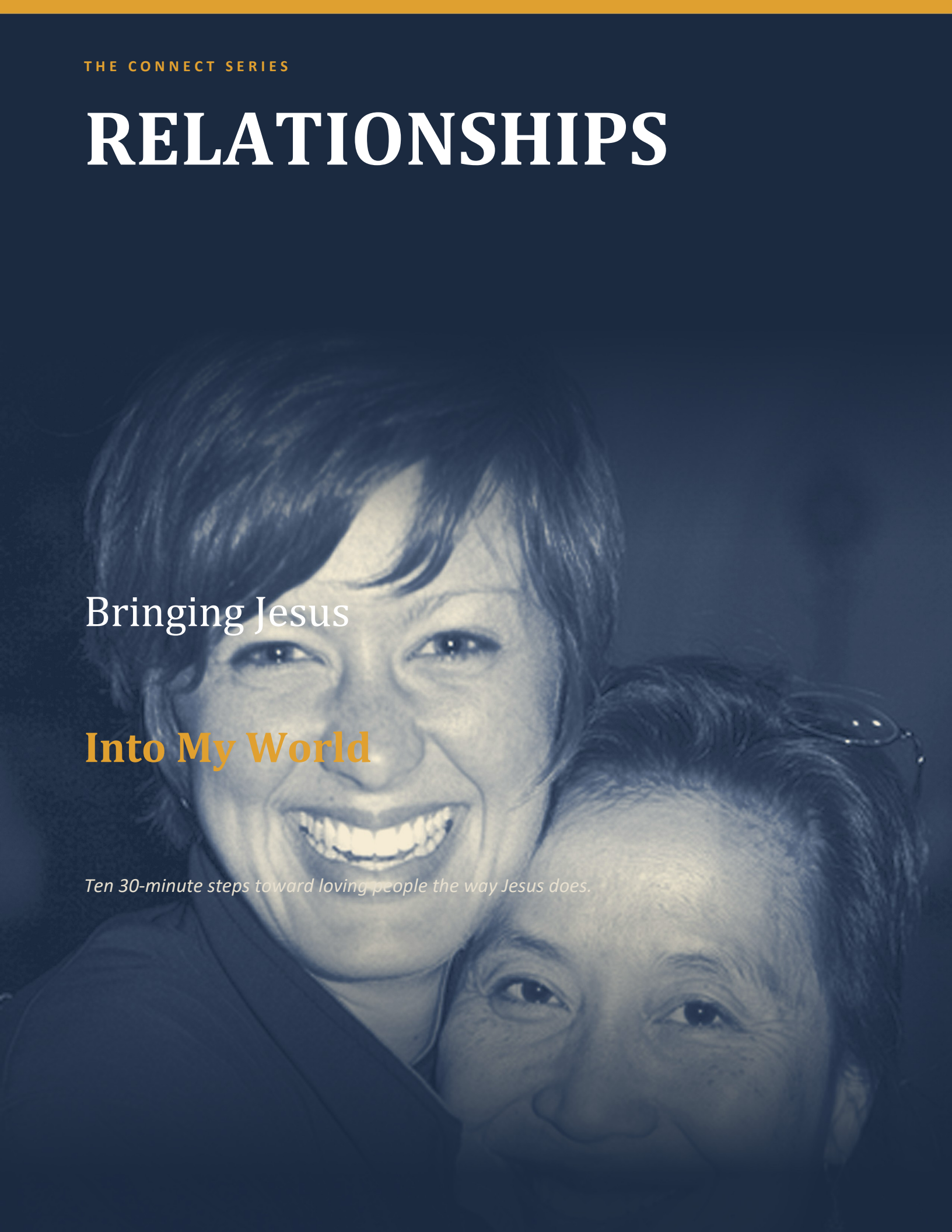
THE CONNECT SERIES

RELATIONSHIPS



Bringing Jesus

Into My World

Ten 30-minute steps toward loving people the way Jesus does.

A personal and small-group study of love, family, friends and faith

THE CONNECT SERIES

RELATIONSHIPS

Bringing Jesus Into My World

Ten chapters, 30 minutes each

by Ralph Ennis, Judy Gomoll, Rebecca Goldstone, Dennis Stokes and Christine Weddle



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Content development team: Ralph Ennis, Judy Gomoll, Rebecca Goldstone, Dennis Stokes and Christine Weddle. **Original cover and interior design:** Christine Weddle. **Consultation:** Margo Balsis, Karen Yu, Kyu Ho Lee, Melindajoy Mingo, Jolene Blair, Kristi Monteiro, Jon Sween, Bahari Harris, Leah Wilson-Hartgrove and Debbie Entsminger. **This edition:** adapted for younger readers, with shorter chapters, plain language, safety notes and new images.

Some of the stories in this book are true to life and used with permission. All other stories are composites or made up, and any resemblance to people living or dead is coincidental.

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INSIDE

Your ten steps

Each chapter starts with a question you may already be asking. Each one takes about 30 minutes.

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WELCOME

People are complicated

Family, friends, roommates, coworkers, people who hurt you and people you've hurt: relationships are the best and hardest part of life. Almost everyone wonders how to **love well** in the middle of it all.

This study isn't about rules. It's about **bringing Jesus into every relationship**, starting with receiving His love. Other Connect studies explore receiving God's love (GOD) and who God says you are (IDENTITY and SOUL). This one is about loving people, all kinds of people. If you're loving God and yourself, loving others follows naturally.

> **IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME?**
>
> - **Go at your own pace.** Some chapters, like Restoring Broken Relationships and Loving within Families, touch painful things. Skip anything that's too much.
> - **Don't do it alone if you can help it.** It works best with a trusted friend, mentor or small group. If you're in a group, start with Chapter 1 together.
> - **If you're in crisis or being hurt,** talk to a counselor, pastor, parent or doctor first. A study can't replace professional help.

You can work through it on your own, with a friend, or in a group. If a question hits a sore spot, that's okay. Skip it, come back later, or talk it through with someone you trust.

HOW IT WORKS

Think of each chapter as a short trip

Every chapter follows the same path, so after the first one you will know what to expect. You stop four times along the way. A timer helps: the whole trip is about 30 minutes.

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

The story	A short story to get you thinking. Some are true to life, and others are made up from common experiences.
Pause 1 *Exploring what God says*	You look at what the Bible says about the topic, often through real people like Jesus, Paul or Abraham. Most verses are printed for you.
Pause 2 *Exploring your reality*	You get honest about where you are right now, and how you got there. No one has to see your answers.
Pause 3 *Coming alive to God*	You respond to what you've read, with a few words, a prayer, or by memorizing a verse. This is where it moves from your head to your heart.
Pause 4 *Journeying forward*	You pick one small step for this week, journal, and close in prayer.
Digging deeper *(optional)*	Extra questions and ideas if you want more. Skip it and you won't miss anything.

ABOUT THE PICTURES

Each chapter has photos and graphics to help you think and feel. Spend a minute with them, and picture yourself in the scene. If a picture bothers you, ask yourself why. Every chapter also gives you one verse to memorize, with a card you can save as a lock screen.

THREE HABITS

Get the most out of every chapter

1

Read slowly

Read each verse like a message meant for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand it.

2

Be honest

Write or draw something for every question, even 4 or 5 words. Honest beats polished.

3

Pray as you go

Not only when a question says "pray." Tell God what you're thinking, even if it's "I'm scared of this."

Finding your rhythm. Most people finish a chapter in one 30-minute sitting. If that's too much, try three 10-minute sessions, or one Pause a day. Pictures are part of the study. Look at them and picture yourself in the scene. If an image bothers you, ask yourself why.

If you're doing this in a group

A group works best when everyone feels safe. Read these agreements out loud together at your first meeting.

1. **What's said here stays here.** Don't repeat what you hear in the group to anyone outside it.
2. **Share only for yourself.** Use "I" statements. Talk about your own life, not "we" or "you."
3. **Listen, don't fix.** Skip the advice and the "me too" stories. Accept how others feel without trying to change it.
4. **Go at your own pace.** Nobody has to share. Nobody gets pushed. Silence is okay, and some questions can stay unanswered.
5. **All feelings are allowed.** Tears, anger and quiet are all welcome. Ask before you hug or touch.
6. **God does the changing.** The group's job is to make a safe place for His love. The Holy Spirit does the rest.
7. **Know the limits.** A group isn't therapy. If someone needs more help, encourage them to talk to a pastor, counselor or trusted adult. If someone is in danger or being hurt, tell a trusted adult right away.

> **TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER**
>
> After you read these agreements, finish this sentence out loud: *"One thing I need from this group to feel safe is …"* Then pray together before you start.



THE STARTING LINE

Before you start

Take about five minutes. Be honest. You'll come back to this page after Chapter 10 to see what has changed.

1 Finish this sentence: *When I think about my closest relationships, I feel …*

---

2 How well are my relationships working right now? Circle a number.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

0 = not well at all *10 = very well*

3 Which relationship is hardest for me right now? (Family, a friend, someone I've hurt, someone who hurt me, people unlike me, something else?)

---

4 What do I hope to get out of this study?

A PRAYER TO START

God, relationships are hard and wonderful. Help me be honest as I read. Teach me to receive Your love and to love others the way You do. Amen.

IF THINGS FEEL HEAVY

Some chapters touch hard things like broken trust, family pain and abuse. If you're going through something painful, talk to a trusted friend, pastor, counselor or parent. If someone is hurting you, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-7233**. If you're thinking about hurting yourself, call or text **988** (the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in the U.S.). Call **911** if you're in danger.

Ready? Turn the page to Chapter 1: Receiving Love to Give Love

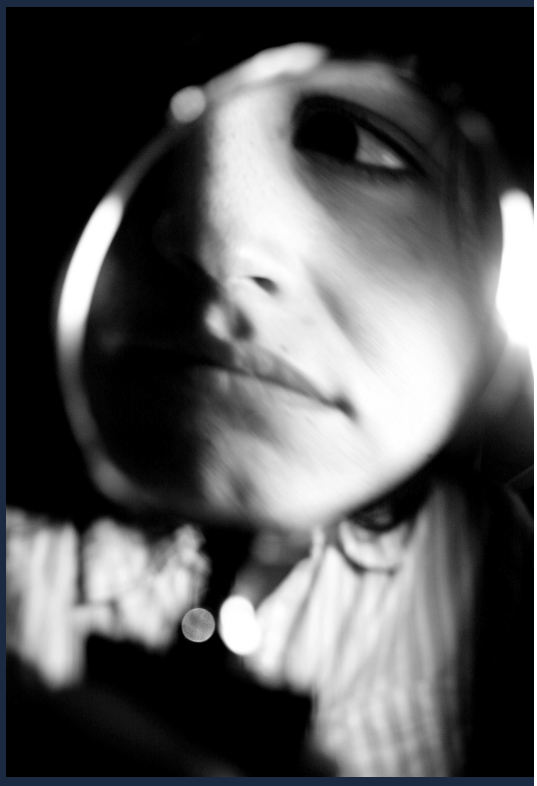
RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 1

Receiving Love to Give Love

You can't pour out what you haven't received.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

You can only give away the love you've received. God loves you first, so you can love yourself the way He does, and then love everyone else. In this chapter you'll look at what blocks you from receiving love, and how to let it in.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **Notice** how you talk to yourself.
- **Learn** why receiving love comes before giving it.
- **Spot** what keeps you from accepting love.
- **Say** Matthew 22:39 from memory.

KEY VERSE

And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." **Matthew 22:39 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

The mirror

A story from the original study, updated.



Illustrative photo

Sara avoids her own eyes in the mirror each morning. Her reflection is too painful. She spends her energy hushing the voice that criticizes everything about her.

Friends tell her she's a gifted musician, great with kids and kind. She can't see it. It's easier to give love to others than to receive it herself. When she prays, the noise inside quiets a little. **So why can't she let herself be loved?**

Q1 What do you say to yourself about yourself most days?

Q2 Is your self-talk mostly kind or mostly harsh? Give an example.

IMPORTANT

If your inner voice ever tells you to hurt yourself, or you feel hopeless, tell a trusted person today. In the U.S. you can call or text **988** any time. This study is not a substitute for counseling, and getting help is a strong thing to do.

PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

Love starts with God

"We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). When you receive God's love, directly and through other people, you can start to love yourself the way He does. Then there's enough love in you to spill over to others. Jesus summed up everything: love God, and "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37–40).

TWO PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED JESUS' LOVE

Read their stories, then notice what changed.

Zacchaeus
Luke 19:1–10

Hated tax collector. Jesus invited Himself to dinner. Zacchaeus gave back what he'd taken, with interest.

The grateful woman
Luke 7:36–50

Known as a "sinner." She felt Jesus' forgiveness and poured out her love on Him.

Q3 How sure are you that God actually likes you, not just loves you because He has to? What gets in the way of you receiving His love?

Q4 Read Luke 19:1–10. How do you think Zacchaeus felt about himself before and after Jesus' love? Why could he suddenly give to others?

Q5 Read Luke 7:36–50. How did Jesus' love change this woman? How might these two stories have changed the people around them?

PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Do you let yourself be loved?

A baby knows she's loved because her needs get met. God made us with needs, and He made us to meet each other's needs. Receiving love starts with admitting you have needs (Isaiah 55:1–3; Philippians 4:19). Check yourself on these six areas.

SIX CHECKPOINTS OF HEALTHY SELF-LOVE

Circle the side that sounds more like you.

Inner voice	Boundaries	Rest and play	Health	Asking help	Purpose
Kind and honest vs. harsh and condemning	I can say no vs. I can't say no	I make time vs. I never relax	I take care vs. Only when I'm sick	I ask for help vs. I do it alone	I've prayed about it vs. I just get through

Q6 Many of us act independent so we won't be hurt or disappointed. How true is that of you? Who could you ask for help this week?

Q7 Henri Nouwen wrote that the loud voices say "prove yourself," while God's quiet voice says "you are my Beloved." When have you felt pressure to earn love?

Q8 Which area above would you most like to change? How could your group support you?

PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

Love costs something

When we don't love ourselves well, we tend to criticize in others what we can't accept in ourselves (Matthew 7:3–5). Jesus invites us to bring our flaws into the light of community. He also says that those who "lose their lives" for Him will find them (Luke 9:23–24). Love isn't selfish indulgence or self-hatred. Both are about "me." Healthy love sits in the middle.

WHERE DO YOU LEAN?

Circle the one you're closest to right now.

Self-indulgence	Healthy self-love	Self-hatred

Q9 Who bugs you the most lately? What "speck" or "plank" might that person be showing you about yourself? Which extreme do you lean toward?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: "Love, Matthew 22:39. And the second is like it:"
2. Say the second half three times: ""Love your neighbor as yourself.""
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- God loves you first, so you can **receive** love.
- Admitting your **needs** is the start of being loved.
- Loving yourself is neither **selfish** nor **self-hating.** It frees you to love others.

PRAYER PAUSE

Go easy on yourself. It takes a lifetime to fully receive God's love. Ask the Spirit to help you see yourself as "the one Jesus loves." Ask Him to remove any barriers that keep you from receiving Him.

Take one step

1. **Notice.** Catch one harsh thought about yourself today and replace it with "God loves me."
2. **Ask.** Tell one friend about a real need you have this week.
3. **Give.** Do one kind thing for someone, out of the love you've received.

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love affect my heart? What one step will I take?

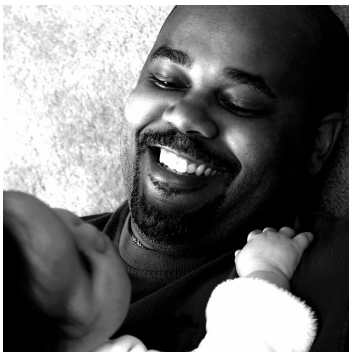
CLOSE IN PRAYER

Father, thank You for loving me first. Quiet the harsh voices, break down what blocks Your love, and fill me so I can love others. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



The father with two sons. Read Luke 15:11–32. The younger son thought he was unworthy of love. The older son thought he had earned it. Neither could receive what the father freely gave. The father ran to meet both of them.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. Where do you find yourself in this story: the father, the younger son or the older son?
2. What was the younger son's "self-focused" love like? What happened when he decided he wasn't worthy?
3. What do you think the older brother was saying to himself about his father, his brother and himself?
4. Imagine the morning after the feast. How does it feel to put the robe, sandals and ring back on?

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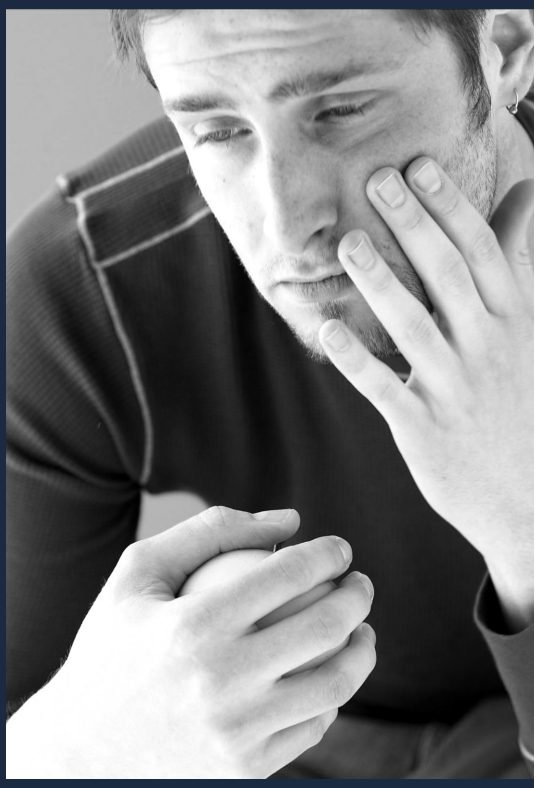
RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 2

Loving Others in Community

Love is the proof that Jesus is real.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

You can't really love God without loving people. Jesus said the world will know we follow Him by how we love each other. In this chapter you'll see what that love looks like in a real community, flaws and all.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **See** what loving one another looks like.
- **Plan** how to love one person this week.
- **Face** the fact that no community is perfect.
- **Say** John 13:34–35 from memory.

KEY VERSE

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. **John 13:35 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

Too ashamed to come back

A story from the original study, updated.



Illustrative photo

Jake is ashamed. The guy he'd been mentoring caught him looking at porn. Too embarrassed to talk about it, Jake quietly backs away from his friend and his Bible study group.

Later he visits a different group. The leader says, "Everyone here is pretty broken." One leader beat a drug habit. One went through a hard divorce. One has PTSD. Another battles depression. Some of the guys meet to help each other with porn. **Jake can't believe people actually talk about their messes.**

Q1 What, if anything, would attract you to a group like that?

Q2 Why do you think people hide their messes from their friends?

IMPORTANT

If you're stuck in a habit or struggle you can't shake, you're not alone, and you don't have to fight it alone. Talk to a trusted friend, pastor or counselor. In the U.S., the free, confidential SAMHSA helpline is **1-800-662-4357**, and **988** is there if you're in crisis.

PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

What loving one another looks like

Jesus said we can't really love God unless we love people. The Bible gives us many "one another" commands. Here are six. Then think about the new command Jesus gave: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34–35).



Q3 Which ways of loving come easier for you? Which are harder? How would you like someone to show you love this week?

Q4 Read Hebrews 10:24. Where do you see Christians stirring each other to love and good deeds? Give an example.

Q5 When have you recognized other believers by their love, not their religious habits? What would it do for people who don't know Jesus to see this kind of love?

PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Put love into action

Choose three verses from Pause 1. Who could you love with each one, and how? The example will get you started.

MY LOVE PLAN

Pick three verses from Pause 1. Who will you love, and how?

Verse	Love whom?	By doing what?
Example: 1 Thess. 5:11	My brother Jason	He's afraid he won't finish his first marathon. I'll call twice a week and run with him.

Q6 No community is perfect. Does that make you feel disappointed, or is it a relief? When have you been in a place with no grace for mess? When have you been in one with lots of grace?

Q7 Jesus' love comes through sacrifice. What do you need to give up (time, comfort, status) to love someone around you?

PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

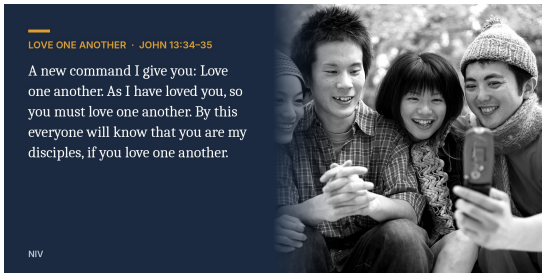
Love that people notice

In about AD 197, the early Christian writer Tertullian said outsiders looked at believers and said, “See how they love one another!” Christians were caring for the poor, orphans and prisoners. Acts 2:44–47 says “people in general liked what they saw,” and the community grew daily. Paul describes this love: “Really love them… take delight in honoring each other” (Romans 12:9–16).

Q8 What do you think attracted so many people to the first Christians? How are you doing at loving people who are different from you (culture, race, money, education)?

Q9 Why do some Christians stay in a “holy huddle” with only other believers? What would it take for your group to open the circle?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: “Love one another, John 13:34–35. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”
2. Say the second half three times: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- Love for people is **proof** of love for God.
- No community is perfect. **Grace** makes room for messes.
- Real love is **sacrificial.** It costs time, comfort or pride.

PRAYER PAUSE

Thank God for the people who've loved you well. Ask Him to show you one person who needs your love this week. Ask Him for courage to be honest about your own mess with someone safe.

Take one step

1. **Choose.** Pick one person and one verse from your love plan.
2. **Do.** Act on it in the next two weeks. Text, call, share a meal or help with a project.
3. **Open up.** Tell one safe person about something you've been hiding.

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love affect my heart? What one step will I take?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Jesus, You love me with a love that costs You everything. Teach me to love my friends and my community the same way. Give me courage to be real. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Tough and tender love. Read the short letter of Philemon. Onesimus had run away and made a mess of his life. Paul asked Philemon to welcome him back "no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother." Mercy and truth go together.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. Imagine Jake asks to come back to your group. What tensions would you face? How could you love him with both grace and truth?
2. When was the last time someone spoke a hard truth to you in love? When was the last time you confessed a struggle to a safe person?
3. When did someone in your community last pray with you, bring you a meal or meet a practical need?
4. Community means giving up time, privacy and the urge to protect yourself. What are you willing to give up?

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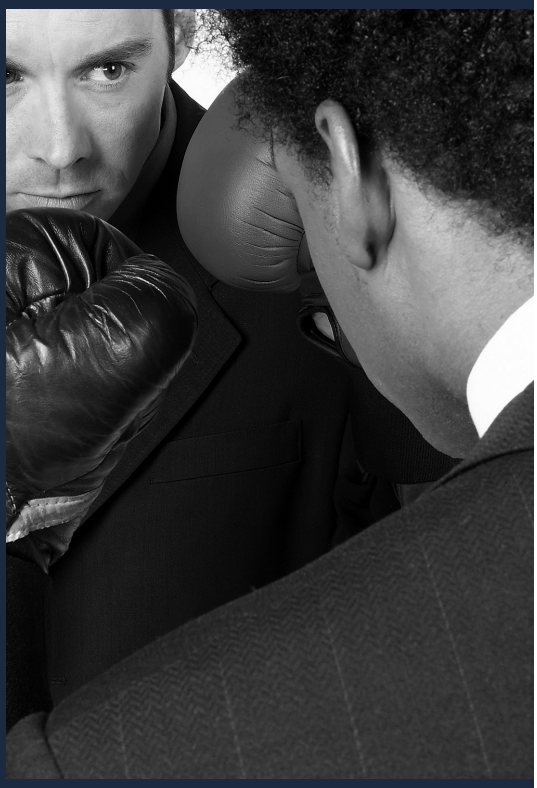
RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 3

Restoring Broken Relationships

Forgive. Be honest. Take the first step.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

Loving people is easy until someone hurts you. This chapter is about what to do when a relationship breaks: how to forgive, when to talk, and how to tell the difference between forgiving and getting hurt again.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **Name** one strained relationship.
- **Learn** the steps of restoring a relationship.
- **See** how mercy beats keeping score.
- **Say** Ephesians 4:32 from memory.

KEY VERSE

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

Years of silence

A story from the original study, updated.



Illustrative photo

For years, Carlos has carried hurt from his older brothers. He decided never to forgive them. He went silent and shut them out. Now the resentment exhausts him.

Then he reads Jesus' words in Matthew 6:14–15 about forgiving others. If he reaches out, he risks more rejection. If he doesn't, he's stuck. **Something inside him begins to break, and he wonders if this is the first step toward healing.**

Q1 If you were in Carlos's shoes, what would you do?

Q2 Think of someone you're at odds with. How does it feel in your body when you think of them?

IMPORTANT

Forgiving someone doesn't mean going back into danger. If anyone is hurting, threatening or controlling you, get safe first and tell a trusted adult. In the U.S., the National Domestic Violence Hotline is **1-800-799-7233**, and **988** is there for crisis support.

PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

What breaks relationships, and how they heal

Paul says, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18). Peace isn’t always possible, but your part is. Read Ephesians 4:25–32 and look for anything you’ve added to a conflict: lies, anger, gossip, bitterness. Then see the five steps of restoration.



Q3 Read Ephesians 4:25–32. Which words or actions from you may have added fuel to a conflict? What’s one small thing you can stop or start?

Q4 Read Matthew 5:23–24 and 18:15. Who should make the first move: the person who offended or the one who was hurt? Who needs to know about your conflict, and who doesn’t?

Q5 Joseph was sold by his brothers, yet he told them, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good” (Genesis 50:20). What perspective helped him? Have you seen God bring good out of pain?

PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Your relationship, honestly

Think of one person you're struggling with. Write their first initial here: _____. Then circle how big the problem feels.

HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

Think of one strained relationship. Circle one.

- ○ Minor irritation
- ○ Serious conflict
- ○ Deep wounding

Q6 What has God been saying to you about this relationship? What could you do to start healing, such as asking for or offering forgiveness?

Q7 What might it cost you to forgive? What might it cost you not to forgive? Who in your group or church could support you?

Q8 Is there someone you need to forgive who isn't sorry? What might be in it for you to forgive anyway?

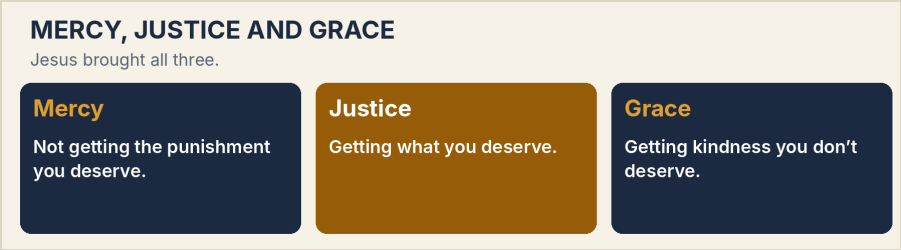
PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

Mercy beats keeping score

When I hurt you, I want mercy. When you hurt me, I want justice. Jesus brought both. At the cross, mercy satisfied justice. In Matthew 18:21–35, a servant forgiven a huge debt refuses to forgive a small one. “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13). We’re also told to “overcome evil with good,” even with enemies (Romans 12:17–21).



Q9 Why couldn’t the forgiven servant show mercy? Would you rather live in a merciful world or a fair one? Who is an “enemy” in your life, and what could “doing good” look like?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: “Forgive, Ephesians 4:32. Be kind and compassionate to one another,”
2. Say the second half three times: “forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- **Forgiveness** is up to you. **Restoration** takes two people.
- Forgiving is not the same as **staying unsafe.**
- God forgave you first. **Mercy** wins over keeping score.

PRAYER PAUSE

Ask: Is there anyone I need to ask forgiveness from? Anyone I need to forgive? Is there anything I need to forgive myself for? What fear is stopping me? Then ask God for the next small step.

Take one step

1. **Pray.** Tell God the full truth about your hurt and anger.
2. **Choose.** Decide to forgive, even if the feelings come later.
3. **Reach out.** If it's safe, take one step this month: a call, a note or a talk.

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love affect my heart? What one step will I take with this relationship?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Lord, You forgave me everything. Show me whom to forgive and whom to ask for forgiveness. Give me courage, wisdom and safety. Heal what's broken. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Pathways to restoration. Most conflicts aren't as big as Joseph's, but they still hurt. Here are nine steps for an everyday conflict before it damages the friendship.

NINE PATHWAYS TO RESTORATION

Try these in an everyday conflict, in this order.

1 Name your hurt Put words to it: "I feel betrayed because..."	**2 Tell God** Take the hurt to Him. The Spirit comforts.	**3 Get help** Ask a trusted person to guide or mediate.
4 Follow Jesus Offer mercy, even if they don't ask.	**5 Talk in person** Skip the gossip. Make the first move.	**6 Say it matters** "Our relationship matters more than being right."
7 Hurts before problems Talk about how you feel first.	**8 Find a solution** "How will we handle this next time?"	**9 Pray and do something** Pray together. Grab pizza.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. Which pathway do you skip most often? Why?
2. Felicia canceled on helping Chantel move. Chantel cursed her out and has been bad-mouthing her for a month. What would you tell each of them?
3. Jason took credit for Mike's work and got the promotion. How could Mike forgive and still set boundaries?

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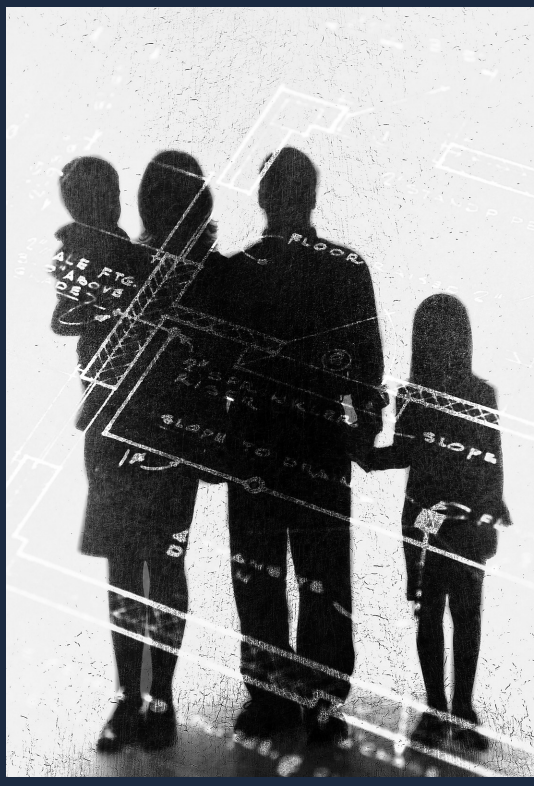
RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 4

Loving within Families

You didn't pick your family. God can still use it.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

Families come in every shape, and none of them are perfect. In this chapter you'll look honestly at the family you grew up in, learn what it means to honor your parents, and think about the family you may build someday.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **Look** honestly at your family story.
- **Learn** what "honor" really means.
- **Think** about marriage and your future family.
- **Say** Psalm 68:6 from memory.

KEY VERSE

God sets the lonely in families. **Psalm 68:6 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

Two homes, one holiday

A new story written for this edition.



Illustrative photo

Maya is nineteen. Every holiday she bounces between her mom's apartment and her dad's new house, where she feels like a guest. She loves them both, but she wonders what "family" even means anymore.

At church a friend's family invites her for dinner, and she feels a sudden ache. **She's not sure whether she's sad about the family she has or the one she wishes she had.**

Q1 What do you think are the purposes and benefits of being in a family?

Q2 Families today look very different: single-parent, blended, adoptive, foster, grandparent-led and more. What does "family" mean to you?

IMPORTANT

If you've been hurt, neglected or abused at home, it is not your fault, and you don't have to stay silent. Tell a trusted adult, counselor or pastor. In the U.S. you can call the Childhelp hotline at **1-800-422-4453** or call **988** if you're in crisis.

PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

Parents, children and David's family

Paul writes, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'… Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1–4). Even King David had a messy family.



Q3 What do Ephesians 6:1–4 say to children of any age? To parents? How is "honor" different from "obey"?

Q4 Read 1 Samuel 16:1–13 and 17:28–31. How might David have felt about his family? Can you relate?

Q5 Read 1 Samuel 18:1–12. How did David experience rejection from Saul? How was Jonathan a better brother to him than his own brothers?

PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Looking at your family

Honoring your parents doesn't mean pretending they were perfect. It means choosing to treat them with value, even when they've hurt you. Which of these could you do?



Q6 Describe your family growing up in a few words or a quick sketch. How might it be shaping how you see God today?

Q7 Which one way of honoring would you try, even if you've been hurt? What's one change you want to make with someone in your family?

Q8 Who has been like "family" to you? Who could you be "family" to this month?

PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

Marriage and your future family

Marriage is a big part of family life for many people. Paul says to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21), and to love sacrificially (5:25–33). Peter says husbands and wives are partners in "the gracious gift of life" (1 Peter 3:7). Jesus also taught that God's design is a lasting union (Matthew 19:4–6). If you've seen divorce, God meets you there with grace. If you're single, you're not behind.

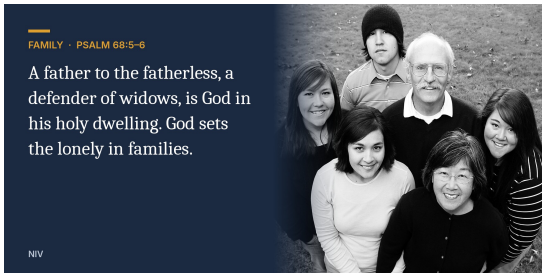
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR FUTURE FAMILY?

Circle any that fit.

- ○ Families don't work
- ○ I'm afraid of the pain
- ○ I don't know how
- ○ I'm trusting God
- ○ I'll cross that bridge
- ○ Something else

Q9 How did your parents' marriage (or the marriages around you) shape how you see marriage? How has divorce touched you? Who is a healthy couple you could learn from?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: "God's family, Psalm 68:5–6. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,"
2. Say the second half three times: "is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families."
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- No family is perfect, but **God can use yours.**
- **Honor** means valuing parents, not obeying forever or staying in danger.
- In Christ, you're **adopted into God's family.**

PRAYER PAUSE

Talk to God about your family. Listen for what He says. If your family was broken or absent, take time to grieve and forgive. Ask Him to put people in your life who can meet needs your family couldn't.

Take one step

1. **Honor.** Pick one way from Pause 2 and do it with a family member this month.
2. **Pray.** Pray for your family, including the ones you find hard.
3. **Belong.** Invite someone who's alone into your "family" for a meal.

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love affect my heart toward my family? What one step will I take?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Father, You're the perfect parent. Heal what my family got wrong, help me honor them, and place me in Your family. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



What helps a child grow. The Bible challenges parents to raise children with love, faith and hope. No parent does it perfectly, and God is the only perfect Parent. Use this as a way to understand, not to blame.

WHAT HELPS A CHILD GROW

No parent is perfect. Use this to understand, not to blame.

Security
through love
Wanted for who you are. Forgiven when wrong. Comforted when hurting.

Strength
through faith
Believed in. Given room to choose. Taught to trust God.

Purpose
through hope
Valued as unique. Respected. Helped to prepare for the future.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. How did your dad (or father figure) help build security, strength and purpose in you? How did your mom (or mother figure)?
2. If your parents couldn't give you some of this, who could mentor you and fill some of the gap?
3. How are you trusting God to help you influence future generations?
4. Even the best parenting can't guarantee a child's choices. How does that change how you see your own parents, or yourself as a future parent?

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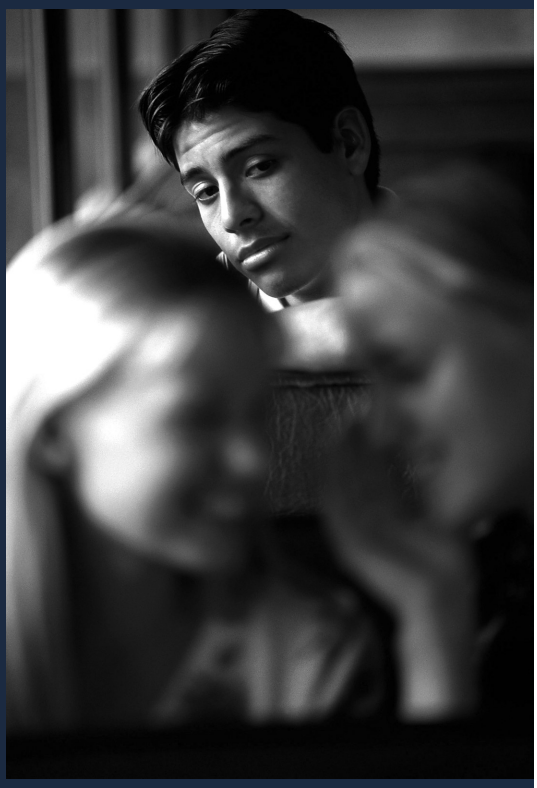
RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 5

Loving Friends

Busy, but not alone. Known, not just liked.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

Many of us are surrounded by people and still feel alone. Friends are one of God's best gifts, but real friendship takes trust and risk. In this chapter you'll learn what makes a friend safe, and how to be one.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **Spot** the difference between safe and risky friends.
- **Check** how well you and a friend know each other.
- **Learn** from David and Jonathan.
- **Say** Proverbs 18:24 from memory.

KEY VERSE

There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. **Proverbs 18:24 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

Busy but lonely

A story from the original study, updated.



Illustrative photo

Jessica has lots of friends. Her phone buzzes with different group chats, and people greet her everywhere she goes. After work they gather at a coffee shop. But when she gets home at night, she feels unknown and lonely.

Once in a while someone breaks a confidence, and people get hurt. So Jessica keeps everyone at a safe distance. **She wants a few close friends, but wonders if the risk is worth it.**

Q1 What part of Jessica's story can you relate to?

Q2 Do you know someone like Jessica? How could you reach out?

IMPORTANT

Loneliness is common and it's not a sign something's wrong with you. But if it turns into deep sadness or hopelessness, tell a trusted friend, pastor or counselor. In the U.S. you can call or text **988** any time.

PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

What makes a good friend

"Two are better than one… If one falls down, his friend can help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10). "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). But some "friends" aren't safe. Proverbs gives us clues for choosing, and being, a trustworthy friend.

SAFE FRIEND OR RISKY FRIEND?

Proverbs gives us clues. Which do you see in your friends? In yourself?

SAFE FRIEND	RISKY FRIEND	LOOK IT UP
Keeps a secret	Spreads gossip	Prov. 11:13
Answers gently	Starts fights with words	Prov. 15:1
Stays cool	Is a hothead	Prov. 15:18
Listens to understand	Only airs opinions	Prov. 18:2
Sticks closer than a brother	"Friends" who destroy	Prov. 18:24
Tells the truth, even if it hurts	Says "just joking" after lying	Prov. 27:6; 26:18–19

Q3 When has a friend helped you the way Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 describes? Which proverb above matches an experience with a friend?

Q4 Read Proverbs 26:18–19. When has a friend's "just joking" hurt you? When have you hurt someone that way?

Q5 In what ways are you a safe, trustworthy friend? Where do you need to grow?

PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

How well are you known?

It's life-changing to have a few friends who know you inside and out and still love you. But you can't be that close to everyone. Think of one close friend. Rate how much each of you shares in these areas.

FRIENDSHIP CHECK-UP

Think of one close friend. Rate each area from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

I share this	Area of our lives	They share this
	Daily joys and irritations	
	Family issues	
	Hurts from the past	
	Fears and struggles	
	Dreams and goals	
	Where I am with God	

Q6 How lonely have you felt in the last year or two: isolated, busy but unknown, or well-connected and known? Who do you trust with the real you?

Q7 What is one step you could take to know a friend better, and to be known? Do you have a friendship across cultural or money lines? What could you learn from it?

PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

David and Jonathan

Even with a messy family, David had great friends. His closest was Jonathan, the king's son, who knew David would be king instead of him. Jonathan stayed loyal through years of danger. Read the scenes below and notice what made this friendship so strong.

DAVID AND JONATHAN: FOUR SCENES

What made this friendship so strong?

Making a friend	Standing up	Protecting	Encouraging
1 Samuel 18:1–4	1 Samuel 19:1–7	1 Samuel 20	1 Samuel 23:16–18
Jonathan gave David his robe and sword. He gave himself.	He spoke well of David, even to his own father.	He risked his life to warn David.	He helped David find strength in God.

Q8 Which qualities of David and Jonathan's friendship do you want in your own? Who is a "Jonathan" to you? Who sees you as theirs?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: "Real friend, Proverbs 18:24. One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin,"
2. Say the second half three times: "but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- Real friendship means being **known,** not just liked.
- Safe friends **keep confidences, speak truth** and stay.
- Jesus is **"a friend who sticks closer than a brother."**

PRAYER PAUSE

Talk to Jesus about your friendship with Him. Thank Him for laying down His life for His friends (John 15:13). Then thank Him by name for the friends He has given you.

Take one step

1. **Affirm.** Tell a friend one thing you admire about their character.
2. **Share.** Tell one safe friend something real about your week.
3. **Invite.** Ask someone to do an activity or serve together with you.

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love affect my friendships? What one step will I take?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for being my friend. Make me a safe and loyal friend, and give me people who know me and love me. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Nathan, the truth-teller. When David failed badly, God sent his friend Nathan to tell him the truth, with a story that opened David's heart (2 Samuel 12:1–14). A good friend speaks truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and then points to hope.

THREE WAYS TO DEEPEN A FRIENDSHIP

Pick one to try this week.

Affirm
Tell a friend what you see in their character, not just what they do.

Do and serve
Share a hobby. Serve someone together.

Change together
Share a goal for the next six months and cheer each other on.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. Who has been a "Nathan" to you? How did they help you?
2. Is there a friend you could speak truth to in love? How could you do it kindly (Romans 2:4)?
3. Try an affirmation circle. Each person shares one thing they appreciate about each other person in the group.
4. Which of the three ways to deepen a friendship will you try this week?

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RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 6

Loving People Different from Me

Change "they" to "we."

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

Differences can divide us or enrich us. Jesus loved people others avoided, and He calls us to move from "that's not my world" to real friendship. In this chapter you'll see how He did it and what your next step could be.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **Notice** who you call "they."
- **Learn** how Jesus loved outsiders.
- **Name** the differences that make you uneasy.
- **Say** Ephesians 2:14 from memory.

KEY VERSE

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. **Ephesians 2:14 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

The new neighbors

A story from the original study, updated.



Illustrative photo

When a new family moves in down the street, Tina can't figure them out. There's a young man with tattoos and piercings, and an older woman with a walker who seems confused and obsessed with her cats. She can't imagine what they have in common.

One day Tina returns a runaway cat. The living room is full of photos of the young man as a baby, a boy and a teen. "He's my grandson," the woman says. "His mom is getting treatment, and his dad's not around. It's just the two of us. But the good Lord gets us through." **Tina sees love across a dozen differences.**

Q1 When has someone different from you loved you well? What happened as a result?

Q2 The telltale word of prejudice is "they." Who do you tend to call "they"? What would happen if you changed it to "we"?

IMPORTANT

If you're being mistreated or threatened because of who you are, you deserve to be safe. Tell a trusted adult, and report threats or violence to the police. In the U.S. you can call or text **988** if you're in crisis.

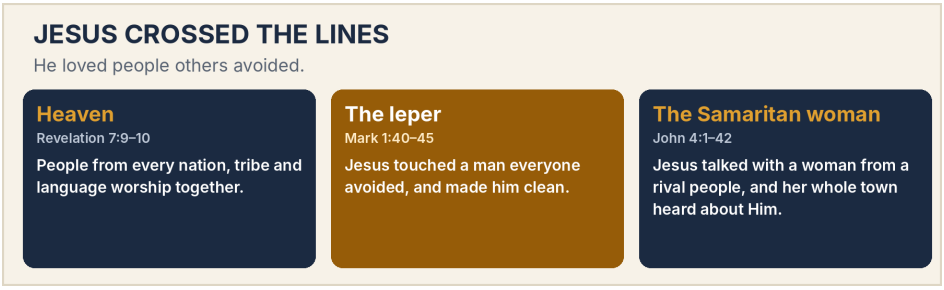
PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

How Jesus loved people who were different

In heaven, “a great multitude… from every nation, tribe, people and language” will worship together (Revelation 7:9). On earth, Jesus broke through walls to love people others avoided. Notice what each person felt when Jesus treated them with dignity.



Q3 How do you think God feels about the diversity of people on earth? How do you feel about it?

Q4 Read Mark 1:40–45. Leprosy made people “unclean” outcasts. What did Jesus do? What do you think it cost Him?

Q5 Read John 4:27–42. How did Jesus love someone different in race, religion, gender and reputation? Who are the “outcasts” in your world today?

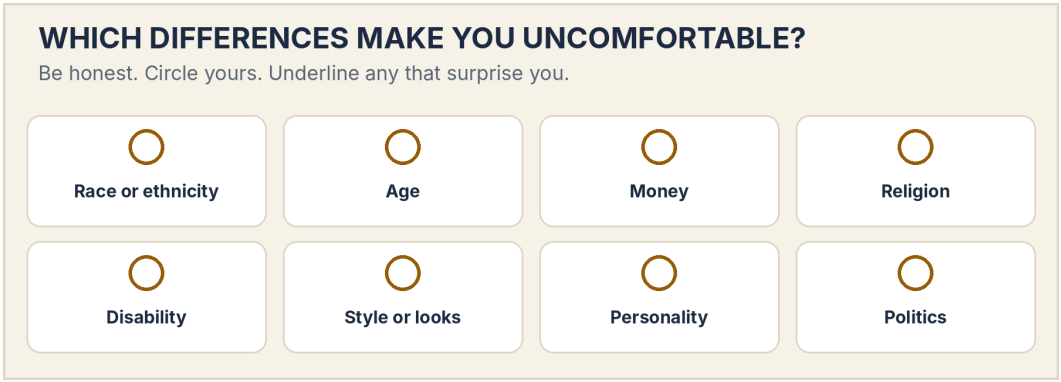
PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Your comfort zone

We all feel more comfortable with some people than others. Jesus came to “destroy the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14). Where are your walls? Circle what makes you uneasy, and underline any that surprise you.



Q6 Why might you feel uneasy: ignorance, fear, embarrassment, past hurt, or stereotypes from friends, family or media? What does it cost people when we avoid those who are different?

Q7 When someone with that difference comes into your life, how will you show dignity and love? How does walking in the Spirit help?

Q8 Remember: you are “they” to someone. When has someone treated you like an outsider?

PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

God's heart for the poor, and for one family

The Bible has more than 175 passages on the poor. God wants us to share what we have and to treat everyone with respect. James warns against giving the "good seat" to the rich and a bad one to the poor (James 2:1–4). And through Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

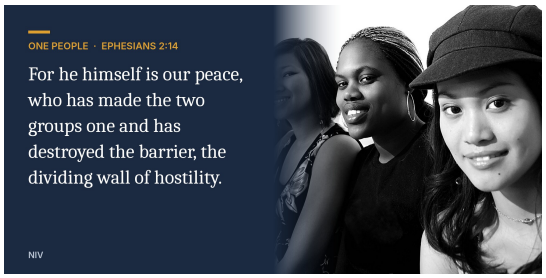
FOUR WAYS TO LOVE THE POOR

God has special compassion for people who are poor or pushed aside.

Share	Speak up	Leave some	No favorites
Isaiah 58:7	Psalm 82:3–4	Leviticus 23:22	James 2:1–4
Share food, shelter and clothes.	Stand up for those treated unfairly.	Leave margin for people in need.	Give everyone the "good seat."

Q9 When have you not gotten "the good seat"? If you see discrimination, what can you do? What small step could you take to love someone different from you, and what would it cost?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: "One people, Ephesians 2:14. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one"
2. Say the second half three times: "and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- Jesus broke through **walls** to love outsiders.
- Loving people who are different takes **humility** and little steps.
- In Christ we are **one family** from every nation.

PRAYER PAUSE

Think of a time you were hurt for being different, or hurt someone else for it. Take it to God and let His mercy meet you there. Ask Him to show you someone to love across a difference.

Take one step

1. **Listen.** Ask someone different from you about their story. Just listen.
2. **Go.** Visit something in their world: a meal, an event or a service.
3. **Serve.** Do one practical thing to help someone in need, with a friend if you can.

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love affect my heart toward people who are different? What one step will I take?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God, You made every people in Your image. Break the walls in my heart. Teach me to see people the way You do, and to love them. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Learning project. Talk with a friend about how people stereotype each of you. Jesus didn't let stereotypes keep Him from lepers, Samaritans or women. Don't expect stereotypes to change overnight. It's a lifelong process.

GO-TO, NOT COME-TO

Jesus came into our world. We can go into others'.

THINKING OUTSIDE MY BOX

- ◯ Know I live in a multi-ethnic world
- ◯ See the gap between my world and my neighbor's
- ◯ Take small steps to befriend and serve

LIVING AMONG THOSE DIFFERENT FROM ME

- ◯ Be compassion-driven
- ◯ Work, serve, eat, learn and play together
- ◯ Keep promises and earn trust
- ◯ Pray and stay with people over time

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. Check one or two ideas above to develop over the next few months. How could you start, and with whom?
2. Who could you contact to say thank you for loving you through your differences?
3. Bring a picture, story or song that celebrates loving through differences.

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RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 7

Resisting Satan

You're in a real fight, and Jesus has already won.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

There's a real spiritual battle behind the scenes of life. Satan lies, accuses and tempts. But Jesus defeated him at the cross, and He gives you everything you need to resist. In this chapter you'll learn Satan's tactics and your defenses.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **See** the two kingdoms in conflict.
- **Spot** Satan's tactics and footholds.
- **Learn** the armor God provides.
- **Say** James 4:7 from memory.

KEY VERSE

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **James 4:7 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

Voices in the dark

A story from the original study, updated.



Illustrative photo

Blaine keeps hearing accusing thoughts: “You’re a loser. You’ll never be a real man.” He turns to porn to feel better, until the shame hits again. He’s pulled away from dating. His worried mom even visits an astrologer about him.

His friends keep asking him to play dark video games with demons and violence. He tells himself, “It’s just virtual.” But he senses something dark getting its hooks into him. **He wants to be free and feel clean again.**

Q1 What effect do you think the images and games Blaine takes in are having on his thinking and his soul?

Q2 How seriously do you take evil, or Satan? Explain.

IMPORTANT

Not every struggle is a spiritual attack. Anxiety, depression and addiction often need a doctor or counselor too, and getting that help is wise. If you hear voices, feel trapped by dark thoughts, or think about hurting yourself, tell someone today. In the U.S. call or text **988** any time.

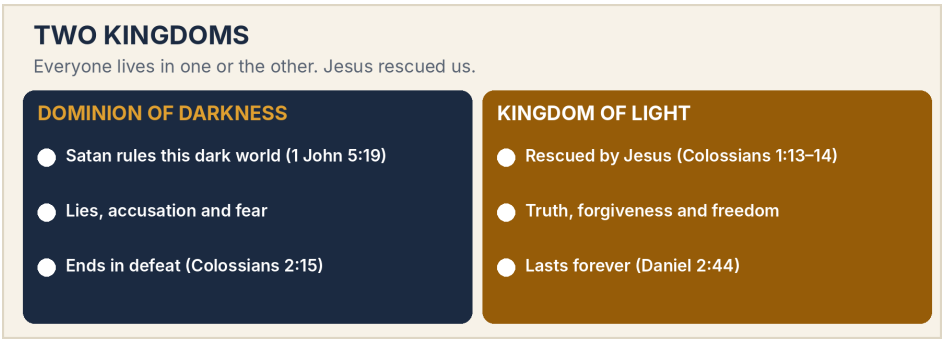
PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

Two kingdoms and the end of the story

Satan has real influence in this world (1 John 5:19). But God has rescued us "from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Colossians 1:13). Satan is a liar who prowls "like a roaring lion" (John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8). The good news: Jesus "disarmed the powers and authorities" by the cross (Colossians 2:15).



Q3 Satan is the supreme deceiver. What lie or half-truth have you been vulnerable to? Where in the world (entertainment, school, work) do you see his influence?

Q4 Read John 12:30–32 and Colossians 2:15. How did Jesus overcome Satan? How does that make you feel?

Q5 Spiritual warfare is in the Lord's Prayer: "Your kingdom come… deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:10, 13). What would deliverance look like for you?

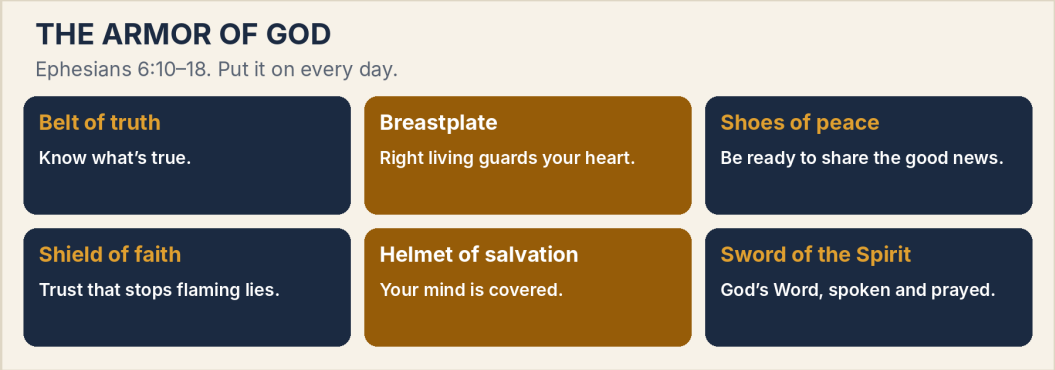
PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Know the enemy, use your armor

Satan's common schemes are to accuse and condemn (Revelation 12:10), blind our minds (2 Corinthians 4:4), stir up jealousy (James 3:14–15), and test us with suffering. God gives us armor to resist (Ephesians 6:10–18). Our fight is "not against flesh and blood," so people aren't the enemy.



Q6 Which tactic do you face most: accusation, jealousy, doubt, discouragement? Which piece of armor do you most need today?

Q7 Read 2 Corinthians 10:3–5. What recurring thought do you need to "take captive" and make obedient to Christ?

Q8 Read James 4:7 and 1 Corinthians 10:13. When have you resisted temptation? Where did God give you a way out?

PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

Footholds and strongholds

Satan often starts small. “Do not give the devil a foothold” (Ephesians 4:27). God warns against fortune-telling, mediums, spells and other occult practices (Deuteronomy 18:9–14), because they open doors to harm. Treat small footholds early, before they grow into strongholds. And remember: “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).



Q9 What foothold have you seen in your own life or in Blaine’s story? How do the media portray evil and the occult, and how does that compare with the Bible? How could you resist next time?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: “Resist, James 4:7. Submit yourselves, then, to God.”
2. Say the second half three times: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- Satan is real, but **Jesus has already won.**
- Deal with **footholds** early. Don't fight alone.
- **Submit to God, resist the devil,** and he flees.

> **PRAYER PAUSE**
>
> Shame and accusation try to keep you hiding. Like a wounded soldier, you need friends. Ask God to show you any area under attack, and ask a trusted believer or counselor to pray with you. Don't "go it alone."

Take one step

1. **Tell.** Share one struggle with a trusted believer, mentor or counselor.
2. **Cut.** Remove one foothold: an app, a habit, a game or a source of dark influence.
3. **Speak.** Say James 4:7 out loud the next time you feel attacked.

JOURNAL

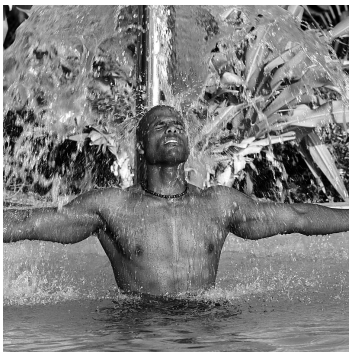
A How does Jesus' victory affect my heart? What one step will I take?

> **CLOSE IN PRAYER**
>
> *Jesus, You defeated the enemy at the cross. Show me where I've given him ground, and give me courage to take it back. I submit to You. Amen.*

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Satan's playbook. Compare how Eve fell for Satan's tactics and how Jesus resisted them. Notice that Jesus' strategy involved dying on a cross. Victory through death is a theme across Scripture.

SATAN'S TACTICS vs. JESUS' ANSWERS

Eve fell for them. Jesus answered every one with Scripture.

SATAN & EVE (GENESIS 3:1–7)

- Doubt: "Did God really say...?"
- A lie: "You will not die."
- Pride: "You'll be like God."

SATAN & JESUS (MATTHEW 4:1–11)

- Stones to bread. "It is written: people do not live on bread alone."
- Jump from the temple. "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."
- All the kingdoms. "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only."

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. What tactics did Satan use against Eve and Jesus? What is one lesson that helps you resist being "deceived by the serpent's cunning" (2 Corinthians 11:3)?
2. How did Jesus defeat Satan (Colossians 2:15)? Does it surprise you that it involved dying?
3. What other passages show victory coming through death or giving something up?

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RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 8

Loving People into God's Family

Pass it forward.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

Someone loved you into God's family. Now you can do the same. You don't need to be an expert or have all the answers. In this chapter you'll see how to live and talk about Jesus in a way that's honest, kind and natural.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **Thank** the people who led you to Jesus.
- **Learn** to show and tell the good news.
- **Practice** saying your story in plain words.
- **Say** 1 Peter 3:15 from memory.

KEY VERSE

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. **1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

24-hour witness

A story from the original study, updated.



Illustrative photo

Jed keeps feeling nudged to tell his friends about Jesus. But does God really need his help? And he has no idea how to start.

Then David and Anna invite him to Thanksgiving dinner with people from the gym he's never spoken to. Before eating, everyone shares something they're thankful for. Later David explains: "We look for where God seems to be working, open our home, invite people to our small group, and help those who are ready." Anna jokes their gym is a 24-hour witness. **Jed wonders if God could use him, flaws and all.**

Q1 Can you relate to Jed's desire and his fear about sharing Jesus with friends? How?

Q2 What would it look like for you to "open your home" or your time to people who don't know Jesus yet?

IMPORTANT

Sharing your faith isn't pushing. Respect every person's "no" or "not yet," and let God do the convincing. If someone shares something heavy with you, like abuse or thoughts of suicide, don't carry it alone. Help them reach a trusted adult or a crisis line. In the U.S. they can call or text **988**.

PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

You were rescued, and you can be a link

Apart from Christ, people are like hostages, captive to sin. "The Son of Man came… to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He "rescued us from the dominion of darkness" (Colossians 1:13) and paid for us with His own blood (1 Peter 1:18–19). Our lives can point others to Him: we're "the aroma of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:15).



Q3 Write the names of people who were links in your chain. Take a moment to thank God for each of them.

Q4 Read Colossians 3:12–17. What about our lives and communities attracts people to Jesus? Which would draw people more: hiding your struggles, or admitting them so people can see Jesus working in you? Why?

Q5 Where have you seen the gospel "preached" without words?

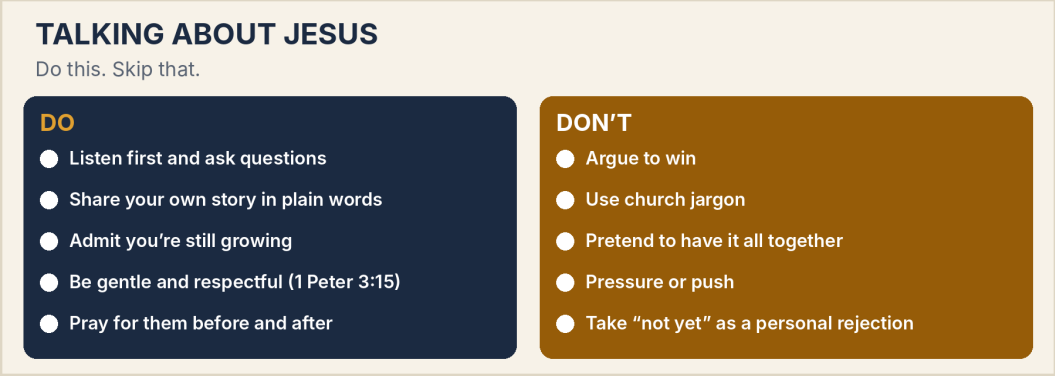
PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Talking about Jesus without being weird

After we build trust, we can talk about our faith. Paul met people on their terms: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). Peter says to be ready to explain your hope "with gentleness and respect."



Q6 Ask God for three names. Write their initials: ____ ____ ____. What has happened when you've tried to talk about Jesus? What would you change?

Q7 Read Mark 5:18–20. If Jesus said, "Go home and tell your family how much the Lord has done for you," what would you say in 2–3 sentences?

Q8 How willing are you to enter someone else's world, as Paul did, so they can hear you? Write a one-sentence prayer about where you are.

PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

Say it in your own words

What stops us? Fear of rejection, fear of not knowing the answers, or feeling like we're still a mess. But God uses flawed people. "How can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:14). Don't assume people know the basics. Here is the good news in four steps. Practice saying it out loud.

THE GOOD NEWS IN FOUR STEPS

Know it well enough to say it in your own words.

1 God loves you	2 Sin separates	3 Jesus paid	4 Receive Him
John 3:16; Romans 5:8	Romans 3:23	1 Peter 1:18–19	John 1:12
He made you and wants a relationship with you.	All of us fall short of His goodness.	He gave His life to ransom us and forgive our sins.	Trust Jesus and become a child of God.

Q9 A friend asks, "What's so good about Jesus?" Say your answer out loud. What are you most grateful for? Who are you praying for, and who is praying with you?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: "Be ready, 1 Peter 3:15. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."
2. Say the second half three times: "But do this with gentleness and respect."
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- Someone loved you into God's family. **You can be the next link.**
- Share by **living, listening and telling** your story.
- God does the work. Be **gentle and respectful.**

PRAYER PAUSE

Pray for the three people on your list. Ask God for open doors and for the right words (Colossians 4:3–4). Pray with a friend for friends and family who don't know Jesus yet.

Take one step

1. **Pray.** Pray for your three names every day this week.
2. **Invite.** Invite one of them to a meal, game night or small group.
3. **Write.** Draft your story in three parts (see the next page).

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love affect how I share Him? What one step will I take?

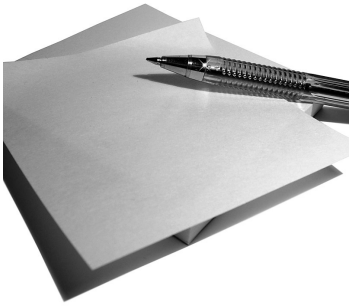
CLOSE IN PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for those who brought me to You. Make me a loving link for others. Give me courage, gentleness and the right words. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Your story. Telling your story in 3–4 minutes is a great way to be "prepared to give an answer." Use words that someone unfamiliar with church could understand. It's okay to mention a struggle that's still in progress. Plan an hour or two to write it, then read it to a friend.

YOUR STORY IN THREE PARTS

Keep it to 3–4 minutes. Use everyday words.

1 BEFORE	2 HOW	3 SINCE
What was life like before you trusted Jesus?	What happened? What made you say yes?	How has life changed? What's still in progress?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. Write a draft of your story using the three parts. Read it to someone and ask for feedback.
2. Who might God want you to share your story with soon?
3. What part of your story would you cut if someone didn't know church words?

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RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 9

Partnering with God

In His kingdom. You're invited.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

God doesn't do His work alone, and He invites you in. You don't have to quit your job, move overseas or become a pastor to join Him. In this chapter you'll see how your everyday life can be part of God's kingdom.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **See** the tasks God gave humans from the start.
- **Spot** where He's placed you to partner with Him.
- **Dream** about how you can join His work.
- **Say** John 15:16 from memory.

KEY VERSE

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. **John 15:16 (NIV)**

START HERE

A short story

4 min

A library in Uganda

A story from the original study, shortened.



Illustrative photo

Kato grew up in a poor Ugandan village. A missionary couple helped him get an education, and now he teaches agriculture in the U.S. His home church dreams of a small library with Bibles, books and reading classes to help kids escape poverty.

Kato meets Peter at a workshop. They pray together, and Peter asks, “What can I do?” Peter and friends from church give money. The villagers give time and materials. Believers, Muslims and neighbors all make bricks side by side. **Peter says he doesn’t have to leave his job to be right where God is at work.**

Q1 How many partnerships do you see in this story? List them.

Q2 What touches you most about this story?

IMPORTANT

Serving others is great, but you’re not meant to burn out. Rest is part of partnering with God. If you feel overwhelmed or hopeless, talk to a trusted adult or call or text **988** (in the U.S.). And before you go anywhere to serve, make sure it’s with a safe, trusted group.

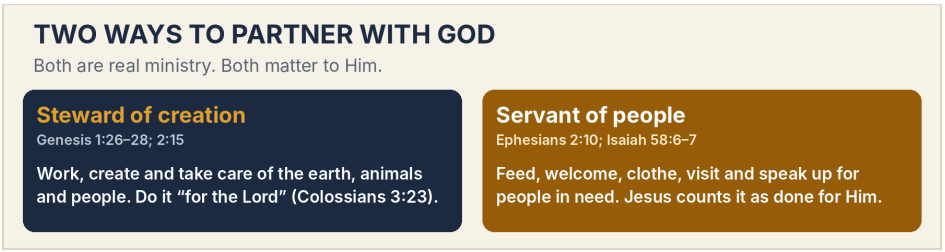
PAUSE 1

Exploring what God says

9 min

God gave humans real work to do

From the beginning, Father, Son and Spirit worked together to create everything. Then God made people in His image and invited us to partner with Him: “Rule over the fish of the sea… and over every living creature” and “be fruitful and increase in number” (Genesis 1:26, 28). He “put the man in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15). Later, Paul says everything you do can be done “as working for the Lord” (Colossians 3:23).



Q3 Look at Genesis 1:26–28 and 2:15. List the tasks God gave people. How do they connect to everyday work, school or family life?

Q4 Some people think they must leave ordinary life to do “real ministry.” Read Colossians 3:17, 23–24 and finish this sentence in a couple of ways: “We are partnering with God when…”

Q5 Read Ephesians 2:10 and Matthew 25:34–40. Finish the same sentence again. Then read Philippians 2:14–16: what “darkness” has God put you in to be a light?

PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

You might be the only Jesus someone meets

Imagine God's people living "next door to everywhere." You might be the only hands and feet of Jesus on your team, in your apartment building or at your job. You might be the only voice God has there. You don't have to do everything. You just need to say yes to what's in front of you.

WAYS TO PARTNER WITH GOD RIGHT NOW

Circle one that fits your life this month.

Listen Be there for someone who needs to not be alone.	**Serve** Help at a food pantry or tutor a kid.	**Pray** Pray for your friends by name.
Protect Take care of the earth and its creatures.	**Create** Write music or make art for your generation.	**Work** Do your job or school work as for Jesus.

Q6 When has God used you to help someone, maybe without you realizing it at the time? When did your simple presence help someone who needed to not be alone?

Q7 Which idea above (or one of your own) would you most enjoy doing right now? Where would you do it, and with whom?

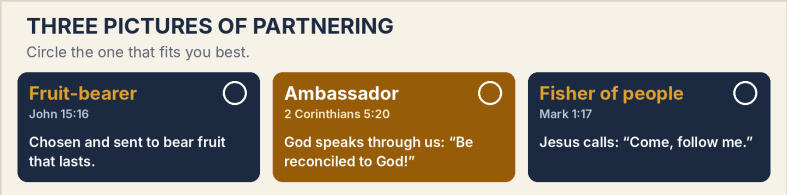
PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

God has given you a kingdom role

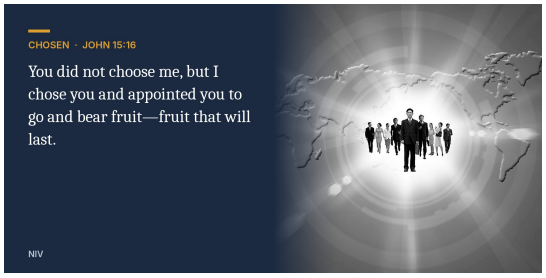
Jesus talked about God's kingdom all the time, and "your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). He chose you to "go and bear fruit" (John 15:16). Paul says, "We are Christ's ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:20). And Jesus told fishermen, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of people" (Mark 1:17).



Q8 Which picture fits you most? Why? How does it feel to know God chose you and invites you to partner with Him?

Q9 Partnering is never a solo project. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 and Acts 1:8. Which of your strengths could God use with others? What role does the Holy Spirit play in your dreams?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: "Chosen, John 15:16. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last."
2. Say the second half three times: "Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- God works with people. You can partner with Him **at work, at school and at home.**
- There are two ways: **caring for creation** and **serving people.**
- God **chose you** and gives you gifts, friends and His Spirit.

PRAYER PAUSE

Ask God: "Who do You want me to pray for? To give to? To serve? Where do You want me?" Then listen. Write down anything that comes to mind.

Take one step

1. **Choose.** Pick one idea from the cards that fits you this month.
2. **Ask.** Ask a friend, "What strengths do you see in me?"
3. **Do.** Do one small act of service this week, then tell someone.

JOURNAL

A How does Jesus' way of love shape the way I partner with Him? What one step will I take?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God, thank You for choosing me. Show me where You're already at work and help me join You. Use my strengths, my friends and Your Spirit. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Case study: Maria. Maria has loved Jesus since her early teens and has always wanted God to use her. She discipled others and served with the homeless. Now she has two kids and a part-time job, and no time for what she used to do. She tells you, “I still want to partner with God, but I don’t feel like I’m doing anything for Him.” She isn’t asking for advice. She needs perspective.

YOUR PLANNING PROCESS

Six questions to work through with a friend.

Prayer Who will I pray for?	**Arena** What kind of service interests me?	**Giving** Who could I give to or support?
Preparation Do I need training to serve well?	**Serving** When could I try it for a week or more?	**Other** Who or what else should I consider?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

1. What would you say to Maria? How can someone partner with God in a busy season?
2. Is God nudging you to serve nearby, far away or both? It’s not about “the glamour of going” or “the security of staying.” It’s about listening.
3. Use the planning cards with a trusted friend. Which question is hardest to answer?

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RELATIONSHIPS: BRINGING JESUS INTO MY WORLD

CHAPTER 10

Trusting God for Generations

Pass it on.

About 30 minutes



THE BIG IDEA

What God starts in you can keep growing long after you. One person who follows Jesus can help others follow Him, and they help others too. In this chapter you'll see how God builds families of faith, in your own family and beyond it.

YOUR 30 MINUTES

4 min	9 min	5 min	8 min	4 min
THE STORY	PAUSE 1 · Explore	PAUSE 2 · Be honest	PAUSE 3 · Respond	PAUSE 4 · Move

Grab a pen (or open a notes app) and set a timer. Short on time? Answer the questions that matter most to you and skip the rest. Honest beats fast.

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL

- **See** how God works through generations.
- **Discover** two ways to pass on your faith.
- **Trust** God to work even through your weaknesses.
- **Say** Matthew 28:19–20 from memory.

KEY VERSE

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations… teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. **Matthew 28:19–20 (NIV)**

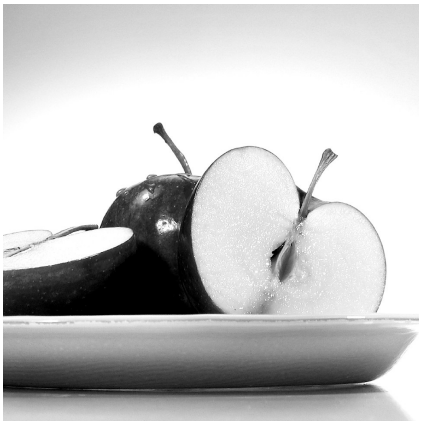
START HERE

A quick picture

4 min

Apples and seeds

An activity from the original study.



Illustrative photo

Cut an apple in half and look inside. How many seeds do you see? Each seed could grow into a tree. And one tree can grow hundreds of apples every year, each with its own seeds.

God's plan works like that. From the beginning He said, "Be fruitful and increase in number." He doesn't only want more people. He wants generation after generation who love Him and honor Him with their lives.

Q1 About how many seeds are in a typical apple? About how many apples are in a single seed? Explain your guess.

Q2 What does this picture say about the power of multiplication?

IMPORTANT

Not everyone has a family that follows Jesus, and some families are painful or unsafe. You can still be a spiritual parent or sibling to others. If you're being hurt at home, tell a trusted adult. In the U.S., you can call Childhelp at **1-800-422-4453** or call or text **988** for support.

PAUSE 1

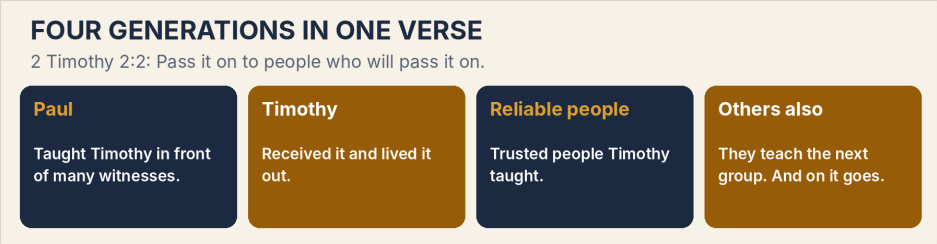
Exploring what God says

9 min

Two paths for passing on faith

Path 1: Family. God wants parents and grandparents to teach their children to know and love Him. "We will not hide these truths from our children… so the next generation might know them… and they in turn might teach their children" (Psalm 78:4–6). God shows love "to a thousand generations" of those who love Him (Exodus 20:6). But when Joshua's generation died, "another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done" (Judges 2:10). Faith has to be passed on.

Path 2: Spiritual family. Jesus had no children, yet He poured His life into His disciples and prayed for "those who will believe in me through their message" (John 17:20). Paul had no children, yet he called Timothy "a son with his father" (Philippians 2:22). Whoever you are, you can have spiritual children.



Q3 Read Deuteronomy 6:2–3 and Psalm 78:2–8. What do older generations get commanded to do, and what results does God promise? Do you know a family with two or more generations of Jesus-followers? What do you notice about them?

Q4 Read Judges 2:7–14. What happened to the generation after Joshua, and why? What can we learn from it?

Q5 Read 2 Timothy 2:2. Who is each "generation" in this verse? Where do you fit in the chain?

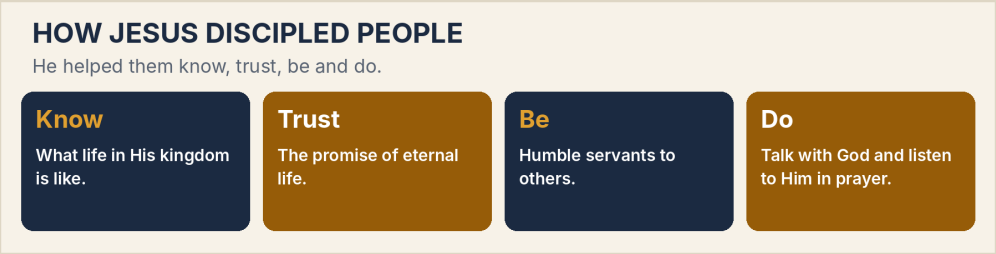
PAUSE 2

Exploring your reality

5 min

Where do you fit in?

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples… teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” That means helping people grow, not just helping them decide. Moses told families to talk about God “when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:7). Both paths start with love.



Q6 Who in your family (or anyone else) has had a positive effect on your faith? How? What do you hope for your future family or the younger people around you?

Q7 Write the initials of someone who helped you with each of the four cards above. Then write the initials of someone you could help. Who are you praying for, and who is growing with you?

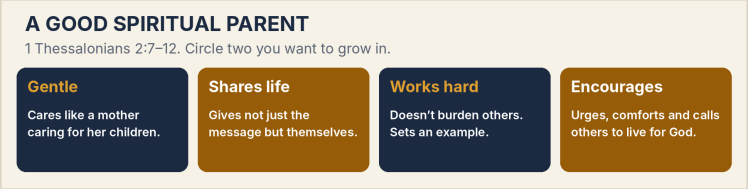
PAUSE 3

Coming alive to God and others

8 min

God works through weak people

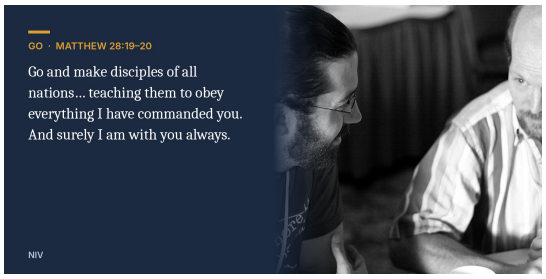
Feeling like you're not ready to help anyone? Good news: "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).



Q8 How do you feel about influencing others: anxious, inadequate, excited? How might God work through your weaknesses?

Q9 Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7–12 and circle two qualities above you want to grow in. Who laid your spiritual foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10–15), and whose foundation are you helping to build?

Hold on to one verse (3 min)



Phone tip: Save the card as your lock screen.

1. Say the topic and reference out loud, then the first half three times: "Go, Matthew 28:19–20. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"
2. Say the second half three times: "and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."
3. Put both halves together. Then cover the verse and write it from memory below.

Write the verse from memory:

PAUSE 4

Journeying forward

4 min

Key thoughts

- God wants **generation after generation** who love Him.
- You can pass on faith through **family** and **spiritual family.**
- God works **through your weakness**, not just your strengths.

PRAYER PAUSE

Pray for your family and for friends who don't know Jesus. Ask God who to come alongside. Finish this: "God of _____ (who discipled me), _____ (me) and _____ (those I will help)."

Take one step

1. **Thank.** Thank someone who helped you grow in faith. Text or call this week.
2. **Pick.** Pick one person to help grow. Ask God to show you who.
3. **Start.** Invite them to read a Bible passage with you or join a small group.

JOURNAL

A What legacy do I want to leave? What one step will I take?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God, thank You for the people who passed Your love to me. Use me, even with my weaknesses, to pass it on. Help me plant seeds that grow for generations. Amen.

✓ You made it. That's 30 minutes well spent.

OPTIONAL · NOT PART OF YOUR 30 MINUTES

Digging deeper



Abraham's story. God told Abraham, "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky" (Genesis 22:17). Abraham trusted God for generations he would never see. Galatians 3:29 says, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed." The next time you see the stars, remember: you're part of that promise.

ABRAHAM'S FAMILY IS YOUR FAMILY

God promised Abraham a family as many as the stars. That includes you.

God's promise	The Seed	All nations	You
Genesis 17; 22:17–18	Galatians 3:16	Genesis 22:18	Galatians 3:29
Descendants as many as the stars and the sand.	The "offspring" who blesses all nations is Jesus.	Through Jesus, people from every nation are blessed.	If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's offspring.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP

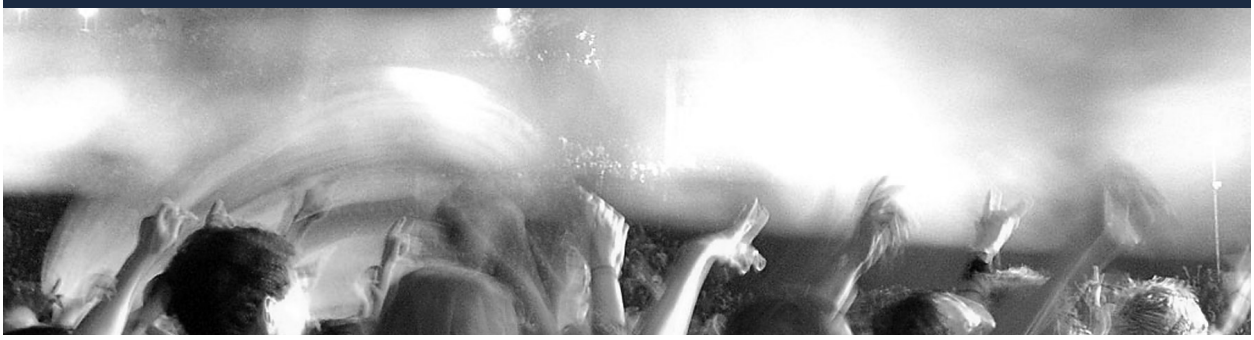
1. What would it look like for you to "plant seeds" where you are right now? Who's working alongside you?
2. If you led someone to trust Jesus tomorrow, would you know how to help them get started and keep going? Who could teach you?
3. How could you help with a Bible study or small group for people exploring faith?

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AFTER CHAPTER 10

Celebrate your group

You finished. Notice what God has done.



You've spent ten chapters on how to love people the way Jesus does: yourself, your community, people you've hurt or who've hurt you, your family, your friends, people unlike you, the spiritual battle, sharing your faith, partnering with God and passing faith on. Before you move on, **pause and celebrate.** Set aside one meeting (45–60 minutes is plenty), bring snacks, and walk through the four moments below. Jot down your answers to "Reflect back" ahead of time. Studying on your own? Do this with a friend or mentor, or write in a journal.

1 · REFLECT BACK

1. How have you benefited from this group of fellow travelers?
2. How has your walk with God changed? What is different in your daily life?
3. Which chapter challenged you most? Which relationship are you most hopeful about?
4. What feelings come up when you think about your time together?

2 · LOOK AHEAD

1. What do you need most from God in the next season?
2. What setting would help you get it? A church, a campus group, a mentor, another Connect study?
3. How will this group stay connected? A group chat, a monthly dinner, a weekly walk?
4. Who else could use this study? Could two of you start a new group?

3 · SAY THANKS

Go around the circle. Tell each person one thing you appreciate about them: how they showed up, or something they said that stuck with you.

Be specific. Two real sentences beat "you're awesome."

4 · PRAY TOGETHER

Thank God for this part of the journey. Praise Him for who He is. Read 1 John 4:7–12 aloud, taking turns.

Then **linger.** No rush, and nobody has to pray out loud.

A PRAYER FOR THE ROAD

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:11 (NIV)

YOUR RESPONSE

My next season

Turn what you learned into one small step with real people.

You're not trying to be a perfect friend. You're letting Jesus' love flow through you to the people around you. Write **one small thing** you'll do in each area over the next month. Share it with a friend who will ask you about it.

AREA	ONE THING I'LL DO
Receiving love Ch. 1	
Community Ch. 2	
Broken relationships Ch. 3	
Family Ch. 4	
Friends Ch. 5	
People unlike me Ch. 6	
Spiritual battle Ch. 7	
Sharing my faith Ch. 8	
Partnering with God Ch. 9	
Future generations Ch. 10	

A RELATIONSHIP I WANT TO BRING TO JESUS

Name a person, and write one way you'll love, forgive or pray for them.

MY

One

KEEP IT WITH YOU

Why memorize Scripture?

Words hidden in your heart are there when you need them.

You won't find the word "memorize" in the Bible, but the idea is everywhere. God's people are told to **treasure** His words, **store them up,** and **write them on their hearts.** Here's what that looks like, and what it does for you.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS TO DO

- **Treasure** God's words and guard them like your most precious possession (Proverbs 7:1–3).
- **Write them deep within your heart,** like a necklace you always wear (Proverbs 3:3).
- **Let them sink in,** and pay close attention (Proverbs 4:20–22).
- **Think about them** day and night (Joshua 1:8).
- **Talk about them** at home, on the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deuteronomy 6:7).

WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

- **Helps you resist sin:** "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).
- **Brings life and health** (Proverbs 4:22).
- **Builds your trust in the Lord** (Proverbs 22:18–19).
- **Helps you do what it says** (Joshua 1:8).
- **Brings joy:** "Your words were my joy and my heart's delight" (Jeremiah 15:16).

TWO PEOPLE WHO KNEW IT BY HEART

Jesus. In the wilderness, Satan tempted Him. Jesus answered each time with a verse of Scripture (Matthew 4:1–11). He knew God's words well enough to use them in the moment.

Peter. On the day of Pentecost, a huge crowd gathered. He had no time to look anything up, yet he spoke from the Old Testament, including the Psalms and the prophet Joel (Acts 2). About 3,000 people believed that day.

HOW TO START (PICK TWO)

- ☐ **Put it on your phone.** Lock screen, notes app, or a daily reminder.
- ☐ **Say it out loud.** Walking or driving works great.
- ☐ **Write it out** until you can get every word right.
- ☐ **Pray it back to God,** line by line.
- ☐ **Text it to a friend** with one sentence on why it matters.
- ☐ **Review before you sleep.** Fall asleep thinking about it.

CARRY THESE WITH YOU

Verses to know by heart

One from each chapter. Check the box when you can say it.

1 LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Matthew 22:39

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

☐ I can say it

2 LOVE ONE ANOTHER

John 13:34–35

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

☐ I can say it

3 FORGIVE

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

☐ I can say it

4 GOD'S FAMILY

Psalm 68:5–6

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families.

☐ I can say it

5 A TRUE FRIEND

Proverbs 18:24

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

☐ I can say it

6 WALLS COME DOWN

Ephesians 2:14

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

☐ I can say it

7 RESIST THE ENEMY

James 4:7

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

☐ I can say it

8 BE READY

1 Peter 3:15

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

☐ I can say it

9 CHOSEN

John 15:16

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.

☐ I can say it

10 GO

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them… and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

☐ I can say it

Scripture quotations are from the NIV (2011), written from memory. Check any verse against your own Bible. Matthew 28:19–20 is shortened here with an ellipsis. The full verse is on the chapter 10 verse card.

IF YOU WANT MORE

Dig deeper

Ideas from the original study for passing on your faith.

God does the miracle of spiritual growth. Our part is to walk by faith and say yes to what He shows us. Here are ten ways to take part, drawn from the original study. For each one, write your own idea for the next step: helping someone **keep growing** after they decide to follow Jesus.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Pray. Ask God to work in specific people's lives.

Start talking. Ask for boldness. Step out and be real, and don't quit if it falls flat.

Serve your neighbor. Acts of kindness say "I love you" without words.

Listen. Needs and questions come out when you pay attention.

Team up. Introduce friends to other believers. No one does it alone.

GOING DEEPER TOGETHER

Read the Bible together over coffee, in a dorm or online.

Explore life together. Movies, work, births, loss and beauty all point to God.

Encourage a decision. Following Jesus is a choice you keep making daily.

Love with truth. Ask God for love that speaks truth in a way that gives life.

Love God first. Don't trade time with Him for serving Him.

What do you do when a relationship hurts?

Loving people costs something. Some relationships are painful or unsafe, and that isn't your fault. Try these:

- **Name it.** Tell God and one trusted person what's happening.
- **Stay connected.** Keep going to your small group, church or a safe friend, even when you don't feel like it.
- **Forgive without staying in danger.** Forgiving someone doesn't mean going back to a harmful situation.
- **Get help.** If someone is hurting you, tell a trusted adult. In the U.S., call or text **988** for crisis support, the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-7233**, or Childhelp at **1-800-422-4453**.

Resources

The original study points to Breakthru: Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts (NavPress) to help you find the gifts God gave you. Also look at the other studies in the Connect series on the next page, and ask a mentor you trust what to read next.

WHAT'S NEXT

The Connect series

Keep going. There's more to discover.

Connect is a series of personal and group studies built to help you know God's truth, rest in His love, and live in His hope. They're made for small groups, where friends can encourage, trust, and support each other on the journey. Jesus said what life is all about:

> **MATTHEW 22:37–39 (NIV)**
> *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Growing in love for God, for others, and for yourself, and living in ways that honor Him: that's a real spiritual journey. Here's the whole road.

1 GOD	**Connecting with His Outrageous Love** Receive God's love, and love Him back.
2 IDENTITY	**Becoming Who God Says I Am** Discover who God says you are, and learn to live out of that true identity.
3 SOUL	**Embracing My Sexuality and Emotions** See how loving God, others, and yourself helps you handle your inner life in ways that honor Him.
4 RELATIONSHIPS	**Bringing Jesus Into My World** YOU ARE HERE Learn to love people, all kinds of people. If you're loving God and yourself, loving others follows. This is the study you just finished.
5 LIFE	**Thriving in a Complex World** Explore time, money, decisions, commitment, church and more, and how they fit into living well with Jesus.
6 FREEDOM	**Breaking the Power of Shame** Face shame, whatever its source, and experience God's mercy, healing, and freedom.

> **OUR PRAYER FOR YOU**
> *That you will grow in deeper closeness with God, from a heart of worship, as you humbly follow Jesus' way, His truth, and His life.*

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THIS STUDY

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Ralph and his wife, Jennifer, have served with The Navigators since 1975, from military bases in Norfolk to Princeton University, Richmond, and The CoMission in Moscow. Ralph has a master's degree in Intercultural Relations. They live in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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This edition

Adapted for a younger audience

Chapters, stories and images in this edition were rewritten and redesigned for a younger reading level and a 30-minute rhythm, with safety notes added.

Author information is from the original study (© 2006).

Notes and sources

About the stories. Stories in chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are adapted from the original study with names and details changed. Maya's story in chapter 4 is new for this edition, and the family statistics in the original were removed because they were dated.

Chapter 2. Tertullian's quote ("See how they love one another!") is from his writing around AD 197.

Chapter 9. The original lists Matthew 26:34–40. This edition uses Matthew 25:34–40, the passage about serving "the least of these."

Support lines. 988 (call or text), SAMHSA 1-800-662-4357, National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233 and Childhelp 1-800-422-4453 are U.S. numbers. Please confirm they are current before printing.

Memory verses. This edition uses the suggested verse from the original study for each chapter, written in NIV from memory (the original used NLT for a few).

Title. The attached study is titled *RELATIONSHIPS: Bringing Jesus Into My World*. The Connect series list calls it *Bringing Jesus to My Community*.

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