

I CAN RELATE

PHILIPPIANS 2:5 NIV
*'IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS
WITH ONE ANOTHER, HAVE
THE SAME MINDSET AS
CHRIST JESUS'*

A Devotional Discussion Collective

Biblical wisdom for real connections into Christlike relationships

What Is This Series About?

At the heart of the I Can Relate series is a call to approach every relationship in our lives; friendships, marriages, families, and parenting, with the mindset of Christ. **God IS community.**

As **Philippians 2:5** (NIV) encourages us, *“In your relationships, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”*

His mindset, marked by humility, love, sacrifice, truth, and grace is the lens through which we’ll explore God’s design for healthy, gospel-shaped relationships. Relationships can be deeply personal and incredibly complex. Our church family includes people in every season: single, married, widowed, divorced, those longing for children, estranged from family, or thriving in community.

That’s why this series isn’t about offering one-size-fits-all advice. It’s about anchoring our relationships in the truth of Scripture, which speaks to everyone. Through biblical teaching, personal stories, and honest conversation, we’ll confront the brokenness that often surrounds relationships, while holding fast to the hope of Jesus our Great Reconciler.

Whether you feel full or empty in this area, our prayer is that through the Word and the Spirit, you’ll find both comfort and clarity, and come away equipped to relate to others the way Jesus does: with wisdom, compassion, and purpose.

Collective FOUR / Parenting With Purpose

INTRODUCTION

What an honour to explore the sacred calling of parenting - not just as a role, but as a divine assignment that reflects the very heart of God. Whether you are a parent, desire to be one, are raising spiritual children, or were shaped by parents (for better or worse), Scripture offers wisdom, encouragement, and guidance for us all.

The Bible doesn't sugarcoat parenting. It's challenging, costly, and holy. As we dive in, we'll see that children are not possessions - they are a heritage from the Lord, entrusted to us for formation, discipline, and love. The call to parent is really a call to disciple - to reflect the Father's character to the next generation and to raise sons and daughters who know who they are and Whose they are.

Whether you're in the thick of nappies, navigating teen years, parenting adult children, or investing in others as a spiritual parent - this study is for you. The goal? To realign our view of parenting with God's heart, and to receive fresh grace to raise, guide, and release children in the way of the Lord.

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Psalm 127:3–5** (NIV) – “Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from Him...”
- **Ephesians 6:1–4** (NIV) – “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”
- **Colossians 3:20–21** (NIV) – “Children, obey your parents in everything... Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.”
- **Proverbs 22:6** (NIV) – “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”
- **Isaiah 54:13** (NIV) – “All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace.”

DISCOVERY

In both the Old and New Testaments, parenting is painted as a powerful partnership with God. The Hebrew words for “father” and “mother” describe not just roles, but functions: originator, nurturer, covenant carrier, protector. The Greek terms emphasize life-giving purpose - to initiate, to create, to impart likeness. Parenting isn’t about control; it’s about stewardship. Discipline, instruction, and delight all sit together in God’s picture of parenting. God disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12), and He calls parents to do the same - not to provoke, but to train. From Abraham to Hannah, from Mary and Joseph to Lois and Eunice - the Bible shows us that parenting, both physical and spiritual, is about legacy.

God invites us to model His heart, not just manage behaviour. Our children are arrows (Psalm 127), and we have the sacred responsibility of aiming them well. This study helps us pause, re-centre, and ask: Am I parenting out of fear, culture, or the Gospel?

DISCUSSION

Starting Questions:

- What is something you learned from your parents - good or bad - that still affects you today?
- If you are a parent, what season are you in right now? (young kids, teens, adult children?)
- If you aren’t a parent, who in your life has “parented” you spiritually or practically?

Exploring Questions:

- According to *Ephesians 6:1–4* and *Colossians 3:20–21*, what is the balance between discipline and encouragement in parenting?
- In *Proverbs 22:6*, what does it mean to “start children off” in the right way? What does that look like practically?
- In *Isaiah 54:13*, what does it practically look like to trust that God Himself is teaching your children, and how can we, as parents, partner with Him in that process?
- In a culture of performance and comparison, how can we raise children with identity rooted in Christ?

Action Questions:

- What is one intentional step you can take to disciple your child (or a young person in your life) toward Jesus?
- Are there any parenting patterns you need to unlearn or surrender to God?
- How can we support each other as a community in raising up the next generation?

DEVOTION

Take a quiet moment to ask:

- God, where have I felt overwhelmed, ashamed, or unsure in my parenting journey?
- Holy Spirit, where are You inviting me to parent from a place of grace, not pressure?

Let’s Pray Together:

“Lord, thank You for the privilege of parenting. Help us to reflect Your heart as a Father: full of love, truth, correction, and compassion. Where we’ve felt like we’re failing, renew our confidence. Where we’ve leaned on our own understanding, lead us back to Your Word. May the children in our lives grow up knowing Your voice, Your ways, and Your faithfulness. Give us wisdom, patience, and joy in the journey. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Parenting is a calling, not just a role and God is with you in every moment.

1. Take Time

Create a moment of quiet, ask the Holy Spirit to refresh your heart and renew your vision as a parent.

2. Focus on God’s Word

“All your children will be taught by the Lord, and great will be their peace.” - Isaiah 54:13 (NIV)

3. Reflect

You are not parenting alone.

God’s heart is toward your children. He cares deeply about their future, their peace, and their purpose. And He has entrusted you with a sacred role in shaping their lives. Whether you’re in a season of joy or challenge, God equips you to lead with love, wisdom, and intentionality.

What is God reminding you about your children or the children you influence?

Is there something you feel prompted to adjust, initiate, or pray for in your parenting?

How can you bring more purpose, presence, or peace into your family rhythm this week?

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS / PARENT CHECKLIST

A reminder list for parents who want to raise their children with grace, grit, and God at the centre.

1. Have I really listened to my child this week? *"You can't shape a heart you haven't heard."*

- ✓ I gave them my full attention without checking my phone.
- ✓ I asked follow-up questions (and didn't settle for "fine").
- ✓ I made space for silliness and seriousness.

2. Have I talked about God outside of Sunday? *"Faith isn't taught. It's caught." - Unknown*

- ✓ We prayed together this week (even if it was short or messy).
- ✓ I shared something God taught me lately.
- ✓ I used a real-life moment to point back to Scripture or truth.

3. Am I modelling what I'm trying to teach? *"Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate."*

- ✓ I said sorry when I messed up.
- ✓ I handled stress in a way that honoured God (or at least explained it when I didn't).
- ✓ I treated others with kindness, especially the barista who got my coffee order wrong.

4. Am I giving them time or just tasks? *"Your presence matters more than your perfection."*

- ✓ We had at least one moment of unrushed connection.
- ✓ I asked them how they would like to spend time with me.
- ✓ I remembered they're not an inconvenience - they're a calling.

5. Have I said more encouragement than correction? *"Discipline without relationship leads to rebellion."*

- ✓ I told them what they're good at this week.
- ✓ I caught them doing something right and praised it.
- ✓ I hugged them without needing a reason.

6. Am I parenting out of fear or faith? *"God loves your kids more than you do."*

- ✓ I prayed instead of panicked.
- ✓ I remembered their story is God-authored, not pressure-driven.
- ✓ I let go of control in one area and chose trust instead.

7. Are we aiming for obedience or heart transformation? *"We're not raising well-behaved kids. We're raising future disciples."*

- ✓ I disciplined with restoration in mind, not just punishment.
- ✓ I reminded them who God says they are.
- ✓ I stayed consistent, not controlling.

BONUS: The "Did I Laugh Today?"

- ✓ I laughed with my kids (not just at the memes about parenting).
- ✓ I remembered that joy is a spiritual weapon.
- ✓ I didn't take myself too seriously (neither did they).

"There's no such thing as a perfect parent. Just one who keeps showing up, surrendered and Spirit-led." - Someone who's been there.

A Closing Benediction

May the God who is the source of all relationship;

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - fill your heart with wisdom, your words with grace, and your life with love.

May He bless your conversations, and continue the work He's begun in quiet moments of reflection.

May the truths you've explored take root, and bear fruit in your friendships, your family, and your faith.

As you go, may you walk humbly, love deeply, forgive freely, and honour boldly.

May you build homes that reflect heaven, and live lives that draw others to Christ.

And may you always know: You are loved, you are called, and you are never alone.

Amen.