

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 TWO / Friendship Like Jesus

INTRODUCTION

God is relationship. As Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, He models perfect unity and He created us in His image to reflect that same relational nature. One of the clearest ways we experience this is through friendship. But in a world where connection often feels shallow or performative, and where loneliness quietly lingers even in crowded rooms, it's worth asking: *What does God say about friendship?*

Jesus didn't just preach love, He practiced it in friendships that were honest, sacrificial, and deeply human. He laughed with His friends, wept at their pain, taught them patiently, and even washed their feet. He called His disciples friends (John 15:15), not because they earned it, but because He chose it. And still today, He longs to walk with us in that same closeness.

Whether you feel surrounded or isolated, this study invites you to rediscover friendship as God designed it, full of healing, strength, and purpose. Through Scripture, reflection, and shared discussion, may you hear the gentle invitation of Jesus to say with confidence: "I can relate."

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Philippians 2:5** (NIV) – "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."
- **John 15:12–15** (NIV) – "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you... I have called you friends."
- **Ecclesiastes 4:9–10** (NIV) – "Two are better than one... If either falls down, one can help the other up."
- **Proverbs 17:17** (NIV) – "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."
- **1 John 4:7–12** (NIV) – "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God..."

DISCOVERY

Friendship is more than compatibility - it's a reflection of God's own character. Scripture teaches that love, truth, and sacrifice are the foundations of friendship. Jesus calls His disciples friends, not just servants. Friendship in God's design is personal, transformative, and deeply rooted in mutual love and purpose.

But we live in a world where friendships are tested - through betrayal, distance, differences, and disappointment. This study helps us reframe friendship not as optional, but as spiritual - and as something God wants to bless and restore.

DISCUSSION

Starting Questions:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word "friendship"?
- Can you think of a friendship that has shaped you deeply (for better or worse)?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to form deep friendships? Why?

"Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art... It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that give value to survival." - **C.S. Lewis**

Exploring Questions:

- Jesus called His disciples friends. What do you think made that relationship different from others in His life?
- From Philippians 2:5, what does it mean to have "the mindset of Christ" in friendship?
- How does understanding God's relational nature impact how we relate to others?
- In your friendships, where do you see the need for forgiveness, encouragement, or growth?

"A true friend never gets in your way unless you happen to be going down." - **Arnold H. Glasow**

Action Questions:

- Is there a friendship in your life that needs intentional investment or reconciliation this week?
- What can you practically do this week to initiate or strengthen a godly friendship?
- What character traits of Christ (kindness, honesty, humility, etc.) do you want to grow in as a friend?

"True friendship is a plant of slow growth." - **George Washington**

DEVOTION

Take a few quiet moments to reflect:

- Who in your life feels like a God-given friend - a gift, not just a coincidence?
- Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to reach out to someone, forgive someone, or open your heart again to community?

Let's Pray Together:

"Lord, thank You for creating us for relationship. Where we've been hurt or isolated, bring healing. Where we've been guarded, give us courage. Help us to be the kind of friends who reflect Your love - patient, kind, honest, forgiving, and faithful. Grow Christ-like friendships in this group and in our lives. Amen."

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Friendship is a gift, but it’s also a spiritual practice. Jesus didn’t just model friendship. He redefined it.

1. Take Time

Find a quiet moment to pause. Ask God to bring to mind the people you are called to walk with, forgive, or pursue in friendship.

2. Focus on God’s Word

*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” - **John 15:12–13** (NIV)*

3. Reflect

Jesus shows us that true friendship involves sacrifice, honesty, consistency, and grace. He calls us not just to receive love, but to give it, even when it’s costly. Friendship in the way of Jesus isn’t always easy, but it is always worth it.

Is there someone you need to thank, forgive, reach out to, or stand beside in a deeper way?

Who has God placed in your life as a friend for this season?

What kind of friend are you?

What might it look like to love your friends the way Jesus has loved you?

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS / FRIENDSHIP FOLLOW UPS

Friendship is one of God’s greatest gifts, a space to reflect His love, grow in character, and walk in truth and grace together. Real friendship isn’t always easy, but it’s always worth it.

Questions to Reflect On:

✓ Who in my life is a true friend, not just by proximity, but by intentionality?

✓ Is there a friendship that needs mending, forgiveness, or clarity?

✓ Am I showing up as the kind of friend I hope to have?

✓ Have I made space for new friendships in this season?

✓ Have I been quick to encourage... or quick to assume?

“Friendship is born at the moment when one person says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’” - C.S. Lewis

A Friendship Health Check:

Take a moment this week and ask:

✓ Do my closest friendships draw me closer to Jesus?

✓ Do we pray for each other... or just chat?

✓ Are we carrying each other’s burdens or just venting together?

✓ Are we growing together or stuck in surface-level moments?

“A sweet friendship refreshes the soul.” - Proverbs 27:9 (MSG)

Try This Week:

- ✓ Send an encouraging message to a friend you haven’t connected with in a while.
- ✓ Make time for one intentional hangout - no phones, no rush, just real talk.
- ✓ Pray for a friend by name every day this week.
- ✓ Ask someone older in the faith how they’ve built lasting, Christ-centred friendships.
- ✓ Be open to a new friendship - especially with someone different to you.
- ✓ Start a “Friendship & Faith” WhatsApp group to share verses, prayers, or voice notes.
- ✓ Choose a Bible verse together with your friends to speak over each other this season.
- ✓ Talk to your friendship circle about doing a monthly meal, game night, or coffee catch-up - community grows when it’s consistent.

“We do not choose our families, but we do choose our friends and the wise choose ones who help them become more like Christ.”

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.