

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

A collective series of connect group studies, personal reflections and family conversation starters as to how to build relationships with a Christlike mindset.

How to Use This Collective

This resource has been prayerfully and intentionally created as a tool for spiritual growth, meaningful conversation, and deeper connection, with God and with one another. Whether you're leading a Connect Group, gathering with friends and family, or diving in on your own, our hope is that this collection of studies and reflections will help you build relationships that reflect the heart of Jesus.

Each section in this collective is built around a key themes; **Friendship, Marriage, Parenting, Family**, accompanied by foundational biblical focuses such as *Forgiveness & Reconciliation, Boundaries & Honour, Unity in Diversity*, that we hope will help you on as you build Christlike relationships.

The **Connect Group Study** format offers Scripture, questions, and spiritual insight to guide your group conversation or personal meditation. Following each study, you'll find a **Personal Reflection Guide** to help you pause, sit with what the Holy Spirit may be saying, and respond with intentionality. There are also **conversation starters for your family** - like family value-building steps, marriage tips, and parenting checklists to help you put your faith into action at home and in your relationships.

Use this guide at your own pace. Let it spark honest discussion, fresh revelation, and a hunger to keep building the kind of community God intended. Most of all, let it draw you back to the **Source of all relationships**, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let's keep growing together.

With love,

The Hillsong Africa Team

Contents

Collective ONE / The Source Of All Relationship

Collective TWO / Friendship Like Jesus

Collective THREE / Marriage God's Design

Collective FOUR / Parenting With Purpose

Collective FIVE / The Gift Of Family

Collective SIX / Forgiveness & Reconciliation

Collective SEVEN / Boundaries & Honour

Collective EIGHT / Unity In Diversity

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 ONE / The Source Of All Relationship

INTRODUCTION

Before we unpack friendship, marriage, parenting, family and some of the foundational attitudes we should all adopt when it comes to relationships, we begin here: with relationship itself.

The idea of relationship doesn't start with us. It begins with God. He is relational at His very core: Father, Son and Spirit one God in three Persons, living in perfect unity, love, honour, submission, and joy.

Everything we know and long for in relationship closeness, trust, understanding, purpose flows from God's nature.

We were made in the image of this relational God. That means to live well with others, we first need to see how Jesus relates to the Father, how the Spirit glorifies the Son, and how God draws us into fellowship with Himself and with one another.

"Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? So one hundred worshippers looking to Christ are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be were they to become 'unity-conscious' and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship."

- A.W. Tozer

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Philippians 2:5** (NIV) - *"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."*
- **1 John 4:7-8** (NIV) - *"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God... whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."*
- **Genesis 1:26** (NIV) - *"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...'"*
- **John 17:20-21** (NIV) - *"I pray also for those who will believe in me... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."*
- **Romans 5:5** (NIV) - *"God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."*
- **Colossians 3:12-14** (NIV) - *"Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience... And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."*
- **Ephesians 2:19** (NIV) - *"You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household."*

DISCOVERY

- What comes to mind when you think of "relationship"?
- Have you ever thought about the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; as a relationship?
- How does the way Jesus related to others (disciples, sinners, friends, enemies) challenge or inspire you?

DISCUSSION

Starting Questions:

- What does Philippians 2:5 suggest about our posture in relationships?
- Why do you think Jesus' mindset is the foundation for healthy relationships?

Exploring Questions:

- Read Philippians 2:1-11 together. What parts of Jesus' attitude stand out most to you?
- In what ways do pride, selfish ambition, or insecurity damage relationships in our lives?
- How do humility, servanthood, and love draw people together?

"The most important thing about you is what you think about when you think about God." - A.W. Tozer

- How does your view of God shape the way you relate to others?
- What do you think God desires to form in your character through the relationships in your life right now?

Action Questions:

- What relationship in your life could benefit from a fresh dose of Christlike humility this week?
- Is there someone you need to ask forgiveness from, encourage, or show more patience toward?

DEVOTION

Let's take a moment this week to reflect on the perfect love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As you spend time in prayer and the Word, ask the Holy Spirit to help you adopt the mindset of Christ in every interaction - not by striving, but by abiding in His love.

"God is a relational being, and He made us to reflect that. That's why no possession, no success, no achievement will ever fully satisfy - we were made for connection with Him and each other."

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Before we can love others well, we must be deeply rooted in the love of God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1. Take Time

Come to stillness. Allow yourself to simply be with God, no striving, just belonging.

2. Focus on God's Word

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." - **2 Corinthians 13:14** (NIV)

3. Reflect

God Himself is the perfect relationship, Father, Son, and Spirit, united in love. He created us for connection with Him and with one another. When we understand the way God relates to us, with patience, mercy, honesty, and intimacy it transforms how we show up in every other relationship.

You are fully known and fully loved. That is the foundation.

What does it mean to you that God is the ultimate source of relationship?

Is there an area of your life where you need to return to Him first, before looking to others?

How can your relationships reflect the way God relates to you?

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS / TAKEAWAYS TO TAKE TO HEART

1. Start With the Source

Before any relationship gets your energy, give your attention to the One who created relationship itself. Time with God fuels everything else.

2. Mirror the Mindset of Christ

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus." **Philippians 2:5** (NIV)
Humility. Compassion. Service. That's the model we follow.

3. The Trinity Is the Blueprint

Father, Son, and Spirit live in perfect unity, honour, and mutual love. That's not just theology, that's your relationship framework.

4. The Fruit of the Spirit Is the Culture of God's Kingdom

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) says, *"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"*
If your relationships are bearing fruit like love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness, you're on the right track.

5. Ask: "What Does Love Require of Me?"

Not just what feels fair, or easy. But what reflects the love I've received from Christ?

6. Relating Takes Practice

Grace is a muscle. Listening is a discipline. Patience is grown. Don't quit on the process.

7. Let the Holy Spirit Lead the Way

He is your Helper, Counselor, and Convictor, especially in hard conversations and complex dynamics.

8. God Doesn't Waste a Relationship

Every connection, even the strained or strange ones, is a classroom for growth and grace.

9. Relationship Is Risky and Worth It

Vulnerability, forgiveness, setting boundaries. It can feel costly. But love is always the better way.

10. Live Like You Belong

Because you do. You've been adopted into the family of God. Let that security shape how you treat others.

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.”

Collective **THREE** / Marriage God's Design

INTRODUCTION

Here, we explore God's original and ongoing design for marriage, a sacred covenant rooted in love, sacrifice, and mutual submission. Marriage isn't just a social contract or romantic pairing; it's a spiritual picture of Christ and His Church. Through Scripture, we see that God honours marriage, calls husbands and wives to reflect His character, and uses this relationship to reveal His heart to the world.

Whether you're married, preparing for marriage, or simply wanting to understand God's vision for it, this study offers a biblical foundation that speaks to every season. Together we'll unpack the meaning of covenant, the posture of Christlike love, and the purpose of marriage in the Kingdom of God.

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Ephesians 5:21–33** (NIV) – “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church... the two will become one flesh.”
- **Genesis 2:24** (NIV) – “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”
- **Hebrews 13:4** (NIV) – “Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure...”
- **Colossians 3:18–19** (NIV) – “Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands... Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”
- **1 Corinthians 11:11–12** (NIV) – “...woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. But everything comes from God.”

DISCOVERY

Marriage in Scripture is presented not as a casual agreement, but as a covenant; a divinely blessed union that reflects God’s character and mission. The Hebrew word *berith* (covenant) describes a solemn, binding commitment, often marked by sacrifice and sealed with God’s blessing. This isn’t a contract based on convenience, but a promise rooted in faithfulness, endurance, and love.

Ephesians 5 paints a powerful picture of this: Christ’s love for the Church is the model for how a husband should love his wife; and the Church’s response to Christ models the respect and trust of a godly wife. Genesis reminds us that this union is designed by God, for intimacy, companionship, and purpose.

Marriage is a refining space; not always easy, but always holy when centred on Christ. It’s a place where selfishness is challenged, love is tested, and transformation is possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION

Starting Questions:

- When you think of marriage, what words or images come to mind?
- What do you think makes a marriage “God-honouring”?

😊 “Marriage: where two become one... and then spend the rest of their lives figuring out which one.” (Inspired by Genesis 2:24 - with a little side of sanctification.)

Exploring Questions:

- According to Ephesians 5, how are husbands and wives called to reflect Christ in their roles?
- How does understanding marriage as a covenant (not a contract) change the way we approach it?
- In Genesis 2:18–25, what can we learn about God’s intention for intimacy and partnership?
- In what ways have culture’s ideas of marriage clashed with Scripture’s?
- How do forgiveness, grace, and mutual submission play out practically in marriage?

😊 “Love is patient, love is kind... until someone loads the dishwasher wrong.” (1 Corinthians 13: the marriage remix.)

Action Questions:

- If you are married: What is one way you can love your spouse more like Christ this week?
- If you are not married: What have you learned about God’s design for marriage that speaks to your season right now?
- What’s one thing you can pray or act on this week that supports a healthier view of marriage in your life or community?

😊 “God said, ‘It’s not good for man to be alone’ - and married people everywhere said, ‘So... what’s your return policy?’” (Genesis 2:18, but make it married-life real.)

DEVOTION

Take time to reflect silently or journal:

- What area of your life has been shaped by the marriages around you - for better or for worse?
- Is God revealing a mindset shift He wants to bring about in you around relationships or marriage?

Let's Pray Together:

"Lord, thank You for the gift and mystery of marriage. Help us honor it the way You designed it - with love, faithfulness, and selflessness. Where our views have been shaped by pain, disappointment, or culture, renew our minds through Your Word. Heal what's been broken, restore what's been lost, and equip us - whether married, single, divorced, or widowed - to see marriage the way You do. Amen."

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Marriage is not just a partnership, it’s a covenant and a calling to reflect God’s love.

1. Take Time

Slow down together. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart and unite you in purpose and peace.

2. Focus on God’s Word

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” - Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

3. Reflect

Marriage is God’s idea, a relationship designed to reflect Christ’s love, sacrifice, and unity. Whether you're thriving or in a tough season, God is present in your marriage. He desires wholeness, mutual honour, and joy between you. His Word provides wisdom, and His Spirit offers help to love patiently, communicate kindly, and dream together.

How is God encouraging you in your marriage right now?

Is there something you feel led to strengthen, heal, or celebrate in your relationship?

What might a small step look like this week, a prayer together, a conversation, or a moment of fun?

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS / TOP TEN TIPS FOR KEEPING THE LOVE ALIVE

Marriage is holy, hilarious, hard work and worth it.

"A strong marriage requires two people who choose to love each other even on the days they struggle to like each other." - Anonymous

1. Talk with each other, not just at each other.

- ✓ Yes, about your day.
 - ✓ Yes, about your feelings.
 - ✓ But also... talk about dreams, silly things, faith questions, what you're grateful for, and what's for dinner.
- #putyourphonedown

2. Keep learning from each other. People grow. Change. Evolve. Ask new questions.

- ✓ Try: "What's something that's bringing you joy right now?"
- ✓ Or: "What do you need more of from me this week?"

"Love is not just a feeling, it's a commitment to curiosity."

3. Make date night a non-negotiable. Don't overthink it. It's not about being fancy, it's about being intentional. Even if it's couch time with tea and no phones.

- ✓ Weekly or bi-weekly - book it in like you would a meeting.
- ✓ And yes, swap tracksuit pants for something snazzy every now and then.

4. Laugh together. Often. In-jokes. TikToks. Memes. Bad dance moves in the kitchen.

- ✓ Marriage isn't meant to be serious all the time.
- ✓ When tension is high, sometimes a silly face can lower the temperature.

"Couples who laugh together, last together."

5. Handle conflict with grace. You won't always agree. That's okay. But learn to disagree well.

- ✓ Fight fair (no low blows or historic throwbacks).
- ✓ Apologise quickly, forgive freely.

"In marriage, being right is less important than being kind."

6. Invite God in, daily. Pray together. For each other. Over meals, kids, work, and your future.

- ✓ It doesn't have to be long, just heartfelt.
- ✓ Let your spouse hear you bless them out loud.

"A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." - Ecclesiastes 4:12

7. Build a home culture you love. Your home is your safe place. Shape the atmosphere with intention.

- ✓ Decide what you want your home to feel like peaceful, playful, prayerful?
- ✓ Establish rhythms: Sunday slow dinners, family devotions, dance parties?

"What happens in your home is more powerful than what happens on your Instagram."

8. Find a shared mission. You're not just lovers, you're a team. A kingdom team.

- ✓ Serve together. Dream together. Raise kids together.
- ✓ What has God called your marriage to build?

"Marriage isn't just about each other it's about what God wants to do through you together."

9. Be generous with compliments and touches. Say nice things. Hold hands. Give long hugs.

✓ Text them something sweet just because.

✓ Praise publicly. Correct privately.

"A well-timed 'You look amazing today' can change the tone of the whole day."

10. Celebrate! Everything! Anniversaries, tiny wins, surviving toddler tantrums, making it to Friday.

✓ Create your own weird traditions.

✓ Pause, party together, even if it's just with pizza and gratitude.

"A marriage built on fun, faith, and forgiveness is a marriage built to last." - Someone wise (maybe you!)

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.

Collective FIVE / The Gift Of Family

INTRODUCTION

Here we're exploring the beautiful and complex idea of family - not just the one we were born into, but the family of believers we've been born again into. Whether you come from a close-knit home or a fractured one, God's Word speaks to the power and purpose of family in all its forms. We'll look at the biblical picture of family: a circle of relationships where everyone gives and receives, where lineage is honoured, and where faith binds generations together.

Jesus didn't just come to preach a message - He came to bring us into God's family. Through Him, we're not only sons and daughters of God, but brothers and sisters to one another. Today, we'll reflect on what it means to belong, to carry responsibility for one another, and to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

"We need to place God at the center of our family... As a family, we need to walk with God daily." - **Billy Graham**

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Joshua 24:15** (NIV) – "As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."
- **Ephesians 3:14-15** (NIV) – "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name."
- **Psalms 68:6** (NIV) – "God sets the lonely in families..."
- **John 17:3** (NIV) – "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."
- **Galatians 3:7** (NIV) – "Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham."

DISCOVERY

Family is central to the story of Scripture. From the first humans to the lineage of Jesus, and ultimately the church, God's story is one of generational blessing, covenantal relationships, and spiritual inheritance.

In Hebrew, 'bayith' refers to everyone and everything in a household. 'Mishpachah' speaks of a reciprocal circle - family is not meant to be one-sided. In Greek, 'patria' points to lineage from the Father, and 'adelphoi' reminds us that in Christ, we're siblings - born of the same Spirit.

Family is God's idea. But like anything God ordains, it also comes under attack. Brokenness, conflict, and isolation can distort our experience of family. Yet the Gospel always makes room for restoration. The church becomes a spiritual home where we learn how to relate, forgive, grow, and walk with one another in love.

"Many times it takes just one member of a family to initiate the action to bring a family back together again." - **Billy Graham**

DISCUSSION

Starting Questions:

- How has your understanding of "family" been shaped by your personal story?
- Do you feel like you've experienced the idea of spiritual family before? What did that look like?

Exploring Questions:

- What stands out to you about how Scripture defines family (bayith, mishpachah, patria, adelphoi)?
- Why do you think God chose family as the framework through which to build His people?
- In *Ephesians 3:15*, we're told that every family finds its origin in God. What does this say about His heart for both natural and spiritual family?
- Consider *John 17:3*. Jesus wanted to connect us to the Father. How does this connection affect the way we relate to others - in our homes, friendships, or church community?
- Have you ever had to fight for family - in prayer, reconciliation, or forgiveness? What happened?

Action Questions:

- What's one intentional way you can strengthen your family - natural or spiritual - this week?
- Is there anyone God might be prompting you to include, reach out to, or reconcile with as an act of spiritual family?
- What's one tradition, practice, or value you want to start or revive in your home to honour God?

DEVOTION

Take A Moment To Reflect:

- Where do you feel most connected in your sense of family - and where do you feel most distant?
- Are there any mindsets, disappointments, or wounds you need to bring before God for healing?
- Ask God to help you see others through His family lens - not just by shared blood, but by shared faith.

Prayer:

- Pray for healing in broken family dynamics - for homes to be places of peace, not pain.
- Pray for the lonely to find belonging in the church family.
- Pray for wisdom in parenting, humility in leadership, and grace in siblinghood, both natural & spiritual.
- Ask God to restore honour, joy, and unity to every family represented in your group.

*“God knew that children grow and mature best in a stable, loving family, and this was one reason He gave marriage to us.” - **Billy Graham***

“Amazing things can happen when the family of God bands together.”

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Family is a gift, sometimes messy, often meaningful, always part of God’s design.

1. Take Time

Slow down and be present - God often speaks through the people closest to us.

2. Focus on God’s Word

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” - Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

3. Reflect

No family is perfect, but every family is called.
Whether you’re part of a close-knit tribe or healing from hurt, God’s design for family includes you to give, to grow, and to reflect His heart. He places us in both biological and spiritual families for our good and His glory.

What does “family” mean to you in this season?

Are there areas where healing, connection, or commitment are needed?

How can you contribute to making your home or church family a reflection of God’s love?

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS / HOW TO ESTABLISH YOUR FAMILY CULTURE & VALUES

Why It Matters

Every family has a culture. Whether it's intentional or accidental. Your family culture is the unseen atmosphere in your home: the way you speak to each other, how you handle conflict, what gets celebrated, what gets corrected, and what rhythms shape your days.

When we establish our family values intentionally, we create a shared vision that strengthens connection, builds purpose, and helps our children grow up with clarity about who we are and what we stand for. Think of it as your family's spiritual and relational compass, it won't make every day perfect, but it will help keep everyone pointed in the same direction.

"A family is not built in the grand gestures, but in the everyday choices made together."

Let your children be a part of choosing the words, creating the poster, or even drawing pictures to go with each value. When kids help build it, they're far more likely to take ownership of it.

Step-by-Step Guide: Building Your Family Values

1. Pray Together First

Invite God into the process. Ask Him to show you what makes your family unique and what He desires to shape in your home. Let Scripture lead your vision.

2. Set a Family Meeting

Create a relaxed moment (over a meal, or a cozy evening) where every family member can be involved, yes, even the little ones!

3. Ask Each Other Good Questions

Here are a few prompts to spark discussion:

- What do you love most about our family?
- What makes our family special?
- What do you think we could do better?
- What kind of people do we want to become?

4. Choose 3–5 Core Values (Let the language reflect your voice as a family, it doesn't need to be formal.)

Based on your conversation, decide together on 3–5 key values that define how you want to live as a family.

Examples could include:

- We speak kindly.
- We say sorry and forgive quickly.
- We serve one another.
- We show up for each other.
- We honour God.

5. Write a Family Manifesto

Put your values into a simple statement or declaration you can display in your home. Example:

In our family, we love God, speak kindly, forgive often, and have fun together. We serve others and choose joy, even on hard days. This is who we are.

6. Make it Visible

Hang your family values somewhere central, the fridge, the hallway, a framed print. Let it serve as a daily reminder and a conversation starter.

7. Live It Out

Come back to your values often. Use them to guide decisions, celebrate growth, and even navigate discipline. Revisit them once a year to update or reflect. Your family culture won't be shaped in a day, but in the patterns you repeat, the grace you extend, the Jesus you reflect.

"The best legacy you can leave isn't just what you do, but who you are together."

Collective SIX / Forgiveness & Reconciliation

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is part of life and part of love. Whether it's a misunderstanding between friends, tension in a marriage, or long-standing hurt in a family, we've all experienced the pain of broken connection. But while the world often tells us to cancel, avoid, or blame, Jesus offers us another way: reconciliation.

This week, we're asking: *How do we respond to conflict in a Christlike way?*

Philippians 2:5 calls us to have the same mindset as Christ in our relationships - a mindset of humility, self-sacrifice, truth, and forgiveness.

As we dig into Scripture, we'll uncover a redemptive pattern: God doesn't ignore conflict. He enters into it to bring peace. Through the power of the Gospel, we are not only reconciled to God, but also called to be ministers of reconciliation in our own lives.

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Romans 12:18** (NLT) - *“Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.”*
- **Matthew 18:15-17** (NLT) - *“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.”*
- **Philippians 2:3-5** (NLT) - *“Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.”*
- **Matthew 6:14-15** (NLT) - *“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

DISCOVERY

Jesus didn’t just tell us to love others - He showed us how, even when it was difficult. He confronted sin, forgave betrayal, restored the broken, and reconciled enemies through the cross. And He calls us to follow Him in doing the same.

Conflict can be uncomfortable, but it can also be sacred ground for growth, healing, and deeper connection. Avoiding it often leads to resentment, while facing it with the heart of Christ creates space for restoration.

This doesn’t mean every relationship will be easy or even fully restored, but it does mean we can choose to live at peace - as far as it depends on us, anchored in the grace we’ve received.

DISCUSSION

Starting Questions:

- What emotions come up for you when you think about conflict?
- Have you ever experienced reconciliation after a painful disagreement? What made it possible?
- Why do you think Jesus cared so much about how we treat each other, especially in moments of tension?

Exploring Questions:

- How does Jesus instruct us to handle relational conflict?
- What do these verses show us about posture and attitude in difficult conversations?
- Why is it important to address conflict, not just avoid it?
- What happens when we stay silent too long?

Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT) - *“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

This is confronting scripture.

Forgiveness is something you can do on your own, in your heart, through God’s grace. It’s choosing to release someone from the debt of what they did to you - not pretending it didn’t hurt, but deciding not to hold it against them.

Forgiveness is about your freedom, your healing, and your obedience to God. It’s not based on whether the other person apologises or changes.

Reconciliation, on the other hand, is about restoring the relationship - and that takes two. It requires honesty, repentance, accountability, and often time. While forgiveness is a command, reconciliation is an invitation - one that reflects the Gospel when both parties are willing to walk in humility and truth.

So, forgiveness is a decision; reconciliation is a journey. You can forgive without reconciling, but you cannot truly reconcile without first forgiving.

Forgiving someone can feel impossibly hard, especially when the hurt is real, but Jesus gently calls us to it, not as a burden, but as a pathway to freedom and restored fellowship with the Father.

- Do both forgiveness and reconciliation require the same thing?
- How do humility and the Holy Spirit work together in bringing peace?

Action Questions:

- Is there a relationship in your life where you've avoided conflict rather than addressing it in love? What's one step you can take this week to move toward reconciliation?
- How can you prepare your heart, spiritually and emotionally, for a hard conversation?
- In what ways can you reflect the mindset of Christ in a current or past conflict?

DEVOTION

Let's take a moment to reflect:

- Are there any relationships in your life marked by tension, bitterness, or silence?
- Are there apologies you've been putting off?
- Is there forgiveness you've been withholding, even from yourself?

Let's Pray Together:

"Jesus, thank You for making peace between us and God. Thank You for not giving up on us. Help us to carry that same spirit into our own relationships. Where we've been hurt, bring healing. Where we've been proud, bring humility. Where there's distance, give us courage to move toward restoration. Teach us to love like You do, even when it's hard. Amen."

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Take a moment to pause and let God speak to your heart.

1. Take Time

Bring yourself to stillness, silence creates space for the Spirit to speak.

2. Focus on God’s Word

“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” - Matthew 6:14–15 (NLT)

3. Reflect

God’s forgiveness towards you is complete, undeserved, and freely given.
Ask Him to help you extend that same grace to others and to yourself.

What is the Holy Spirit highlighting for you?

Is there someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from?

How is God inviting you into freedom today?

Collective SEVEN / Boundaries & Honour

INTRODUCTION

In this study, we're exploring two vital pillars for healthy relationships: boundaries and honour. Boundaries protect what matters; honour shows what matters. When these two work together, they build trust, clarity, and peace in our relationships - with family, friends, church community, even strangers.

God is a God of order, not confusion, and He models boundaries and honour in how He relates to us. As we look to Scripture, we'll uncover how to live wisely and graciously in a world that often confuses control with care, and self-expression with self-respect.

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Proverbs 4:23** (NIV) – “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”
- **Romans 12:10** (NIV) – “Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.”
- **Galatians 6:2-5** (NIV) – “Carry each other’s burdens... for each one should carry their own load.”
- **1 Peter 2:17** (NIV) – “Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.”
- **Matthew 5:37** (NIV) – “All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”

DISCOVERY

Boundaries are not walls to keep people out - they are doors that teach others how to enter our lives in healthy ways. In the same breath, honour isn't flattery or blind obedience - it's recognising the image of God in someone and treating them accordingly. Scripture consistently affirms both. Jesus set boundaries (He withdrew from crowds, said “no,” and didn't entrust Himself to everyone), while also showing profound honour - to children, to women, to the dishonoured, and even to those who crucified Him. Boundaries and honour are not opposing values. In the Kingdom, they work together to form the culture of heaven in our relationships.

DISCUSSION

Starting questions:

- Have you ever struggled to say “no” to someone? Why do you think it's so hard sometimes?
- What does honour look like in today's world? Can you think of a moment where you felt truly honoured?

Exploring questions:

- What do healthy boundaries look like in relationships, and how can we tell when one is missing?
- Why do you think Jesus said “let your yes be yes, and your no be no”?
- How does the world confuse honour with people-pleasing, or boundaries with rejection?
- In Galatians 6, we're told to carry each other's burdens and our own loads. What might that look like practically in your life?

Action questions:

- Where in your life do you need to set clearer boundaries?
- How could you do this in a loving and Spirit-led way?
- Who do you feel God prompting you to honour more intentionally; what could you do this week to show that?

DEVOTION

Take Time To Reflect Quietly:

- Where have I allowed others to overstep boundaries in my life that God never intended them to cross?
- Where have I withheld honour - maybe from people I find difficult - and how might God be inviting me to see them differently?

Let's Pray Together:

“Father, thank You for being the God who both guards and gives. Teach me to set wise boundaries like Jesus did - not out of fear, but out of love. And help me to honour others the way You honour me - with grace, patience, and value. May my relationships reflect both heaven's truth and heaven's kindness. Amen.”

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Pause and let the Holy Spirit bring clarity and conviction to your heart.

1. Take Time

Silence the noise - honour begins with stillness before God.

2. Focus on God's Word

"Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves." - **Romans 12:10** (NIV)

3. Reflect

God set the ultimate boundary - His holiness - and yet invited us in through Jesus.
He calls us to honour others not based on perfection, but on position and His image in them.

Where might God be asking you to reestablish healthy boundaries?

Is there someone in your life you've found difficult to honour?

What does honour look like in your current season or relationships?

Collective EIGHT / Unity In Diversity

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world that's beautifully diverse across race, culture, language, gender, background, personality, and story. God is not colour-blind or culture-averse; in fact, He designed diversity and delights in it. But unity doesn't happen by accident. In this study, we'll explore how we can honour our differences while being united in Christ.

Unity isn't about sameness, it's about surrender. The end goal is not uniformity, but spiritual maturity: to become a people that reflect the multifaceted love and wisdom of God, in real relationship with one another.

*"Unity is not the absence of differences; it's the presence of love in the midst of them." - **Unknown***

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **John 17:20–23** (NIV) - “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you... Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”
- **Galatians 3:28** (NIV) - “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- **Ephesians 4:1–3** (NIV) - “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”
- **1 Corinthians 12:12–14** (NIV) - “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ...”

DISCOVERY

From Genesis to Revelation, God’s desire is to form a family from every nation, tribe, people, and language (Revelation 7:9). This is not an abstract idea - it’s the kind of community the Church is meant to embody right here and now. The early Church was radically inclusive: Jews and Gentiles, men and women, rich and poor, slaves and free - all made one in Christ. But that unity took effort, humility, and sacrifice.

We are invited to model this today. It means choosing love over pride, grace over judgment, and curiosity over assumption. When we embrace unity in diversity, we don’t erase our differences - we honour them under the Lordship of Jesus.

“Unity in Christ doesn’t eliminate our differences - it redeems them.” - Lecrae

DISCUSSION

Starting Questions:

- When you hear the word “unity,” what comes to mind?
- Can you recall a time when a diverse team or group brought out the best in you? What made it work?

Exploring Questions:

- Read *John 17:20–23*. Why do you think Jesus prayed for unity before going to the cross?
- According to *Ephesians 4:1–3*, what attitudes help maintain unity in the Spirit?
- How do you respond when someone’s culture, opinion, or background challenges your own assumptions?
- Read *1 Corinthians 12:12–14*. How does the image of the body help us understand our role in a diverse church?
- What’s the difference between “diversity for diversity’s sake” and God’s vision for unity in diversity?

Action Question:

- What is one practical way you can build relational bridges across difference in your life this week (at church, work, school, or home)?

DEVOTION

Reflect:

- Where might God be inviting you to grow in humility, patience, or love when it comes to those different from you?
- Are there unconscious biases or prideful walls He wants to break down in you?

Let’s Pray Together:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to make you an agent of unity - someone who reflects God’s heart for reconciliation and connection across difference.
- Pray for our church to be a house of welcome, honour, and diversity that reflects the Kingdom of God.

PERSONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

What is God saying to you?

Let the Spirit lead you into greater unity, deeper humility, and stronger love.

1. Take Time

Still your heart - unity begins when we choose to truly listen.

2. Focus on God’s Word

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit...”
- **Ephesians 4:3–4** (NIV)

3. Reflect

God celebrates diversity, He designed it. But His call is to unity, not uniformity.
In Christ, our differences aren’t erased, they’re embraced, redeemed, and used for His glory.

Are there places in your life where differences have led to distance?

How can you actively contribute to unity in your church, family, or friendships?

What does it mean to you to be part of “one body” with many parts?

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.