

STUDY GUIDE

# FRIENDSHIP

*it's complicated*



Avoid the Drama,  
Create Authentic Connection,  
and Fulfill Your Purpose Together

**A N D I   A N D R E W**

WITH JAMIE LAMSON

# FRIENDSHIP

*it's complicated*

## STUDY GUIDE

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## ***Sister, friend, fellow woman longing to uncomplicate friendships,***

*Relationships are not easy, but as we continue to walk in our God-given identities, partner with restoration and healing, and practice being intentional with one another, they can be relational glimpses of heaven on earth. I pray that together with the Holy Spirit, you will be able to walk victoriously and without shame, all the while carrying the essence of Jesus to every relationship within your life.*

*Together, we will embark on complicated relational circumstances, such as the woman wounds in our lives, feeling alone as we stand on the outside looking in, navigating betrayal, self-preservation, and breaking up with the drama. We will also uncomplicate things by going first while putting the other before ourselves, creating authentic connections, redefining our friendship circles, walking in unity as we embrace our diversity, and learning to become spiritual midwives.*

*It is my hope and prayer that as you take your time through this book and seek the Father's face, He will lead you into relational healing. That by doing the heart work in our own lives, we would be able to walk alongside those searching for the same freedom, and that we would encourage one another, as a sisterhood, to be free as we avoid the drama, create authentic connection, and fulfill our purpose together.*

***All my love,  
ANDI***

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## ***Dear friend,***

*I am so glad you are here! What an important step it is for your healing journey, both with yourself and with others. As you embark on Andi's timely and much-needed message, I encourage you to take it one step at a time. Keep your eyes locked on Jesus while being honest with yourself in this safe space, and I am confident that as you pursue healing in your relationships, you will find it. You are His beloved. He is for you, not against you, and He will restore all the broken places of your heart. Stay on the journey, sister. Freedom is on its way.*

***With you in heart and prayer,  
JAMIE***

## HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This ten-week study guide is a tool for your meditation and reflection as you wrestle with the important struggles within your relationships. I encourage you to use this as your journal for pondering, questioning, and hashing out those hard feelings and thoughts when it comes to relating to other women. My prayer for you is that as you are honest and vulnerable with the Father, His healing power would restore your relationships—both with others and with yourself.

## PERSONAL QUIET TIME

Each week is divided into five daily reflections coinciding with a portion of my book *Friendship—It's Complicated*. While each day will consistently include prayer, the sections for your personal reflection will be uniquely prompted based on your reading for that day.

### *Sections of Reflection*

#### 1. **COMMUNION** in Prayer

com•mu•nion

*intimate fellowship or rapport: COMMUNICATION*

As you start each day's healing process, you will begin by communing with the Father in prayer, seeking and partnering with Him throughout your healing journey.

#### 2. **LISTENING** Intently

lis•ten

*to hear something with thoughtful attention: give consideration*

Beginning our reflection this way allows us to practice attentive and active listening. We will sit in this space for two to five minutes.

#### 3. **CONNECTED** with Scripture

con•nect•ed

joined or linked together

Just as you are connected in your friendships, healing is connected with God and His Word. In this section, you will be given the opportunity to meditate on a verse from Scripture as you seek out God's transformational truth.

#### 4. **SINCERITY** through Questions

sin•cer•i•ty

*the quality or state of being sincere: honesty of mind*

I encourage you to answer each question with sincerity. Each question in this section aligns with your reading for the day, and your answers may be as private or open as you wish them to be.

**5. VULNERABILITY** with Ourselves through Journaling

vul•ner•a•ble

*capable of being physically or emotionally wounded*

Vulnerability is a scary but essential virtue of friendship. It requires us to be honest, open, and authentic with others, as well as with ourselves. In each journaling section, you will be given space to write your thoughts, memories, concerns, and questions regarding the relationships in your life. This is a safe place to process and be vulnerable with yourself and God as you seek healing over this area of your life.

**6. INTENTIONALITY** in Our Actions

in•tend

*to have in mind as a purpose or goal*

Being intentional in our relationships takes planning, resolve, and dedication. Some of your reflections will include small action steps for you to take so that you can practice walking out your healing. These baby steps are meant to encourage and strengthen you on this journey as you pursue the path of freedom in your friendships.

## **FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE** (Weekly Group Study: 45–60 minutes)

**7. COMMUNION:** Opening Prayer

Each weekly meetup will begin with a prompted prayer. This is flexible, and I would encourage you to pray as the Holy Spirit leads you.

**8. DISCOVER:** Icebreaker Friendship Question

One of the joys of friendship is getting to know our friends better! Each week will include a light and friendly icebreaker question. Feel free to use your own questions, and have fun learning about one another!

**9. CELEBRATE:** Share Friendship Testimonies from the Past Week

Our friendship circles help us flourish and grow with one another through connection, and we are also meant to celebrate with one another. So I encourage you to share how God is showing up in your friendships. I believe these testimonies will bring healing and encouragement to those who hear.

**10. DISCUSS:** Talk about It

During your weekly get-together, you will discuss questions that go along with your reading from the previous week. These questions are meant to enlighten you, share your experiences, and maybe encourage someone else along the way.

# Week 1, Day 1

Read Letter to the Reader (pp. 11–14)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, what a kind and gentle friend you are. Thank you for prompting my heart and spirit to seek your restorative mercy with the friendships in my life. Help me to have open eyes, open ears, and an open mind to receive all that you have for the painful places I am walking through. Thank you that your goodness and your faithfulness follow me all the days of my life. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

11. How have you seen your relationships **inform** you and **form** you?

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I've walked through a lot in friendships, good and bad, and since you're holding this book in your hands, I'm sure you have too. Truth be told, I have had to walk away from some friendships for the right reasons, because ending them was necessary for my physical, mental, and emotional health. (pp. 11–12)

12. Was there a time in your life that you needed to walk away from a friendship for your physical, mental, or emotional well-being? If so, how did you know it was time to close that chapter? What sort of emotional responses did you feel from that decision (shame, guilt, relief, etc.)?

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13. In past hurt and rejection from the women in your life, did you find it more natural to take your pain to God and allow Him to heal and restore the relationship, or did you put up a personal boundary wall, ultimately ending the friendship? Why do you think that was your response? Can you think back on any events in your life that may have swayed you one way or the other?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

**Colossians 3:12–13 NLT**

1. How have the kindness and love of God helped you in your relationships?

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2. Can you think of a time when God's heart toward you helped you to extend mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience in a relationship?

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# Week 1, Day 2

## Read Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 17–18) and The Mom Factor (pp. 18–25)

Today, we will begin to scratch the surface of the woman wound and how our own mothers may have played a significant role in that. First, let me grab you by the hand, look you in the eye, and tell you that I see you. I know from the deepest places of my daughter heart how painful this part of the journey may be. You are going to do some hard heart work, some healing, and you will come out better on the other side. You are brave, and you are loved as a sister, a friend, and a daughter of Christ.

### LISTENING INTENTLY

Before we get started, quiet your heart, thoughts, and fears. Take a deep breath and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the places where you may have experienced a woman wound. Now, listen.

### SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. What was the first woman wound you ever encountered? How old were you, and what were some of the details surrounding that?

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2. What are some of your initial physical responses to rejection or disappointment within your relationships?

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3. What are some of your greatest fears when it comes to relationships with other women?

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4. How was your relationship with your mother growing up? Have you noticed any changes as you've gotten older?

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## INTENTIONALITY IN OUR ACTIONS

In the space below, create two columns: one for your favorite memories with your mom and the other for the most painful memories. Then, invite the Holy Spirit to comfort you as He helps you remember the good things and not-so-good things about your relationship. We will come back to this list in tomorrow's study.

# Week 1, Day 3

## Read Chapter 1: Our Response to the Woman Wound (pp. 25–26)

When we have gotten negative mothering, we can begin a pattern of mistrusting for the rest of our lives. We hide our needs and vulnerability. We become combative and aggressive. To show that we can't be controlled, we control others.

Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

### LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath and ask the Holy Spirit to be your Helper and Comforter as you open your heart in this space. Then, sit quietly with Him for a few minutes.

### VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

Use the following space to journal any thoughts, emotions, or questions as you consider the woman wound your mother may have left. This journaling page is yours to use in whatever way is most helpful. Maybe you need to write a grief letter or doodle your feelings, or you may just want to make a list. I will include a list of questions to help guide you while you consider your woman wound. Remember, this is your journey.

Questions to consider:

- How has your relationship with your mom affected your life as a child? How about as an adult?
- Are there any past hurts or present hang-ups with your mother that haven't been resolved? If so, why do you think that is?
- Have you surrendered and grieved your mother wound? If so, how are you pursuing freedom and reconciliation in your heart and in your relationship with her?
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any circumstances that you are unwilling to forgive.
- Process the list you made yesterday of favorite memories and painful memories.

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# Week 1, Day 4

Read Chapter 1: From My Mama's Heart,  
in Her Words (pp. 27–29)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for your heart for reconciliation. For even when I was and am at my worst, you displayed the ultimate act of restoration by sending your Son, Jesus, to reconcile the world back to you. Soften my heart as I listen intently to your voice. Help me to find comfort and encouragement through the reconciliation of today's reading. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Andi's mom, Mavis, shares:

Beyond the specific details of parenting by emotion, I am healed enough in my own life now to own the actual tragic mistake and sins of wanting to be a great friend with my children instead of being a rock and protector, a teacher and moral guide, an example that made them proud, exemplifying the love of Christ in integrity from the core of my being. (p. 27)

1. How was your relationship with your mom? Was she more of a parent or a friend? Based on your answer, how did that affect you as a child and now into your adult life?

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The testimony of Mavis and Andi’s reconciliation is a beautiful example of the restoration power of Christ. We learned of the grace and mercy extended from both Mavis and Andi’s hearts as they participated in the hard conversation of confrontation.

2. What are your initial responses when being confronted? Do you tend to shrink back and hide, embrace the conversation, or explode?

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3. When receiving confrontation, are you open and approachable? Do others consider you to be gentle and merciful when you are engaging in conflict?

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### CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Be kind and helpful to one another, tender-hearted [compassionate, understanding], forgiving one another [readily and freely], just as God in Christ also forgave you.

**Ephesians 4:32 AMP**

4. When seeking restoration, we are to do so in Christ’s love and offer forgiveness freely. Do you find it easy to confront with kindness and compassion? Why or why not?

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## INTENTIONALITY IN OUR ACTIONS

5. What are some tangible ways you can practice walking this out in your daily life?

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### *Week 1, Day 5*

#### Read Chapter 1: Walking in Truth and Freedom (pp. 29–31)

Today, as we finish reflecting on the woman wounds in our life, we will embark on a journey of writing a grief letter. This can be written to your mother, another woman in your life, God, or even yourself.

As you get quiet before the Lord, consider your personal reflections from this week. Remember, this is a private, safe place. You may choose to share your thoughts, or you may ponder them in your heart as you continue on the journey. You may decide to send your letter, or you may write it for the sole purpose of releasing painful memories and thoughts.

Not every woman's relationship with her mother is the same. You may have an incredible relationship with your mother—praise God! Maybe you will think about writing a letter to her as an encouragement or even as a thank-you.

This journey is yours; I am just thankful to be alongside you, friend.

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Get quiet before the Holy Spirit and ask Him to flood the hurting places of your heart. Ask Him to reveal the circumstances that need healing. Then, seek His voice as you put pen to paper.



# Week 1: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 1: The Woman Wound

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to healing, engaging, and seeking restoration and reconciliation in our relationships. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for our broken places. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** Who is a famous or well-known woman you look up to? This could be a role model from your childhood or adulthood. (Female cartoon superheroes are fair game too!)

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. What qualities do you look for in meaningful friendships? Is it easy or challenging for you to offer those same qualities in return? Why do you think that is?
2. Do you remember your first woman wound? How has that affected you in your friendships today?
3. How has your relationship with your mother affected your friendships?
4. Did your mother take ownership of her actions, or did she assume the role of the victim? How have you seen that affect your life now as an adult woman?
5. How has your relationship with your mother informed you, in good ways or bad, as to how you connect in female friendship? What steps can you take to break any unhealthy cycles as you become aware of them?



# Week 2, Day 1

Read Chapter 2: Introduction (pp. 33–36)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the gift of friendship, and that even before the creation of the world, you showed us your beautiful example of communion with the Son and Holy Spirit. Be near to me this week as I dig deeper into the wounds of my relationships, past and present. Prepare my heart for what is to come. Thank you for being my faithful friend. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Do you thrive on making new friends, or does it seem to paralyze you? Share an example of what happened.

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2. Some women feel elated and energized when meeting new people, while others feel anxious and troubled. What are your body's physical responses to meeting new people?

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I had been invited to an intimate luncheon at the Plaza Hotel of all places with ten other women who were doing great things in the city, and I was more nervous than I remember being for a long time. Why was the potential of making a new girlfriend or group of girlfriends so intense? Why was anxiety mounting at neck-rash levels and the desire to perform ever so slightly rising up, all while the need to put on my imaginary suit of “Don’t get too close, though” armor was coming upon me like a flock of hungry seagulls? (p. 33)

3. Is your default response to think “Don’t get too close, though,” and if so, why do you think that is? Can you think of a circumstance in your past relationships or a traumatic experience you have walked through that may have affected your ability to open up?

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4. Think about your core friendships—your inner circle. What are some things you have walked through that solidified trust and enabled you to let your guard down? What circumstances, good or bad, come to mind?

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## INTENTIONALITY IN OUR ACTIONS

1. Reach out to a woman in your inner circle. Thank her for being a safe place where you can be your true self—no protective armor necessary.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a friend to you—this could be an acquaintance, a Facebook friend, or even a neighbor. Text or message them to let them know you’re thinking about them, and ask how you can pray for them. Be intentional about building relationships outside of your core friendships.





# Week 2, Day 3

Read Chapter 2: Know Yourself (pp. 37–43)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

Father, be near to my heart and mind as I explore more of my story. Help me to grieve, celebrate, and process every memory, thought, and feeling as I seek healing in my relationships, as well as within myself. Thank you, Father, for being my healer, restorer, and comforter in all things. I love you. Amen.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Are there any barriers you are aware of that you have personally placed within and around your friendships? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal them to you and write them down.

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2. How have you seen your flaws affect the people and relationships around you? Now, think about your closest friends: what has been your biggest obstacle to accepting their flaws within your relationship?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well.

**Psalm 139:14 CSB**

1. What is your Enneagram number? If you have taken the test, do you feel that your number is accurate to who you are?

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2. God's Word says that you are remarkably and wondrously made. Do you believe this in every circumstance, or do you tend to struggle with this truth? Why do you think that is? Write down some reasons that come to mind.

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Did you know that the Hebrew word *shalom* means completeness and wholeness? We often associate shalom with peace—inner peace, peace from war, or calmness—when it actually means restoring things to how they should be. On page 41, Andi says, “He is always knocking on the door of our hearts, ready to recover and restore us to a new normal.”

As we understand this, let's look at Isaiah 61:1–3:

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of despair.

3. What is God revealing to you as you ponder this Scripture passage? Do you feel the hope as He is knocking on your heart's door?

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# Week 2, Day 4

## Read Chapter 2: Know Yourself, continued (pp. 37–43)

Today, we will dig into the sacred places of our hearts and reflect more on how our mother wounds have affected our roles in other friendships and relationships. While this exercise may be painful, the restorative work you are putting in will help you in your healing journey. I am so proud of you, friend.

### LISTENING INTENTLY

Ask the Holy Spirit to quiet your emotions and thoughts as you wade through more of your mother wound. Remember that just as He reveals painful things in order for us to be made new, He also comforts us along the way. So take a deep breath and be still.

### VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

It's also important that we think about how our female relational history comes into play with regard to openly being ourselves in friendship. I mean, we all have a mother; otherwise we wouldn't exist. But remember the woman wound that we've already addressed? This is in the mix as we step into friendship. Take stock again: What was that relationship like? Was it picture-perfect or fraught with strife? Was it cordial and cold, void of emotion or connection? Or was it steeped in deep love and good memories, albeit imperfect? Maybe it had jealousy and competition at its core, void of nurture. Or possibly abandonment—the ultimate betrayal of a mother-daughter relationship—rejection at a deep level that brings about mistrust of women in general. (p. 39)

1. After reading the above quote, spend time journaling which needs echo from your heart. How have you seen these voids affect your friendships with other women?

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# Week 2, Day 5

Read Chapter 2: Women Helping Women,  
Not Women Hurting Women (pp. 43–48)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for being a God of restoration. Thank you for your reconciliation power through your Son, Jesus. Father, thank you that healing is for now and is not only physical but also emotional, mental, and spiritual. Be with me as I ponder my own relationships and seek all the broken things to be made new. You are faithful, and I believe that if you said it, you will do it. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. What circumstances from your past have you blamed for your inability to move forward?

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2. In painful situations, do you tend to choose isolation over connection? How does the pain of connection with imperfect humans differ from the pain of isolation in your life?

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3. Why do you think it's easy to talk about the pain from men in our lives while neglecting the woman wounds that have deeply affected us? How are the wounds from men different from the wounds from women?

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# Week 2: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 2: On the Outside Looking In

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of women who are pursuing the healing of their scars and offering a safe place for those around them to do the same. You are such a faithful Father who provides comfort for the hurting places of our souls. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** Have you ever broken a bone? What was your favorite and least favorite part of recovery?

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. Do you enjoy small talk? What do you enjoy about it? What are the things that make you want to crawl out of your skin?
2. What are some of the good works that God has called you to in your life? Do you find yourself comparing your life with those around you through Instagram posts, friendship groups, or at church? Why do you think that is?
3. What is your Enneagram number? Do you feel that your number is accurate to who you are?
4. What aspects of your personality and your unique makeup as a being created in the image of God do you love? Go ahead and BRAG on yourself—you're amazing!
5. How has the pain from other women stopped you from championing women today? Why do you think that is?

# Week 3, Day 1

Read Chapter 3: Introduction (pp. 49–51)  
and King David or Judas? (pp. 51–57)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for your Son, Jesus, and His unconditional and extraordinary mercy and grace. Thank you for your perfect example of true forgiveness and reconciliation, even toward a sinner like me. Be with me and strengthen my heart as I ponder and seek the circumstances and roles where I have violated trust and exhibited betrayal. I surrender to your will, your reconciliation, and your love. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a circumstance where you experienced a significant betrayal? What was your initial response?

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2. Do you find it easy to slide into survival mode when faced with challenging situations? How is it helpful in the moment? How can it be detrimental over time?

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# Week 3, Day 3

Read Chapter 3: Grief Is Not Your Enemy (pp. 58–62)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the emotions you have placed within me to serve as indicators of healing that needs to take place. Be with me as I explore where in my life I have yet to experience the necessary grief required to heal. Give me the courage to dig deep into the places of my heart that may be too burdensome to bear. Come close and comfort my hurting places, Father. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Are there any areas in your life that have not been appropriately processed and are now grounds for a hardened heart and grief? In what thoughts, opinions, and relationships do you feel cynical?

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2. Can you name any high idealistic hopes for building relationships with other women? How have those expectations fallen short in the past? Are there any situations that have given you hope beyond what you could see—either from the hard work of relational healing or through personal reflection?

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3. Is there a time in your life when you had to walk out the five stages of grief? How did you process the:

Denial

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Anger

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Bargaining

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Depression

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Acceptance

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4. We experience grief for more than the loss of a loved one. It can show up with any major or minor life event, which includes betrayal or broken trust of any kind. Knowing this, are you more likely to see life experiences through a lens of grief? In what smaller events have you felt the weight of grief but didn't label it as such because of what society or family and friends would think?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

What expectations did you have for your life that may not be panning out the way you planned? Take a deep breath, close your eyes, and focus on how your body feels. Maybe you feel sadness, panic, numbness, or anger. Write these feelings down as the physical act of acknowledging that full grief needs to manifest. Then, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your first step.

# Week 3, Day 4

Read Chapter 3: Love, Love, and More Love (pp. 62–64)

## LISTEN INTENTLY

Ask the Holy Spirit to meet you in the holy place of His presence. Ask Him to show you what His love looks like as you love others in your life and also what His love looks like as He loves you. Sit here for two minutes.

## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

First Corinthians 13:4–8 lists the aspects of biblical love. This is how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit love, and as followers of Christ, it is how we should love.

Each love trait is listed below. As you ponder each one, think about where you need this specific aspect of God's love, as well as how you can extend love to someone in that area.

1. Love is patient.
2. Love is kind.
3. Love does not envy.
4. Love does not boast.
5. Love is not proud.
6. Love does not dishonor others.
7. Love is not self-seeking.
8. Love is not easily angered.
9. Love keeps no records of wrongs.
10. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth.
11. Love always protects.
12. Love always trusts.
13. Love always hopes.
14. Love always perseveres.
15. Love never fails.

## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

As you consider each aspect of love and how it applies to your relationship with God and others, I would encourage you to pray over one trait for the next fifteen days. Then, in your quiet time with God, seek His heart, receive His love, and let His overflow pour out to those in your life who need it most.

Friend, this is no small feat. You are breaking relational strongholds while portraying a reflection of His love. I am so proud of you!

# Week 3, Day 5

Read Chapter 3: A Quick Word on Boundaries (pp. 64–67)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, you created the heavens and the earth, animals and humans, and fruit that was good to eat. Thank you for boundaries from the very beginning. Help me navigate the messiness of relationships—in both what I am and what I am not responsible for. Give me wisdom, courage, and discernment as I walk forward toward my side of the fence. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Do you find that boundaries in relationships are easy or hard? Why do you think that is?

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As you navigate betrayal in friendship, you have to get clear on what you own and what the other person owns. I mean, to make this relevant right now, ask yourself if, in the last thirty days, you have tried to fix something for someone that wasn't (emotionally or even practically) yours to fix. Maybe you've tried to clean up their mess for them or carry a burden that wasn't yours to carry. Have you taken responsibility for someone's moods, actions, or words when it was actually out of your hands to do so? Have you said yes to something or someone when you meant or wanted to say no? (p. 64)

2. Which one of the above boundary circumstances do you most relate to? Can you identify this pattern from your home life as a child? What family dynamic is coming to mind?

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3. Have you ever had to set boundaries in place for a relationship that was no longer safe or healthy?  
How did the other person react?

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Andi shared a few reasons why boundaries matter. As we consider this, list reasons why they are important for you and those walking alongside you.

1. Boundaries are about valuing ourselves and others.

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2. Boundaries inform us.

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3. Boundaries protect us.

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# Week 3: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 3: Navigating Betrayal

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to healing and seeking ownership through grieving and boundaries in the unexpected. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for our broken places. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** We all have ways to recharge when we are feeling empty. What is your favorite method of self-care that fills your soul, heart, and body when you are feeling low? (Your answer can be anything from reading to taking a midday nap to painting your toenails!)

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor." How do you think this quote applies to our relationships in general and to your life specifically?
2. Have you ever regretted allowing someone to get close to you when they hurt you? Why was this situation so painful? Were there any unspoken expectations that were betrayed?
3. Who is the spiritual mother in your life that you feel safe enough reaching out to when you are in the valley? What qualities make her a safe place?
4. Which aspect of biblical love from 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 is easiest for you to extend to others? Which one is the hardest?
5. Andi encourages us that, "Their issues (whoever they are) are not my issues. They are not for me to fix and they are not for me to carry." Does knowing that you are responsible for your own side of the fence bring you peace and relief, or does it fill you with chaos and dread? Why?

# Week 4, Day 1

Read Chapter 4: Introduction (pp. 69–74)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for your grace and mercy. Thank you that I don't have to hide anything in my life from you, because you know it all anyway! Holy Spirit, help me to walk genuinely and transparently with those in my life. I don't want to partner with fear and dark corners. Thank you for loving all of me, and thank you for the people in my life who do too. Amen.*

## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

We're all scaling the mountain of our own brokenness to step into our inheritance. You can either charge the mountain with us or circle the bottom and watch. (p. 69)

Take a few minutes to sit with Andi's quote. Then journal some thoughts and memories that come to mind. Here are some questions to get you started:

- What does it look like to scale the mountain of your own brokenness? What steps and tools are needed to help you?
- Are there any relationships in your life where you were going after your part of the healing while the other person watched? How did that make you feel, and how did it affect the dynamic of the relationship?
- In the past, how did it feel to do the hard work of scaling the mountains of your brokenness?
- How did it feel to circle the bottom and watch or sit stagnant?
- Is there anyone in your life who has prevented you from scaling the mountain?

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Self-preservation is willfully choosing the pain of isolation over the potential of messy godly connection.

Andi Andrew

1. Do you find it easier to choose isolation over the potential of messy relationships? Why?

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2. In what relationships have you chosen self-preservation by covering your nakedness and shame with your own fig leaves? Be honest in this safe space.

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Social media is a great place to post filter-perfect snapshots of our day. But may I challenge you, friend? Today, I encourage you to post one real-life, nitty-gritty picture—the real you living your real life. Not only could it spur on someone else, but you might even encounter a life-changing connection. So let's be authentic and allow friends to see the real us.

# Week 4, Day 2

Read Chapter 4: Introduction, continued (pp. 69–74)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a few minutes and sit with the Holy Spirit. Take heart, daughter, that He knows every anxious thought and every fear that you cling to when it comes to showing others the real you. Ask Him to reveal the specific relationships where this picture-perfect mindset hides. I believe He will bring His illuminating revelation into the dark places where you self-preserve.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Has your self-preservation and the fear that comes along with it affected relationships in your life? Who are the people who always try to keep your “emotional thermostat” at a comfortable 70 degrees?

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I didn't have time to cover up my mess. Everyone saw it in all its glory. These are the spirals I fear. The ones I try to avoid. This is what I'm most afraid of. You seeing my incompetence as a mother, as a homemaker, as a wife, as a human. With no time to cover it up, self-preserve, smile, or wave. This is why we can't get too close, why we can't be friends . . . because you might peek behind the curtain and see this hot mess. (p. 73)

2. What areas of your life do you try to cover up and wrap in a perfectly tied social media bow? What are you afraid to show to those around you?

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3. When you find yourself in the downward spiral of self-preservation, how does your body physically react?

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4. Do you find that you can remain calm and collected in times of stress, or do you default to chaos and become unhinged? Why do you think that is? What are you fearful about?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come help me." But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42 NLT)

1. How did Martha differ from Mary? What were their unique strengths and weaknesses when it came to their relationship with Jesus?

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2. How did Martha respond to Mary sitting at Jesus's feet? Do you think Martha was partnering with self-preservation?

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# Week 4, Day 3

Read Chapter 4: Going Back to Move Forward (pp. 74–77)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for being near as I think about my childhood wounds, bents, and learned responses. As I dig in further, take me by the hand and lead me to your way, the better way, in how I relate within my relationships. Thank you for your comfort, your peace, and your direction. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. What was your childhood like? Describe one of your favorite memories. What do you remember most about how your family handled chaotic circumstances?

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Even today, I recognize that, under stress, these tendencies can still pop up for me. They've become rumble strips, warning me that I'm veering off the road of life into unhelpful places—for me and my loved ones. Deep down, I still sometimes have a desire to control everything, create peaceful environments (untouchable by humans—which isn't true peace), and make sure that everyone feels loved and seen, including myself. I also know that if I don't have a strategy in place, one small thing, like spilled coffee or water, can cause my personal universe to fly into chaos, making me feel like an utter failure when the truth is, all I need to do is take a moment, breathe, let myself be loved, and walk in grace. (p. 75)

2. Can you think of a recent time when one small thing caused you to go over the edge? What happened? Who was with you, and how did they react to it? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what the underlying problem was, and journal it out.

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3. How have you seen God restore your heart and sit with you in the small things that may have seemed chaotic at the moment? How has He proved faithful and trustworthy in the journey? If you can't recall a time, ask Him to reveal what He has promised and hold Him to it.

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

You have searched me, LORD,  
and you know me.  
You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.  
You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.  
Before a word is on my tongue  
you, LORD, know it completely.  
You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.  
Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?

**(Psalm 139:1-7)**

What truth are you clinging to from this passage? What is bringing you hope?

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# Week 4, Day 4

## Read Chapter 4: The Slippery Slope of Self-Preservation— How Did I Get Here? (pp. 77–79)

Today, we will be pondering where in our lives and relationships we have defaulted into self-preservation mode. Awareness is needed for the journey ahead. It may be uncomfortable, but it will be worth it.

### LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath and ask the Holy Spirit to meet you in this space and to illuminate and reveal answers to difficult questions. Ask Him to show you circumstances that fit in the friendship puzzle we are trying to navigate. Stay here for a few minutes.

### SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Who have you invited into your inner circle and given permission to speak into your life—good or bad?

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2. What did the process look like in this particular friendship that awarded her that space? (We all know that refining friendship fire—it takes time, trial, and trust.)

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3. When was the last time this friend approached you to speak truth and ask the hard-hitting questions? What did your life look like? Were there any transitions of pain, isolation, or struggle that you were walking through?

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4. Have you been granted permission to speak into another friend's life in this manner? If so, when was the last time you had to have a hard conversation with her? Was it easy, or did it feel like pulling teeth?

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5. Ponder with me for a moment: What do you think the difference is between self-preservation and holy surrender?

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In that particular season, it was a slippery slope that looked right, felt right, and honestly at the time was right. I was doing a lot of good work, but I needed a holy chiropractic adjustment to walk in alignment again. I had veered off course. I'm not supposed to stop parenting, writing, speaking, leading, and all the things, but I'm also not meant to hide behind them so that I can live a life void of meaningful, messy connection. (pp. 78–79)

6. Where in your own life do you feel the weight of your responsibilities and the pull to step out into the calling God has for you? Are you tempted to hide behind these responsibilities until a better time comes along? Ask God to reveal the passions He has placed in your heart. Then, as you jot these things down, dream with Him!

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

What do you know about yourself? And who do you need to allow close enough to tell you what you don't know about yourself? If you don't already have one, invite a friend into the vulnerable places by asking them to peek behind the curtain of your hot mess.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a friend to you, and ask that friend to speak into your life—good things and bad! Take God's hand; He will lead you!

# Week 4, Day 5

Read Chapter 4: Intimacy with Jesus Takes Us  
out of Unholy Isolation (pp. 79–85)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath. Ask the Father to tell you one thing that He loves about you. Write it down.

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## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Is your first instinct to lean into healthy connection or to run the other way? Why do you think that is?

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2. How have you seen your relationship with Jesus impact this first instinct in your relationships?

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3. Because we are beautifully complex—body, soul, and spirit—we can't expect others to meet the needs that only God can. What expectations have you placed on those closest to you that only God can meet?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30–31)

Why do you think it is essential that we love God with our whole self before we love others?

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

Let’s take some time to journal the importance of first resting in God’s love before extending love to others. Feel free to ponder the following questions:

- Do you believe you are loved by God as His favorite daughter?
- In what ways have you been wonderfully made? (Psalm 139:13–18)
- How has God’s love affected your ability to love yourself and others?
- How are you tangibly investing in an intimate relationship with God?
- Do you find it easy to rest and operate from God’s love? Why or why not?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Read Psalm 139 again. What speaks to you? What makes you frustrated? What don’t you understand? Do you feel like you can receive this truth, or do you still need certain verses to become lived revelation? Write all this down and ask God to help you.

# Week 4: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 4: The Truth about Self-Preservation

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to healing, engaging, and seeking your love in their relationships. You are such a faithful Father who empowers us to bring our identities as your daughters to every aspect of our lives. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** Who was your first best friend? What is your favorite memory of this friendship?

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. What is your greatest fear in relationships?
2. As you consider a time when you chose to be completely yourself—imperfections and all—do you think it bonded the relationship or sent the other person running the opposite direction? Why do you think we always assume others will run when they see the real us?
3. Thinking about your childhood, did you hide from, perform for, or care for the ones living in your house? Did you carry any of those tendencies into adulthood?
4. What are your defaults when leaning on the crutch of self-preservation? Do you keep your calendar full, take up a new hobby and obsess over it, or get quiet on social media? What is your self-preservation method of choice?
5. Read Psalm 139 together as a group. What is one portion from this passage that speaks to your heart?



# Week 5, Day 1

Read Chapter 5: Introduction (pp. 87–91)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you that you are a perfect friend. Even though this world is saturated in drama, you are steady and sure. Be with me as I navigate the unhealthy dramas within my relationships, both from others and my own natural tendencies. Reveal the path set before me and show me your perfect ways. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. In your current friendships with women, have you noticed a contrast between those who build you up versus those who tear you down? List one friendship example for each and what you noticed about each one.

A friend who builds me up:

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A friend who tears me down:

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2. Can you think of a relationship in your life that ended because someone “unfollowed” you? This can be in real life or in the social media realm. What drama followed? Were there word exchanges, brewed resentment, or a silent exit? How did that make you feel?

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

Think of a time in your life—maybe it’s right now—when you have focused on the “friends” who have sucked the life, joy, and peace right out of you. You will know this by constant obsessive thoughts and feeling anxious inside. What were some red flags in that relationship that showed you it wasn’t good for you? Maybe it’s a new wound. Ask the Holy Spirit to meet you and comfort your heart as you navigate this relationship. Ask Him to reveal His truth over you as you sort through the lies.

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Key #1: Locate (because they already exist) some friends in real life (not on social media) who won’t unfollow you, no matter how hard or dark things get. Don’t focus on the ones that aren’t with you; focus on the ones that are. (p. 88)

1. My grandmother used to talk about “true-blue friends” when I would sit at her kitchen table on Saturday afternoons. Maybe she was on to something. A true-blue friend never leaves, judges, or painfully insults, but stays with you in the hard things, encourages you, and loves you at all times. A true-blue friend “sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). As you consider this, make a list of who are your true-blue friends and how they have shown up for you in real life.

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Key #2: Consider how you can intentionally break unhealthy thought patterns and cycles in your life. What does this practically look like for you on a daily basis? How can you start today (i.e., deleting/never downloading or ever using “Who unfollowed me?” apps)? (p. 88)

2. Use the space below to list any intentional habits or thought patterns and game plans you will implement to break up with those things that are causing drama in your life.

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# Week 5, Day 2

Read Chapter 5: Drama and Our Desperate Need  
for Jesus (pp. 91–93)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your heart and your spirit about how Jesus engaged in relationships with His disciples. Ask Him to reveal a friendship or relationship that may be festering with drama, and seek His heart for boldness and discernment in how to confront the things that may be robbing you of your joy.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Which disciple do you most relate to? Why?

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2. What does it look like to keep Jesus at the center of your relationships? What are some things you can begin to get in the habit of doing that will help you?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mark 9:35)

1. The disciples were arguing over who was the greatest. Why do you think they did that?

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2. What does it look like to be a servant or to be last in your friendships? (Note: Biblical servanthood is not the same as being a doormat.)

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

Jesus shows us that He doesn't let drama slip by; He addresses it head-on and sometimes it gets awkward. He doesn't ignore it; He speaks to it. He knows it's a part of the human story, but it doesn't get to dominate the conversation or have the last word. (pp. 92–93)

Consider the quote above and journal your thoughts to the following questions:

- How does Jesus show us the way to walk in genuine friendship?
- In the Gospels, what ways do you see Jesus confront drama?
- What dramas in your friendships are bringing you the most discouragement?  
Ask God to reveal a circumstance and ask Him for a solution.
- In what ways are you personally bringing drama to a relationship?  
Maybe it is out of your own bents and negative cyclical thinking. Be honest.

# Week 5, Day 3

Read Chapter 5: Green Rooms, Gossip, and Games (pp. 93–98)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, guide me as I partner with my kingdom identity in friendships. Help me and empower me to bring love, honor, and truth to every conversation I encounter. Thank you for your Word and your revelation when it comes to walking out relationships well and bringing your restoration light to the broken places. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a circumstance where you forgot who you were and acted like someone else? What happened?

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2. Why did you feel it was necessary to act like someone else or to not be your whole self?

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Be the awkward, unchanged person in the room who brings conviction by not entering into the games. Don't enter into gossip, slander, and conversations that degrade or hurt others. As a matter of fact, hit these head-on like Jesus would, with questions or comments like "Have you talked to that person yet about what you're telling me?" or "I feel uncomfortable talking about them when they're not here." (p. 96)

3. If you find yourself faced with a situation where gossip and slander may be lurking around the corner, what are some intentional things you can do to stop it in its tracks?

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- Thinking about your friendships, what do you think would happen if we felt empowered to live from our identity, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

- Read Proverbs 6:16–19. Why do you think gossip and slander are listed here? What does this say to you about how you should engage in relationships?

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- Read Ephesians 4:29–32. Then, comparing it with Proverbs 6:16–19, what are some action steps you can take in being accountable to God and others when it comes to redirecting any engagement in gossip, slander, or lies?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Key #3: Choose honesty (with yourself and others) and integrity over games and image. Self-reflect to see where you've been complicit in gossip, slander, or games. Where do you need to be powerful and repent, apologize, or make things right? Where do you need to stop blaming environments (aka the green rooms of life or the church you went to or your work environment) for why you act the way you do? You don't need this drama in your life, and you can take ownership of, change, and/or step away from unhealthy ecosystems. You are powerful enough to make things right—don't wait for someone else to make the first move. (pp. 97–98)

# Week 5, Day 4

Read Chapter 5: Insecurity, Jealousy, and Competition (pp. 98–101)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, I am sorry for the times that I have partnered with insecurity, jealousy, and competition. Your Word says that we are all fearfully and wonderfully made in your image to do your good and pleasing work. Help me to uncover any roots of pride that I have hidden within my relationships. Thank you for your mercy, grace, and the giving of your Spirit who reveals your truth. Amen.*

## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

Consider the friendships you have now. How have you experienced insecurity, jealousy, and competition within the boundaries of those relationships?

Insecurity

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Jealousy

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Competition

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## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

As you consider your motives within relationships, honestly answer these questions to check your heart.

1. Does my motivation to succeed stem from God's purposes or from my selfish ambitions? (Ecclesiastes 4:4)

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2. Do I find myself paying attention to the good work in front of me or comparing my path to others around me? (Galatians 6:4)

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3. Am I partnering with contentment in what God has called me to, or am I constantly questioning the season God has me in? (Romans 9:20-21)

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4. Do I feel the need to justify myself, or do I trust that God is my vindicator? (Luke 16:15)

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5. Am I doing something to appear gifted, talented, or better than someone else, or am I keeping the interests of others in mind? (Philippians 2:3-4)

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6. Am I operating in the works of the flesh (jealousy, rivalry, anger, division, etc.), or am I flourishing in the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)? (Galatians 5:19-23)

## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Refer back to the HALTS acronym on page 99. Write this acronym on a sticky note and place it somewhere you will see every day (e.g., a bathroom mirror, over the kitchen sink, on the dashboard of your car). Check in with yourself each day and ask yourself if you feel hurt, angry, lonely, tired, or stressed. Invite the Holy Spirit to partner with you in the day ahead, asking Him to keep you aware and accountable for your actions, thoughts, and words. If you find that you are having a hard time, journal your thoughts.



# Week 5, Day 5

Read Chapter 5: What about Catastrophizing and Self-Sabotage (pp. 101–4), The Root of It All: Fear of Man (or Woman) (p. 105), and Radical Ownership (p. 106)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

As we begin to close up week 5, let's get quiet with the Holy Spirit. Thank Him for the healing heart work He is doing in your life. Then, invite Him into your space as we tackle some questions that may be hard to answer.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Catastrophizing is an irrational thought a lot of us have in believing that something is far worse than it actually is. Catastrophizing can generally take two different forms: making a catastrophe out of a current situation and imagining making a catastrophe out of a future situation.

**Dr. John M. Grohol**

1. Take a minute and look at your current friendships. Are there any scenarios that you may be catastrophizing or exaggerating? List them below.

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2. Who do you trust to help you sort out the negative thoughts from the truth? If you don't have someone, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a friend you can trust. Write her name below.

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# Week 5: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 5: It's Time to Break Up with Drama

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to healing, engaging, and taking ownership of their part of the drama in their relationships. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for our broken places. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** What was your favorite fashion trend as a young girl? Feel free to describe the whole outfit. It's a vibe!

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. What is your love language? How do you think our love languages affect our friendships and the people we try to rally around us?
2. Which is your favorite Jesus-disciple relationship and why? How can you relate?
3. Why do you think it is dangerous to conform in relationships? List a few reasons.
4. How has today's culture persuaded you that you need to look or act a certain way to influence others around you or to fit in?
5. Do you tend to overdramatize circumstances in your relationships? Either way, can you think back to a childhood memory where this response stems from?

# Week 6, Day 1

Read Chapter 6: Introduction (pp. 109–11)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the restoration power of Jesus! Thank you for intentionally setting boundaries around relationships from the very beginning. Thank you for your living, active Word that shows us how to love others well and for Jesus's example of how to do life within the circle of friendship. Help me as I choose to be intentional with those around me. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Philippians 2:3–4 says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Why do you think, in our relationships, we have to choose to go first? How does this parallel with the verses from Philippians?

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2. Can you think of a time when you had to go first, even though the other person was the ultimate offender in the relationship? How did you feel, and what was the outcome?

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3. Who do you need to forgive? If no one comes to mind, sit with the Holy Spirit and let Him direct you.

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4. Andi shares that when she is getting to know a friend on a deeper level, she loves to ask, “What fills you with holy anger, like really fires you up?” What about you? What is something you are passionate about that, when violated, really fires you up?

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

The only way we change is to own our lives, our stories, our drama. The drama we find ourselves in and the drama we create. One of the key ways we can resolve issues in our lives or relationships is to acknowledge and own our part of the story. (p. 110)

- Do you find that acknowledging your own part of the story is easy or hard to do? Why or why not?
- What are some things you need to do on your end to resolve an issue in a friendship?
- What part of the story do you need to own?

# Week 6, Day 2

Read Chapter 6: Go First to Forgive and Say Sorry (pp. 111–15)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Today we are going to look inward at the possibilities for why it may be hard to forgive. Get quiet before the Lord and invite Him to meet you where you are. Ask Him to reveal the shadows and hidden places of your heart where you may be hiding any pride or selfishness when it comes to forgiving first. Stay in this posture for a few minutes.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. What is your default response in an argument? Are you quick with a rebuttal, or do you withdraw and get quiet? Do you regret it afterward?

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2. In Romans 7:15, Paul writes, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate to do.” As you consider this verse and how it pertains to your relationships, what do you do that you know you shouldn’t do? Where do you struggle?

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So, what's your hurdle? Our Enneagram number, DISC profile (generally, our personality type), upbringing, past friendship issues, social status, and a thousand other factors cannot be our perpetual excuse for why we don't change, grow, and begin to create authentic connection. (p. 113)

3. What is your hurdle? Knowing this, how can you be intentional with training yourself in both understanding your personality and understanding how you should walk in the Spirit? What things can you implement in your healing journey and daily life to renew your mind and spirit?

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4. Andi says, "The evidence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us is the fruit of the Spirit outside of us." Knowing that the Holy Spirit lives inside of you, do you feel less pressure to pridefully perform and have more desire to partner with Him? Do you see evidence of His fruit, which causes us to go first, or human fruit, which defends our pride?

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

When it comes to loving others, what part of 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 is the hardest to walk out (see pp. 112–13)? Journal all that applies.

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Who do you need to forgive?

*Disclaimer: Is the person you've forgiven producing "fruit in keeping with repentance" (Luke 3:8)? If not, you can still love them from afar, set firm boundaries, and forgive as many times as you need to. But if their life lacks the fruit of repentance and ownership, you can lovingly keep your distance.*

# Week 6, Day 3

Read Chapter 6: Go First to Give Grace (pp. 116–19)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for your Son. Thank you for providing the ram in the thicket when we had no other way out. Jesus, thank you for showing us how to love, forgive, and extend grace to those who have wronged us. Thank you for giving me the grace that I never deserved. Be near me today as I consider the cost of this mercy. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. How has someone recently extended grace to you when you didn't deserve it?

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2. Have you recently extended grace to someone else when they didn't deserve it? What happened? How did you feel?

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Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.

John Newton, "Amazing Grace" (1779)

3. What does this line from the hymn "Amazing Grace" mean to you? What picture do you see when you think of God's amazing grace?

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# Week 6, Day 4

## Read Chapter 6: Go First to Set Boundaries and Expectations (pp. 119–24)

### COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you that from the beginning of the world, you were showing and teaching us how to live with boundaries. From the garden of Eden to the final words of Revelation, you have displayed your intentions for healthy boundaries, and through your precious Son, Jesus, we have a blueprint for walking in healthy relationships. So help me today as I seek your face and ask for your help in identifying where my relationships may be lacking. Thank you for being my friend. Amen.*

### SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think it is important to set boundaries and verbalize expectations?

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2. Have you been in a relationship where expectations weren't verbally expressed? What happened?

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3. Andi writes, "In my opinion and from what I've learned, the definition of unsafe is when someone wants to communicate their feelings and expectations of you without allowing you to do the same" (p. 122). Can you think of an unsafe relationship? What makes it feel that way?

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4. Where have you been an unsafe friend? Why do you think that is?

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5. Do you follow through with what you say you're going to do and what you won't do? If not, in what relationship is it the hardest to walk this out? Why do you think that is?

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6. If your default is not to honor what you say you will or won't do, where do you think this stems from?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Here you will have the opportunity to practice creating boundaries and expectations in friendship. As you are intentional, your heart and soul will flourish in healing.

**Starter #1:** Communicate and speak your expectations.

Use sentences that start with "I feel," "I think," "I would like," "I am going to," and "I am willing to." These sentence starters allow you to take responsibility for your half of the relationship!

**Starter #2:** Ask your friend to communicate her feelings and expectations to you.

Practice active listening. Let her speak without interrupting, and when she is finished, recap what you heard her say.

**Starter #3:** Do what you say you are going to do.

"A simple 'Yes' or 'No' will suffice. Anything beyond this springs from a deceiver" (Matthew 5:37 TPT).

# Week 6, Day 5

## Read Chapter 6: Go First to Free Their Future (pp. 124–26)

As we continue our conversation from yesterday and begin to reflect on what it looks like to let a friendship go, let's seek the face of our good, good Father and ultimate Friend.

### LISTENING INTENTLY

Invite the Holy Spirit to sit with you as your Comforter, your Friend, and your Mighty Counselor. As you prepare to be still before the Lord, ask Him to reveal the relationships you don't want to release and why that may be. Stay in this moment for however long you need to.

### CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Faithful are the wounds of a friend [who corrects out of love and concern], but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful [because they serve his hidden agenda]. (Proverbs 27:6 AMP)

1. Have you experienced the wounds of a safe friend? Did it strengthen or weaken your friendship? How?

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2. How do you think the “wounds of a friend” differ from the “kisses of an enemy”?

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3. In your own life, what circumstances have you walked out as a result of “kisses” from someone you considered a friend?

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## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. How do you handle transition? Do you welcome it with arms wide open, or do you run for the hills? Why do you think you respond this way?

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2. What do you think are the heavenly and earthly purposes of transition?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

When it's a one-way street or when someone wants to make you their punching bag, that's often an unsafe relationship. Their motive doesn't appear to be love but instead to be right, with no desire to reconcile, just to be heard. (p. 122)

It is *okay* to step away from a relationship where the other person refuses to accept your apology or continues to make you pay for your offenses against them (see Matthew 18:21-35). Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where in your relationships you have been clinging too much in hopes that the other person will come around. Take some time to pray for that person and your own heart as you consider letting them go.

Friend, this is some hard heart work. You are doing amazing. Stay the course and continue to pursue God's reconciliation on earth as it is in heaven.

# Week 6: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 6: No, You Go First

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to healing, engaging, and seeking restoration and reconciliation as we decide to put others before ourselves. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for the broken places in our friendships. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** Describe your ideal girls' night. It could be Girls' Night Out, Girls' Night In, Girls' Road Trip, Girls' Day at the Spa—anything is fair game!

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. What is your biggest hurdle when going first in forgiving or saying "I'm sorry"?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–8. Which one of these virtues of love is the hardest for you to walk out in your relationships? Why?
3. When did you first experience God's grace? Where were you, and how did you feel?
4. Who in your life displays a beautiful example of extending grace? What are some things about her that draw you into a relationship with her?
5. How have you seen God flourish your faith in transition? This can be anything from a relationship to a life event, and even within your walk with Him.

# Week 7, Day 1

Read Chapter 7: Introduction (pp. 127–29)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the people you have intersected with my life. Thank you for the women you have given me for life and those who were with me for a season. Be near to me as I navigate any unloving or selfish motives from within these connections. Help me serve well, love well, and be a reflection of your Son, Jesus, in every relationship. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: “What! You too? I thought I was the only one.”

C. S. Lewis

1. Authentic, organic friendship occurs when we can relate to another on a heartfelt level. How does this kind of relationship differ from one that may feel forced?

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2. With whom in your life have you experienced authentic friendship? What connected you to each other?

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3. With whom in your life have you tried to force relationship? What frustrating circumstances evolved from that?

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# Week 7, Day 2

Read Chapter 7: Intentionality (pp. 130–32)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath and ask the Holy Spirit to come and sit with you in this moment. As you consider intentionality in your friendships and relationships, ask Him to shine His light on the places you may have neglected. Seek Him as you think about how you can be more intentional with the hearts of those He has placed in your life.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Imagine you hire an architect to put together plans to build your new house. You're not going to tell them to go ahead and "wing it" or "just do your best"; no, you're going to want them to have a strategy, also known as a blueprint, to build that house.

Paul Andrew

1. What things in your life are you intentional about? This can be anything from paying bills to date nights to family fun days.

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2. In what ways have you seen the benefits of being intentional with these things?

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3. What intentional measures can we put into place to love someone well?

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Gary Chapman's *The 5 Love Languages* helps us understand the five core ways we receive and give love: affirmation, quality time, gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. By understanding how a person feels loved, we are able to be intentional about loving them well in our relationship.

4. What is your love language? What are some ways others have filled your love tank?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run;  
hurry and scurry puts you further behind.

(Proverbs 21:5 MSG)

1. Where in your relationships have you seen intentionality produce growth?

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2. What happened when you weren't intentional with friendships in your life?

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3. Look up the definition of the word *poverty* and write it on the line below. Some translations of Proverbs 21:5 tell us that haste leads to poverty. How have you seen poverty within your friendships?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Write down your three closest relationships. Then, find out each individual's love language and think of one way to be intentional about making them feel loved.

# Week 7, Day 3

Read Chapter 7: Be the Kind of Friend  
You Want to Attract (pp. 132–36)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, be with me as I continue to discover the kind of friend I am, as well as the kinds of friendships I am attracting. Forgive me for how I have been self-seeking in relationships, and help me live aligned with your heart for connection. Show me the healthy ways that I contribute and the valuable things that I bring to the table of fellowship. Thank you for this journey of discovery. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Who is one person in your life that is a natural encourager? How have they encouraged you when you needed it?

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2. What healthy relationship qualities do you tend to attract?

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3. What unhealthy relationship qualities do you tend to attract? Why do you think that is?

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4. Andi writes, “What you dwell on, you dwell in” (p. 135). What beliefs surrounding your relationships with women have affected your friendships? Do you attract unhealthy friendships or lasting friendships?

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

So, my unhealed issues attract unhealed issues. My need to “fix it” for people attracts people who need fixing, and I always fall short. My desire to have someone meet needs in me that my mom couldn’t meet is always too lofty of an unspoken expectation to put on someone else, and it tends to be the straw that breaks the camel’s back in friendships. (pp. 133–34)

1. Write down the qualities you listed in question 3 of the section above. With this information, consider the following questions:

- Do you have a history of personally walking out these qualities from your past?
- Do you tend to fix things within your friendships that leave you feeling personally and relationally short?
- Why do you think that is?

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2. What negative things are you pondering in your heart when it comes to friendships? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the underlying lies against your identity, and write them below. Repent and then surrender these thoughts to God.

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# Week 7, Day 4

Read Chapter 7: Becoming a Safe Person (pp. 136–40)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Invite the Holy Spirit into your study time today. Ask Him to provide you with His revelation as you ponder the following scriptures about friendship. He is faithful to meet you on the road of discovering who He is and who YOU are in Him!

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. When you think of Jesus, what characteristics come to mind?

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2. Why do you think prostitutes, tax collectors, wealthy and poor sinners, outcasts, and those who were broken and crippled flocked to Jesus?

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The critical issue is reciprocity: being truly heard and seen by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone else's mind and heart. For our physiology to calm down, heal, and grow, we need a visceral feeling of safety. No doctor can write a prescription for friendship and love: These are complex and hard-earned capacities.

**Bessel van der Kolk**

3. How has your body physically responded to a safe friend in your life? What role has this safe friend had on your emotional healing journey?

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4. What is one way that safe friends help you to be the person God created you to be?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

As you meditate on each Scripture passage, ask yourself the following questions:

- How does this challenge me as a friend?
- What does this teach me about knowing what to look for in a friend?

1. “The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.”  
(Proverbs 12:26)

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2. “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”  
(Proverbs 13:20 ESV)

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3. “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17)

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4. “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17 ESV)

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5. “Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers.” (Psalm 1:1)

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# Week 7, Day 5

Read Chapter 7: Healed People Heal People (pp. 140–42)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you that it is your perfect will for me to walk in freedom. Thank you for the safe people you have rallied around me and for the lessons you are teaching me. I am so grateful that healing, encouragement, and change are within my grasp as I partner with your Spirit. Help me to seek you as I walk this path of restoration in my life. Be near. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. What is something that you feel you are experienced in?

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2. How have you seen 2020 promote you from experienced to advanced? In what ways have you had to cope, grieve, and walk out healing in this area?

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3. It is often said that “healed people heal people.” How have you witnessed this in your own life, either by someone extending help to you or by your reaching out to someone else? What friends do you allow close to you? Are they doing any work in their own lives to become a whole, healed person?

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4. Is there a circumstance in your life where you experienced the reality that “hurt people hurt people”? What happened?

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# Week 7: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 7: Creating Authentic Connection—It Doesn't Just Happen

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to healing, engaging, and creating authentic connection through intentionality. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for the broken places in our friendships. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** What is one thing in your daily routine that you are intentional about?

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

6. What is a characteristic of a true, authentic friend?
7. What is one way you have been intentional with a friend? What is one way a friend has been intentional with you?
8. When you are surrounded by drama in your relationships, how do you respond physically, emotionally, and mentally?
9. When it comes to friendships, why do you think it is necessary to operate from our identity in Christ?
10. What boundaries do you have set in place for those who've tried to "teach you," "hurt you," or "make a fool of you" when you have not allowed them access to that part of your heart? What is your block/unfriend strategy (in love, of course)?

# Week 8, Day 1

Read Chapter 8: Introduction (pp. 143–45)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for this timely chapter about defining my friendship circles. Guide me as I lean in close to your heart and learn your design for friendships. Holy Spirit, come and be the lamp unto my feet and the light unto my path as you teach and redirect me. I surrender my heart to you; come be the center that all relationships revolve around. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Never make someone a priority when all you are to them is an option.

Maya Angelou

I'm sure many of us can agree we've experienced this on some level, where we have considered a relationship a priority, only to discover that the other person doesn't feel the same.

1. How were you giving to the relationship before you realized the other person wasn't putting in the same effort?

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2. How did you approach the situation?

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3. Was reconciliation achieved from both sides, or is there still tension? Why or why not?

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If you haven't done so, ask the Holy Spirit to heal those tender places of your heart.

## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Andi shares about her first and forever New York friend, Stella Reed. With parallel heart callings, God showed up in a mighty way by providing companionship among the loneliness of moving to a new and rather large city and planting a church.

Yes, God is more than ready to overwhelm you with every form of grace, so that you will have more than enough of everything—every moment and in every way. He will make you overflow with abundance in every good thing you do. (2 Corinthians 9:8 TPT)

1. Looking back, how have you witnessed God’s relational provision in a recent season of life?

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2. What are some things you believe God for when it comes to friendships? Write them out, place your stake in the ground, and believe in faith that He will provide.

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Take some time and examine the relationships in your life. Do you have a few close, trustworthy sisters in your circle, or do you have a boundaryless circle of friends that includes anyone and everyone? List those you consider to be on the best friend level.

# Week 8, Day 2

Read Chapter 8: Jesus's Circles (pp. 145–52)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath. Invite the Holy Spirit into this time as you learn about Jesus and the friendship circles that He surrounded Himself with. Ask Him for wisdom, revelation, and comfort as you learn about biblical relationships.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Jesus operated intentionally on many levels of friendship circles—three, twelve, seventy-two, and even multitudes. Yet, we also see that He chose solitude with the Father over connection with others.

1. As you ponder this, ask yourself, “How often do I go to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with all that I am before I run to another person?” Why do you think this is important?

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2. Jesus revealed the most vulnerable pieces of Himself only to His intimate circle of three. Why do you think it is important we not lay bare our soul and heart to everyone we consider a friend?

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3. Andi writes, “Be vulnerable with a few and authentic with many” (p. 148). What does this mean to you?

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The truth is, there will be messes and uncomfortable moments with the twelve in your life, like there were with the twelve in Jesus's life, but there will also be purpose, lots of good meals, laughs, life on mission, and so much more. (p. 150)

4. Who are your twelve?

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# Week 8, Day 3

Read Chapter 8: My Circles (pp. 152–54)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for this journey of discovering you and your heart for relationships. Thank you for Jesus and the example He has shown when it comes to knowing what my circles look like. Help me navigate heaven's standards while I am on this earth, and prepare my heart as I walk through reflection and surrender. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

I have found that crisis reveals character in us and in our actual friends. Anyone else? Crisis solidifies friendships and relationships because walking through pain together and healing together bring Jesus right into the middle of it all. (p. 152)

1. When in your life have you gone through a crisis and experienced your actual friends rallying around you?

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2. When in your life have you gone through a crisis and experienced friends falling away?

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3. Andi writes, “There is reciprocity, vulnerability, safety, comradery, intentionality, honesty, empathy, trust, and truth in love with my three” (p. 153). When you think about these qualities, what three friends come to mind?

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# Week 8, Day 4

Read Chapter 8: Other Important Circles (pp. 154–56)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, I acknowledge that kingdom living is upside down to the world's standards but is right side up to heaven's. Thank you for the gift of friendships and the boundaries that you have established around them. Help me to seek your kingdom vision for the relationships in my life. Give me discernment where needed, and continue to spark courage in me as you do a new thing. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Andi listed a few circle categories that overlap the circles Jesus operated from, including her community of believers circle, trusted family circle, and neighborhood circle. Can you think of any miscellaneous circles that would be helpful as you establish boundaries in this area? List them below.

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

As a church, 2020 was crippling in many ways. With attendance down and members leaving to deconstruct their faith, individuals have been left to wade through grief by themselves.

Hebrews 10:24–25 says, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

1. Why do you think individuals are leaving the church community?

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# Week 8, Day 5

Read Chapter 8: Your Circles (pp. 157–59)  
and Don't Let Fear Hold You Back (pp. 159–60)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Today, we will begin filling out our circle diagram. Take a deep breath before the Lord, and invite Him into this vulnerable and complicated space. Ask Him to reveal His heart and truth about the particular friendships in your life as you surrender your earthly perspective for His kingdom vision.

## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

As you prepare to modify and create your friendship circles, consider any fears you may have been partnering with. In the space below, write out any fears that have had a voice in your heart and mind concerning relationships with other people. As they come to mind, rebuke them and replace them with God's loving truth for your friendships.

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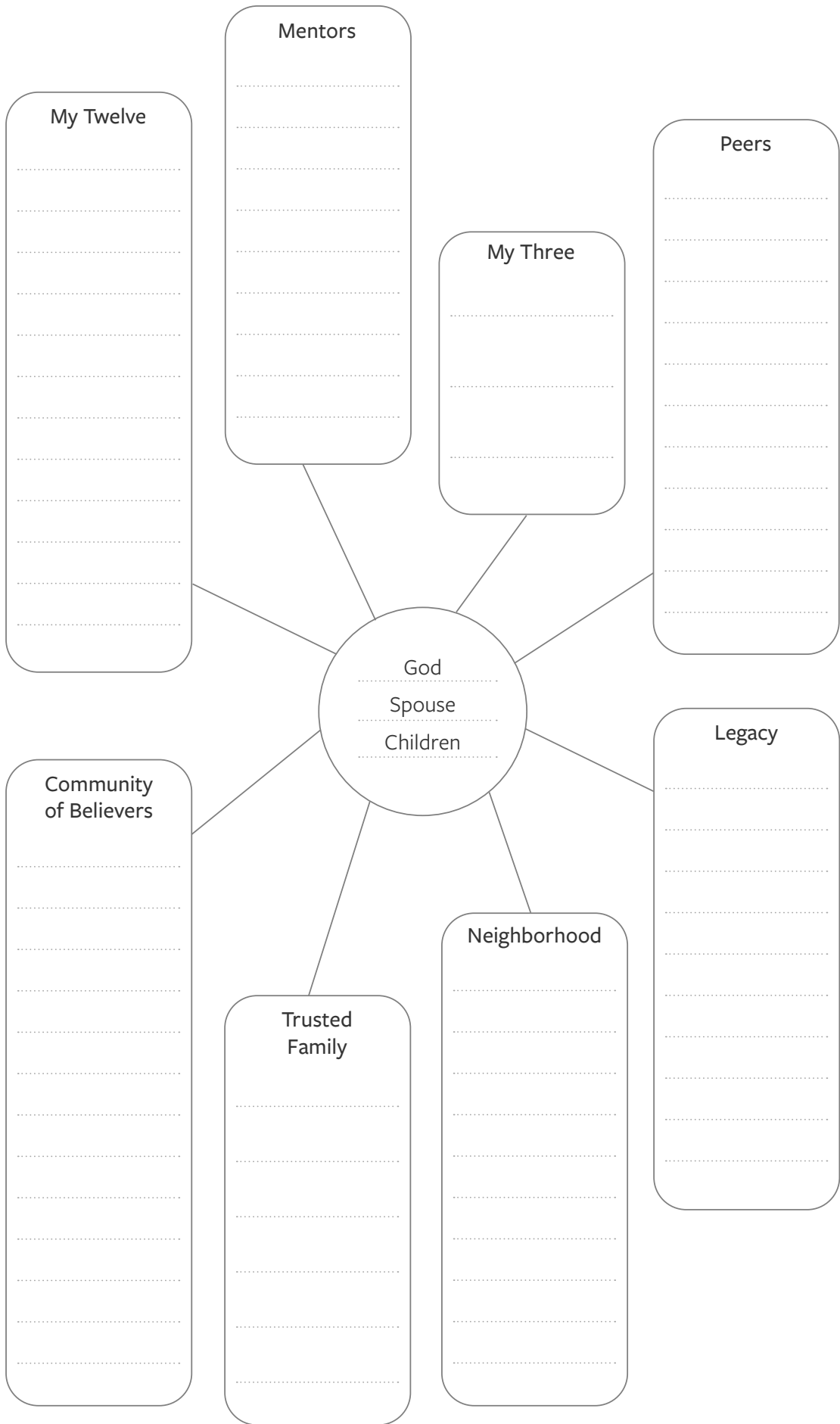
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### *Reflection Points*

Take your time. Prayerfully consider the friendships in your life. While some circles may surprise you, it is okay to embrace the shifting—and most importantly, refuse to feel guilty!

Take a deep breath, pray, and use a pencil! You may need to erase and rewrite as the Lord leads.

Because this is a healing exercise, you may encounter the lies that come with walking out freedom. Use the space above to break agreement with those lies, and let God realign your vision to see the beautiful community around you, big or small.



# Week 8: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 8: Circles—No, Everyone Cannot and Should Not Be Your Best Friend

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to growing and healing through kingdom-defined friendship circles. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for the broken places in our friendships. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** What is your fondest memory of elementary recess?

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. What are some qualities of a God-provided friendship?
2. What do you think is required to have unwavering faith? How can we partner with God in our daily lives?
3. Why should you be intentional about who you want to do purposeful life with, as opposed to doing life with those you feel like you have to?
4. Why do you think it is necessary to prayerfully categorize your circle of friends?
5. What is one fear you have partnered with when it comes to being in relationship with others?

# Week 9, Day 1

Read Chapter 9: Introduction (pp. 161–62) and  
Friendly Fire Destroys Trust (pp. 162–67)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the understanding and compassionate heart of Jesus. Reveal to me where I have made serving you a condition for others and where I have not left room for you to work. Give me eyes to see those around me, to see where they are at and how they flourish the kingdom with the unique gifts you have given them. I love you, Lord. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

Be the woman who fixes another woman's crown without telling the world it was crooked.

Unknown

1. Which friend in your life is a great example of someone who picks you back up in encouragement and truth without telling the world you messed up?

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2. What strengths and gifts do you think a woman must have in order to support another woman?

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3. Have you experienced a situation where another woman called you out in front of others? How did that make you feel? How did the others respond?

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# Week 9, Day 2

Read Chapter 9: One Body, Many Different Parts (pp. 167–72)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath. Invite the Holy Spirit to sit with you. As you listen quietly, ask Him to reveal the places of your heart where you have harbored comparison for those within the body of Christ. Ask Him to show you where you have talked down the gifts and strengths He has placed within you.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. We all have preconceptions of how things should be done. Why do you think you may be quick to judge others who think differently from you?

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We are uniquely created and positioned by Him in every way to collectively fulfill the Great Commission: our DNA is God-breathed, the cities and towns we live in need the reality of Jesus, our church communities are strategic and so are the neighbors we are placed near, and so on. (pp. 167–168)

2. In what area of your life have you felt called to obedience?

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3. How has walking in this obedience been difficult? How has it blessed you?

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4. Have you experienced comparison within the bride of Christ? This could be personal comparison or witnessing it from afar. As Christ's bride, why do you think we have been given different gifts, jobs, and responsibilities within the church?

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5. How do you think God created you to uniquely express His heart and His Word? What strengths and gifts do you have? What are you passionate about?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14–27.

1. What stands out to you?

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2. Where does this passage bring you encouragement and strength?

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3. Why is it important that the bride of Christ function as a body with individual and interconnected parts?

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If you have judged a particular part of the body because it seemed insignificant, confess it to Jesus now.



# Week 9, Day 3

Read Chapter 9: Can We Just Make Peace? (pp. 172–74)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you that your Word never returns void and that Jesus is the Prince of Peace over my life. Help me as I navigate the grief of any open loops within my relationships. Father, my heart may be hurting, but I know that you are near. Reveal to me my next step when it comes to being a peacemaker to those around me. Help me to be obedient and to remember that I can run to you in the pain, sadness, and anger. Thank you for the shalom that only you can bring. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Do you enjoy confrontation? Why or why not?

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2. Where in your life has a confrontational conversation brought healing? Where has it destroyed a relationship?

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The word *peace* is common in most languages. But in the Hebrew language, *shalom* is so deep and restorative. The most basic definition of the word in Hebrew means complete or whole. But what is *shalom*? Susan Perlman of Jews for Jesus says, “The ancient Hebrew concept of peace, rooted in the word ‘shalom,’ meant wholeness, completeness, soundness, health, safety and prosperity, carrying with it the implication of permanence.” (pp. 172–73)

3. How has this explanation of peace brought you a deeper understanding of how we should be in peace with one another?

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4. Where in your relationships have you experienced this kind of peace? Explain.

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5. Where in your life have you experienced peacekeeping? Where have you experienced peacemaking?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:15 ESV)

1. Having a better understanding of what peace means, what does it look like to let the peace of Christ rule your heart?

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2. How is this peace connected to our relationship with God, as well as with one another?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Consider your relationships. Are there any open loops? If so, take some time to bring these relationships to the feet of Jesus. Then, ask Him to fill you with the shalom of heaven as you prepare your heart to be obedient in the next step.

# Week 9, Day 4

Read Chapter 9: The Importance of Generational Crossover (pp. 175–78)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Take a deep breath. Invite the Holy Spirit to sit with you as you consider the generations that have gone before you. This may bring up fond or painful memories. Ask Jesus to comfort you where you need it and to help you feel His love ever so tangibly. Lastly, ask Him to help you remember what He wants you to remember.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite memory of your grandparents?

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2. Did your grandparents share stories with a “woe-is-me” mentality, or did they leave you in awe and wonder? Based on these two methods of storytelling, how might one receive these generational memories?

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3. Who is your mother or grandmother in the faith, and how has she encouraged you in your Christian walk?

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4. How has she disciplined you in love and truth?

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities destroyed long ago. They will revive them, though they have been deserted for many generations. (Isaiah 61:4 NLT)

1. How have you seen the Lord revive the broken places of generational destruction?

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2. In what way has God restored your faith when it comes to walking through the ruins of this world?

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Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates. (Deuteronomy 6:5-9 CSB)

3. How did you learn the love of God from the generations before you?

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4. What are you implementing in your own family so that your children can learn the love of God?

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5. What do you hope the generations after you will say about you?

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# Week 9, Day 5

Read Chapter 9: Imitating Christ's Humility (pp. 178–80)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for Jesus and that He came to earth to show me how to humbly live for you, as an individual and as a friend. Help me in the places where I am not partnering with the kingdom of heaven. Help me where I am harboring pride in how I should be treated and how I should treat others. You came to sacrifice your life as an ultimate act of humility; now help me do the same. Amen.*

## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:1–8)

1. What stands out to you in this passage?

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2. What is something that you are struggling to understand?

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3. Based on this passage, what are some ways we are to walk in humility?

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4. What do you think it means to be “one in spirit and of one mind”?

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5. How do you think this applies to being in relationship with one another?

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As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 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. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1–6)

6. What stands out to you in this passage?

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7. What is something that you are struggling to understand?

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8. What do you think it means to be “a prisoner of the Lord”?

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9. Why is this passage so important when it comes to walking out diversity in friendship?

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# Week 9: Friendship Circle Group Study

## Chapter 9: Unity in Our Diversity—Together Is Actually Better

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to growing and strengthening our unity in our diversity. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for the broken places in our hearts and minds. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** What is one cause or social injustice that you are most passionate about, and why?

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. Read Luke 10:38–42 as a group. Who do you relate to, Martha or Mary? Why do you think that is?
2. Where in your life do you struggle most with comparison? What about within the body of Christ?
3. What do you think the difference is between peacekeeping and peacemaking?
4. What is one thing you were taught that was passed down from generation to generation? This could be physical, spiritual, or emotional.
5. When you think about humility in relationships, where is it the hardest to surrender pride?

# Week 10, Day 1

Read Chapter 10: Introduction (pp. 181–82)  
and With Women (pp. 182–85)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the example of midwives. Thank you for those who have advocated for me in this life when circumstances were just too hard. Help me to serve those around me in the same way as I seek your face. Change my heart so that I continually protect life—relationally, physically, and emotionally. Thank you for advocating for me. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

A midwife must possess the hand of a lady, the eyes of a hawk, and the heart of a lion.

**Unknown**

1. What do you think it means to have “the hand of a lady, the eyes of a hawk, and the heart of a lion”? How can you apply this to your relationships?

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2. Who stood with you in seasons of oppression, heartache, fear, discomfort, and pain? What did that look like?

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3. How do you stay connected to the Holy Spirit—our Advocate—when times are excruciatingly painful?

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When we become too accustomed to the ways of this world, we stop protecting life—spiritually and physically. We stop protecting one another. We look out for ourselves and forget that we belong to one another. (p. 184)

4. Can you think of a time in your own life where you stopped protecting another? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal when and why this may have happened. Then receive His love and forgiveness.

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

Andi shares, “I am on #teamwomen, period” (p. 182). What does it look like to you to be #team-women? How has this sentiment jaded you in the past? Maybe you were hurt by someone who told you they were for you and then didn’t follow through. How has someone proved to you that they were for you and would fight for you?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Healing and wholeness in any relationship require action steps to be applied daily. First, we must be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and then we are reconciled to one another through the powerful gift of the Holy Spirit, also called the Advocate. We are to advocate for one another, not critique, criticize, or reject one another. This is what unity in our diversity looks like. It looks like championing and standing with one another to bring forth life. (p. 183)

1. Have you been reconciled to God through Christ? Are there any areas of your life that call for repentance and reconciliation? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal those places to you.
2. Is there a relationship in your life that needs to be reconciled? Whether it is your best friend, a family member, or a new friendship, will you choose to go first?
3. With the Advocate’s help, how can you advocate for the women in your life? What tangible step will you take today?

# Week 10, Day 2

Read Chapter 10: Relationship above Rivalry (pp. 185–188)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Invite the Holy Spirit to come. Ask Him to reveal the places where your spiritual midwives have been present. If you are feeling sadness or void in this space, ask Him to comfort you in this time as you seek His face and His heart. Sit quietly in this space as you wait for Him to speak.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Consider the dreams and passions God has sowed into your heart. Do you feel that you have a safe and peaceful atmosphere to birth those dreams? Why or why not?

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2. When in your life have you travailed in pain? Who was there next to you holding your hand? How did she remind you of the truth?

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3. When in your life have you been in danger? Who was there next to you, arming for battle? How did she problem-solve in the spiritual realm?

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4. When in your life have you experienced earth-shattering pain? Who was there next to you, mourning with you and holding you?

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# Week 10, Day 3

Read Chapter 10: Becoming Spiritual Midwives (pp. 189–90)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the sisters surrounding me. Thank you for their encouragement, integrity, and love. If there is any circumstance where I didn't extend these things, show me now. Help me seek Jesus in everything I do, and help me love others the way you love them. Help me remember that we aren't in a race against one another but that we are teammates running toward the same finish line. Thank you for the women that I get to call friends and spiritual midwives. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a time in your life where you were ridiculed or looked down on because your thoughts, questions, or concerns didn't align with those of someone else? How did that make you feel?

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2. In contrast, how did that differ with someone who celebrated and jumped in alongside you, regardless of your thoughts, questions, or concerns?

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3. Do you tend to fight hard to make others join you in your beliefs and opinions? Why or why not?

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4. When your beliefs and opinions feel as if they are becoming inflated, what can you do to realign yourself with God's truth and heart?

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# Week 10, Day 4

Read Chapter 10: Becoming Spiritual Midwives,  
continued (pp. 191–95)

## LISTENING INTENTLY

Ask the Holy Spirit, our Advocate, to come and be with you in this moment. As you welcome Him to your space of healing and revelation, ask Him to show you the places in your friendships where you have partnered with shame, fear, and pride. Then, surrender them at the feet of Jesus as you seek His face and His forgiveness. Stay here as long as you need.

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Has the fear of man or worry of harming your reputation prevented you from supporting a woman in your life? Explain.

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2. Did someone in your life have your back regardless of the choices you made, the addictions you struggled with, or the opinions of others? How did that spur you on?

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3. Do you present a safe place for your friends to ask questions and understand on a deeper level, or do you find yourself silencing their concerns?

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4. Based on your answer in the previous question, how have you experienced growth in your relationship? What are some challenges you may face by being honest?

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5. Where in your life have you allowed fear to block your ability to be vulnerable with someone else? Was it the fear of judgment, the fear of abandonment, or even the fear of mocking? As you begin to name your fear, ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate His truth.

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## CONNECTED WITH SCRIPTURE

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)

1. How has the Holy Spirit advocated for you? This could be with others or yourself.

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2. How have you seen the Holy Spirit show up and remind you of His truths right when you needed them? Be specific.

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3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you about yourself in your current season of life?

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4. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you about friendships?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His heart for a friend who may need encouragement. How can you tangibly remind her of her identity and of the Father's heart for her?

# Week 10, Day 5

Read Chapter 10: Becoming Spiritual Midwives,  
continued (pp. 195–200)

## COMMUNION IN PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the spiritual midwives in my life. Thank you for the women who come close beside me to hold my hand, encourage my spirit, and remind me of who I am and whose I am. Help me to do the same for the friendships in my life. Holy Spirit, as you come alongside me and comfort me, may I be an extension of your peace, truth, and love to those close to my heart. Amen.*

## SINCERITY THROUGH QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a situation in your own life where you partnered with faith instead of fear? How could things have turned out differently if you had instead partnered with fear?

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2. Consider your closest friendships. Do you have an action plan to fight in faith and bring forth life when death and fear are knocking at a friend's door? If so, write it below. If not, ask the Holy Spirit to bring insight and revelation.

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3. Have you ever had a sister pray and intercede over you in a dark time? How did that act of war encourage your heart? Did you feel the atmosphere shift? If so, how?

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In becoming spiritual midwives, we can't rob others of the grieving process because we feel uncomfortable or don't know what to say or do. How can we become sisters who create and share space, even if we have nothing to say? Sometimes the ministry of presence is powerful enough. (p. 197)

4. How has the ministry of presence helped you during a time of grieving?

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## VULNERABILITY WITH OURSELVES THROUGH JOURNALING

Andi shares about the birth of her oldest son, Zeke, and the complications that soon followed. However, the responses of the midwives, doctors and nurses, and her mother/doula ushered in an atmosphere of faith, not fear.

How does an atmosphere of faith differ from one of fear? What physical differences can you feel? How do your emotions and thoughts contrast between the two?

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## INTENTIONALITY WITH OUR ACTIONS

If you have a friend, you can be a spiritual midwife. If you have breath in your lungs, you can be generous in helping her walk through the hard things. In the space below, brainstorm ways you can be generous to another friend in their time of need.

Time:

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Heart:

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Resources:

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Hands:

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# Week 10: Friendship Circle Study Group

## Chapter 10: Becoming Spiritual Midwives

### COMMUNION

*Father, thank you for this circle of friends dedicated to growing and supporting one another in the joyful moments and the painful ones. You are such a faithful Father who offers shalom for the broken places in our hearts and minds. Be with us in this sacred, beautiful time together, as we share what we have gleaned and encourage those around us through the testimony of your Son, Jesus. We welcome you in this time, our perfect Friend. Amen.*

### DISCOVER

**Icebreaker:** Where in your life has Jesus restored you? This can be big or small, but either way, let's brag-share with one another how God has been faithful!

### CELEBRATE

Share a testimony of how God has shown up in your friendships this week. This could be a word of encouragement, coffee with a friend, or even a text at just the right time. Let's celebrate what God is doing!

### DISCUSS

1. What is one tangible way you can stand with a woman in your life as she is experiencing oppression, heartache, fear, discomfort, or pain?
2. Why is it important to value relationships over rivalry within your friendships?
3. Based on your personality, what strengths do you bring to the table as a spiritual midwife?
4. What is your process for allowing yourself to be vulnerable with others?
5. On page 197, Andi talked about the uncomfortable space of the ministry of presence. What do you find is most challenging about allowing a sister space to grieve? What about the ministry of presence is the most healing?



