

Week 4: Relationships - *Am I investing my life into the right people?*

My Story

Four years ago my husband and I had a FULL cup. We moved from our unsold townhome into a real live fixer-upper. We had three kids ages five, almost four and four months. And my husband would not let us do any improvements to the house until our townhome sold. Our bedroom had bright green carpet, another had pink, and the rest of the house had different shades of beige carpet. What were we thinking?!? And then we were informed we had a MOLD problem! Sigh. I was stressed!

Somehow, we afforded the sense to attend a couple's small group up the street. I now know it was God's gracious provision. He knew that what I would need more than hardwood floors or matching carpet were solid, Godly friends.

I really do think of that first small group often. I laugh about what it must have looked like from God's perspective. He saw the potential. He knew the fruit of life-giving friendships. He knew the protection and security this foundation would bring. But all we knew was a room full of nervous strangers. We went around the large circle and the husbands introduced each couple. We left that night completely unaware that we had been making eye contact with our very own pot of gold.

It took weeks and months of playdates and casual lunches after church, but in time I knew I was a part of something much bigger than myself. Unity of believers is SO powerful! Discussing problems with children or money or what to cook for dinner became moments when the Holy Spirit used us to speak through one another. I have found that when I gather with my like-minded moms and God-fearing friends, I come away refreshed and renewed. We spur one another on in love and good deeds.

Over the course of four years, our townhome sold, we got hardwoods and fresh carpet in places. I really think fondly of my waiting time. I grew stronger. God met my most desperate needs. Our core group has grown to several couples. We don't always do the same small group but are all actively leading or participating in groups. We stay connected and pray for one another. We have a healthy foundation of loving friends who "have our back".

I have learned that healthy relationships play a vital role in doing life well. I've found that most relationships fall into one of two categories: *Inner Circle and Outer Circle*. Inner Circle being the group I mentioned above, those who feed you. Outer Circle being those you seek to influence. In a way, Jesus modeled this too, with His close friendship of the disciples and then His intense life in ministry.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Who would you identify as your Inner Circle?
- What are some adjectives you would use to describe this group?
- Who is your Outer Circle? Who do you feel called to influence?
- What are some adjectives you think people in your Outer Circle would use to describe you?
- Do you feel that you have an Inner Circle that encourages your growth and love for Jesus?

Final Thoughts

This is a huge area of our lives! Relationships will “make or break us” and the Bible is chock full of verses on our friendships. Take some time this week to evaluate the current friendships in your life, using the model above. If you see you need more godly friends in your “inner circle”, begin to pray diligently for the Lord to bring them to you. Small groups are the best way to start!

As a Daughter of the Most High God

I am an Influencer

I am a Chosen Vessel to be...

The hands and feet of Jesus.

The words of love to Jesus

The compassion and heart of Jesus

The Wisdom and boldness of Jesus