

## Discussion Guide

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# It's Not You...It's You

## Healthy Horizontal Relationships Come OUT of a Healthy Vertical Relationship

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### Main Idea

In this sermon, we explore the essential role of friendship as the foundation for meaningful relationships, rooted in the command from John 13:34 to "love one another" as Jesus loved us. This directive challenges us to shift our thinking; it is not merely a suggestion but a responsibility we must embrace. By committing to live as God-first individuals, we cultivate a strong relationship with Him, leading to abundant fruit in our connections with others and enriching our lives with love and joy.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." - John 13:34

Read: Proverbs 3:6 and 4:23

#### 1. **Habits of God-First Person.**

Here are eight habits of a God-first person.

- 1) Start your day with prayer
- 2) Read a morning and/or evening devotional
- 3) Memorize scripture
- 4) Worship every day
- 5) Take your struggles to God instead of people
- 6) Mind what's going in your eyes and ears
- 7) Serve & tithe in God's House
- 8) Create a running gratitude list

Read Isaiah 54:10, Psalms 119:114

Which of these habits have you seen as most beneficial to your life, and why? Which habits have you been struggling with? How can these habits help to guard our hearts?

## 2. **Hope Changes Everything & Purpose Unlocks Assigned Things**

Hope transforms our lives, while purpose reveals our true potential.

Read: Proverbs 17:17

How can cultivating hope and purpose in our lives strengthen our friendships and help us navigate challenges together?

## 3. **Seek God.**

Seek God... on the Person

Seek God... for the Faith to be Steady

Seek God... on the Purpose

How can actively seeking God in our personal lives, our faith journey and our sense of purpose impact our daily decisions and relationships? In what ways can you seek God in these three ways?

## SUMMARY

The best foundation in a relationship is the foundation of friendship. However, our vertical relationship with God needs to be our ultimate priority. That God-first mentality will direct our lives and lead us to success in all our other relationships. Establishing fundamental habits in our relationship with God is essential to maintain our God-first relationships.

## CALL TO ACTION

1. **Develop Daily Habits:** Commit to incorporating at least three of the eight habits of a God-first person into your daily routine this week, and then add one more each week. Reflect on how these practices influence your relationship with God and, in turn, enhance your friendships.

2. **Engage in Prayerful Reflection:** Take time each day to seek God in your personal life, your faith journey, and your sense of purpose. Journal your thoughts and prayers, focusing on how this seeking affects your decisions and relationships.

3. Cultivate Hope and Purpose Together: Identify a friend or group within your community to share your journeys of hope and purpose. Schedule regular check-ins to encourage one another, discuss challenges, and celebrate progress in cultivating God-first lives and relationships.

## GROUP LEADER RESOURCE

### **Game:** Saran Wrap Game

This one requires a little prep: You'll need a box of plastic wrap and a bag of candy, or an assortment of small, durable goodies. (Packs of gum, dollar bills, gift cards, and the like all work.) Pick one item to place at the center of your saran wrap ball. Wrap it thoroughly in plastic wrap, then add more items as your wrapped ball gets bigger, trapping them in layers of wrap. (To make the game more challenging, tear the wrap into smaller sheets as you go.) Once you've used a whole roll of wrap (or more, if desired), you're ready to play.

Gather in a circle or around a table. Give one person the wrapped bundle; give the person next to them a pair of dice. The person with the saran wrap bundle must unravel as much of the ball as possible before the person with the dice rolls doubles. (Any prizes that fall out during your turn are yours to keep.) Once the person with the dice rolls doubles, they pass the dice down and receive the bundle. Repeat until the ball is completely unwound.

For alternative versions, have the person with the plastic wrap ball wear oven mitts or set a timer for each turn instead of using dice.