



## Reflection Guide

OCTOBER 25 - NOVEMBER 7  
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### Weekend Reflection

FRIDAY, OCT 25 - SUNDAY, OCT 27

This week we talked about building a *community of LIGHT*... building a group of friends with whom we can experience belonging, but also a spurring on *toward* Christ. This can be both messy and lovely in a very real way. Read this quote by Shannan Martin ([The Ministry of Ordinary Places](#), Introduction p xviii):

“As Christ-followers, we are called to be long-haul neighbors committed to authenticity and willing to take some risks. Our vocation is to invest deeply in the lives of those around us, devoted to one another, physically close to each other as we breathe the same air and walk the same blocks. Our purpose is not so mysterious after all. We get to love and be deeply loved right where we’re planted, by whomever happens to be near. We will inevitably encounter brokenness we cannot fix, solve or understand, and we’ll feel small, uncertain, and outpaced as we have ever felt. But we’ll find our very lives in this calling, to be among people as Jesus was, and it will change everything. The details will look quiet and ordinary. They will exhaust and exhilarate us. But it will be the most worth-it adventure we will ever take. Let’s go.”

Wikipedia defines adventure as an “exciting experience that is typically a bold, sometimes risky, undertaking.” How has friendship been an adventure for you? How has it both exhausted and exhilarated you?

*Journal* some thoughts:

- ➔ What are you grateful for in your friendships over the years?
- ➔ Do you have some friendship baggage? How have you experienced hurt in past or current friendships that keeps you from pursuing or welcoming community?

Take some time to specifically name each of those things in prayer. Speak gratitude over healthy and helpful friendships and pray for each of those sweet gals by name. If you have hurts,, ask God to help you loosen your protective grip on any wounds your heart holds from previous friendships. Ask him what you can learn from those past hurts in friendship. Pray specifically for those friends that hurt you and ask him to take away any feelings of defeat, to heal any broken places and ask him to show you how simply taking a next step *toward* friendships can actually help with the healing process. Over the

weekend, take some time to meditate and pray through the following verse. If it's particularly meaningful to you as you look to grow in your experience of friendship, I encourage you to practice memorizing it.

<i>"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>If one person falls, the other can reach out and help.</i>	<i>But</i>
<i>someone who falls alone is in real trouble.</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm.</i>	<i>But</i>
<i>how can one be warm alone?</i>	<i>12 A</i>
<i>person standing alone can be attacked and defeated,</i>	<i>but</i>
<i>two can stand back-to-back and conquer.</i>	<i>Three</i>
<i>are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."</i>	(Ecclesiastes
4:9-12, NLT)	

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### *Weekday Reading*

MONDAY, OCT 28 - THURSDAY, OCT 31

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reminds us that we are better together. We were created to experience relational fullness *with other people*. Isolation is dangerous. When we are isolated and alone we are more prone to attack and defeat.

Think about a time when that was true for you...

Any time I've moved or started a new job I felt lonely for quite a while. But the greatest time I felt isolated was when Aubrey was first born. I was terrified of my new role as mom and everyday I felt like a failure in every way. I felt like I depended on Tony for everything - not just help changing diapers and washing bottles - but also for my personal spiritual and emotional wellbeing. Obviously too great an expectation to put on anyone. It was in those dark days that the lies of the Enemy were the loudest, *"You're a terrible mom. You're doing it all wrong. Your husband thinks you're a failure. You've lost all your sex-appeal. Your marriage will never make it. You'll never be able to do anything outside of this house again because simply keeping this baby alive is all you can do... and even if you tried, you won't be good at it anyway."*

I had already quit my job, choosing to be a stay-at-home mom. And being overwhelmed with motherhood, I also quit small group, any kind of volunteering, attending church and hanging out with very many friends. (*I mean, who would even WANT to be around me, right?* Another lie I was believing.) After several months, I told Tony I couldn't keep going like this. The isolation was all-consuming and I desperately needed an out. The only way I knew to do that was to find connection. So I started trying Bible studies, small groups, responding to texts about getting together, making my own invitations for people to come over... it was not easy and took several more months of putting myself out there. But

you know what? Every step, every trial group, every moment of openness and vulnerability was worth it. And you have to know, people didn't just flock to me. They weren't banging on my door to help rescue me. I had to move *toward* them and I had to ask for help. And in the process I found myself feeling less isolated. The lies of the Enemy quieted, and I experienced more flourishing in my days, even in my new role as mom. I found women and other moms committed to fight alongside me for my joy and communion with Christ (and vice versa).

There's a way to pursue friendship that is good and true and fulfilling, but we have to know that it might not always be easy, fun, or flashy. I believe with all my heart that friendship is an irreplaceable GIFT in the life of a Christian- a gift that I love and will fight for because I've experienced devastating seasons without it AND I've experienced the sweet, fulfilling seasons with it. Because through friendship, God:

- **encourages, consoles, and ministers kindness to us.**
- **exposes, changes, and sanctifies us through the hurts we experience.**

Read the following Scriptures about what good, true, Biblical, light-filled friendship looks like. Choose one (or a few) a day or read them all at once if you happen to have an unexpected large chunk of time. Or choose one and read it again and again. Remember, this is a *guide* for you to use however it fits your time and needs best. After you read, journal about the Scripture(s) using the questions that follow as a guide.

☐ [Proverbs 13:20, 19:20, 27:5-6 and 17](#)

☐ [Hebrews 3:12-14](#)

☐ [John 15:12-15](#)

☐ [Hebrews 10:23-25](#)

☐ [Ephesians 4:1-3](#) and [4:25-32](#)

☐ [James 5:13-16](#)

☐ [Colossians 3:12-17](#)

Journal about the Scriptures you read:

- **What STUCK OUT most to you?** This could be something new or a reminder of something you've forgotten.
- **Did any PEOPLE come to mind?** Who are friends that have been an example to you of these things? What have you appreciated most about being in friendship with them because of how they showed these things? Who are people who have made these things difficult for you? Who is around you that you can put yourself around more in order to learn from or grow in some of these things? Take some time to pray for each of these people by name. If you feel the urge, maybe even send them a text letting them know you are thinking about them and praying for them today.
- **What are you learning about God and who God wants you to be in friendship through this passage?** Let me remind you that God doesn't ask for perfection. He is fully aware of our weaknesses and insecurities and inability to do anything perfectly. So don't read these passages and immediately feel overwhelmed with what you are UNABLE to muster up on your own or even how you have failed with friendships in the past. [2 Corinthians 12:9](#) reminds us that when

we are weak, He is strong and sufficient and able. So whatever you are learning, ask God to help you see moments of opportunity to practice these things and ask him to give you strength to carry it through. And ask for forgiveness for any way you haven't lived these things well and have hurt friends because of it.

→ **How are you moved to PRAY today?**

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### *Weekend Reflection*

FRIDAY, NOV 1 - SUNDAY, NOV 3

When the weekend comes, we know a change in routine comes as well. Use the weekend to rest and to enjoy your family and who God is and maybe even catch up on reading any Scriptures you didn't get to during the week.

If anything, I encourage you to meditate on Hebrews 10:22-25 in the Message version:

*"So let's do it—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out.  
Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. [God] always keeps his word.  
Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out,  
not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on,  
especially as we see the big Day approaching."*

How might God be nudging you to encourage those around you toward love and obedience in an effort to increase connection in friendship?

What are some other things you've learned this week that you want to pursue in friendship?

Take some time this weekend to share your thoughts about friendship and anything new that you're learning/trying with your family (look at the Family Activity section at the end for some ideas). Think about asking your spouse or a friend to help encourage and support you by holding you accountable.

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### *Weekday Reading*

MONDAY, NOV 4 - THURSDAY, NOV 7

It takes some heart work to truly evaluate our friendships. Author Jess Connolly challenges us to ask ourselves: Are you a **"here I am person"** - walking into a room craving to be known and noticed, approved of and loved? Making decisions and surface-level connections with others based primarily on those needs? Or are you a **"there you are person"** - walking into a room looking for ways to love and serve your friends and spur each other on to the glory of God? The only way we have the capacity to walk into a room as a **"there you are person"** is when we're relying on Jesus to be Jesus, right? When

we are secure in our identity in Christ and look to Him to fulfill our every need, we are able to walk into relationships and be a life giving, LIGHT-filled friend.

Being a **“there you are”** friend means that:

- You can be genuinely interested in others, initiating questions and listening well.
- You release the right to demand commitments from others.
- You can more easily issue forgiveness because your hope, purpose, and identity are founded on something greater than a human friendship.
- You can rejoice in your friend's talents, gifts, calling, and blessing (or whatever fun thing she has going on) without being consumed by jealousy, envy, and judgment.
- You can feel more free to not take things so personally and live more unoffended and self-controlled, choosing generosity and grace over bitterness.
- You can drop your guard and share what's really going on (even if you can't control how the other person is going to respond).
- You can feel secure in the fact that you are fighting on the same mission with your friend, even if you don't know every single detail of her life.
- You can love who you're around, even if they aren't the “coolest,” even if they offer you nothing in return.
- You can experience freedom from comparison and competition.
- You can be open-minded, open-handed, open-hearted, allowing space for friends to come and go in seasons as God calls each of you to various things.

**Take some time this week to evaluate each of your friendships through this lens. Are you approaching each friendship with a “HERE I AM” attitude or a “THERE YOU ARE” one?**

When we look at the community we surround ourselves with, it's important to look at how Jesus did it. He wasn't looking for perfect friendships, or those that looked the most like Him. He wasn't surrounding himself with people that shared the same interests, perspectives and views as him. In her new book, [\*“You are the Girl for the Job,”\*](#) Jess Connolly says this about how Jesus chose his friends:

*“He may not have picked the people who made Him feel the best, who cheered Him on the greatest, but He surrounded Himself with those who would help Him bring the most glory to God. Scripture doesn't necessarily preach an ideology of finding your tribe for the sake of your comfort. Instead, when it comes to friendships, relationships, and groups of community in the Word of God, we hear a call to give ourselves away. We hear a call to grace, which means that we have full sight of one another's sins and yet we are still pointing to truth. The Bible paints a picture of messy, beautiful relationships that are based not on how we make each other feel but instead focused on how the world is impacted when we come together.”*

If we are looking to build a community of LIGHT around us, we have to really evaluate how we can give ourselves away in friendship and how our friendships can bring glory to the Father.

Use of the following scriptures on friendship to meditate on this week. After you read each Scripture, journal your thoughts using the questions that follow as a guide.

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Proverbs 12:26</a>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Ecclesiastes 4:9-10</a>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Proverbs 17:17</a>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Romans 1:11-12</a>       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Proverbs 18:24</a>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">1 Thessalonians 5:11</a> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Proverbs 22:24-25</a> |   |

Journal about the Scriptures you read:

- **What STUCK OUT most to you when you read these verses?** This could be something new or a reminder of something you've forgotten.
- **Did any QUESTIONS come to mind?** Many of these Scriptures give us a clear picture of the type of friend that God is calling us to be. We are also warned in many of these Scriptures what to steer clear of in friendships. As you process these words, ask God to help you examine what is true in your current friendships and ways that you can grow in these areas.
- **What are you learning about God's heart for friendship? What is He teaching you about the kind of friend he wants you to be and the kind of friends he wants you to have?** [Romans 1:11-12](#) is such a beautiful reminder of how LIGHT-filled friendship can look. Lean in and listen to what his heart is for our friendships.
- **How are you moved to PRAY today?** Take a few moments to pray over your friendships... asking God to give you clarity on next steps you can take using what he has taught you through these verses to build and to fight for a healthier, LIGHT-filled community around you.

### *Optional Family Activity*

Get your kids and/or spouse involved in what you are learning, reading, and reflecting on through MomLife! Each Reflection Guide will include a space like this with ideas and notes for how to read and have discussion/activities with your family around Scripture.

### *Family Friendship Roundtable*

**Gather up your family and do something nice for your friends:**

- Make cards for your friends and tell them why you appreciate their friendship OR work together to make special gifts or treats to share with your friends.

**While you work on this project together, have an intentional conversation about friendship:**

- Ask your kids what they think makes a great friend. Ask them who they consider to be their friends and why they like them. Ask them what they think *they* bring to the friendship.

- Remind your kids that in order to have a good friend, you need to be a good friend. [Matthew 7:12](#) “**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you**” is a great guideline. Talk through what it looks like for them to be a good friend. Things like how to be kind with your mouth and your body, how to be helpful and honest, how to share and take turns and be fair. Give them a list of things that a good friend does: **Smile, Speaks Kind Words, Invites Others In, Listens Well, etc.**
- Talk with your kids about the fact that each of our friends doesn't have to be all things to us. We can appreciate our friends for what they offer, without expecting more. Maybe one friend is great at playing dolls or cars, while another loves to do crafts or listen to music and dance, and yet another is lots of fun at the park (of course, adjust your examples for older kids). Remind them that friendship is not about what we can get out of this friendship, but more about what we can give to our friends *(example: Jess Connolly's idea of a “HERE I AM” friend vs a “THERE YOU ARE” friend.*
- Remind them that friends don't always agree or get along perfectly. Talk with them about how to make up after an argument or disagreement. It's good for us in friendship to accept responsibility for our own mistakes, apologize and move forward in a positive way toward reconnecting (look at [Colossians 3:12-17](#)).
- Talk with your children about the kind of friend Jesus was. Pick out a few of the friendship scriptures that were meaningful to you from the last two weeks to read with your children.

*Additional Resources [links also found @ [graceclarksville.com/momlife-resources/](http://graceclarksville.com/momlife-resources/)]:*

#### Books:

- [Friendish: Reclaiming Real Friendship In a Culture of Confusion](#) by Kelly Needham
- [Uninvited: Living Loved When You Feel Less Than, Left Out, and Lonely](#) by Lysa TerKeurst

#### Bible Studies:

- [Not Alone: A Study on Friendship](#) with Jennie Allen, Lauren Chandler, and Amena Brown (videos)
- [We Saved You a Seat - Bible Study Book: Finding and Keeping Lasting Friendships](#) by Lisa-Jo Baker

#### Podcasts:

- [The Secret to Healthy Relationships](#) - Made for This Podcast with Jennie Allen Ep. 1
- [When Making Friends Is Difficult](#) - Made for This Podcast with Jennie Allen Ep. 2
- [How to Have Life-Giving Conversations](#) - Made for This Podcast with Jennie Allen Ep. 3

- [In this Together with Jeannie Cunnion](#)
- [Mom Friendships: How Do You Do That?](#) - Mommin' Ain't Easy Ep. 102

#### Guided Journal:

- [Life Worth Living: A Daily Growth Journal](#) by Kristin Vanderlip
- [Living Life Well: A Daily Growth Journal for Kids](#) by Kristin Vanderlip

#### Websites/Blogs:

- <https://www.ebenezerwomen.com/blog-1/tell-it-like-it-is?rq=friendship>
- <https://www.incourage.me/2019/04/friendship-at-its-best.html>
- <https://www.incourage.me/2019/09/6-ways-to-show-up-for-a-friend.html>