

# ROOTED: REAL ONES ONLY— THE ART OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP

5-Day Devotional • Day 1

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## CREATED FOR CONNECTION

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**We were created for relationship from relationship.**

Have you ever wondered why loneliness feels so painful? It's because we were designed for something more. From the very beginning, God has existed in perfect relationship—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—a divine circle of friendship that serves as the blueprint for all human connection. Yet many of us find ourselves surrounded by people but still feeling alone. We have friends who share our hobbies but not our struggles, who can ease our boredom but don't touch our loneliness. We laugh together but don't grow together. This isn't the friendship we were created for. The problem isn't that we need more friends—it's that we need deeper friendship. And that journey begins with understanding that we were made in the image of a relational God. The Trinity shows us that relationship isn't just something God does; it's who God is. And because we're made in His image, relationship isn't just something we do either—it's part of who we are. When we feel that ache of loneliness, it's not a sign that something is wrong with us. It's a reminder that we were created for connection, designed for community, and made for meaningful relationships that go beyond surface-level interactions. That longing in your heart isn't a weakness—it's a compass pointing you toward the deeper connections your soul craves.

### ECCLESIASTES 3:11

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

### PRAYER

*God, thank You for creating me for relationship and connection. Help me recognize that my longing for meaningful friendship is a reflection of Your design. Show me how to move beyond surface-level relationships toward the deeper connections You intended. Amen.*

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### REFLECTION QUESTION

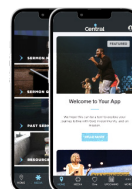
What is the difference between the friendships you currently have and the deeper connections your heart truly longs for?

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# ROOTED: REAL ONES ONLY— THE ART OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP

5-Day Devotional • Day 2

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## THE FOUNDATION OF ALL FRIENDSHIP

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**Quite simply, we cannot sustain thriving and meaningful human relationships if we do not have a thriving and intimate relationship with God.**

Before we can build meaningful friendships with others, we must first understand the most important friendship of all—our relationship with God. Many of us approach human relationships with an impossible expectation: we want our friends to fill the God-shaped void in our hearts. This creates a cycle of disappointment. We place the weight of our eternal longings on finite people, expecting them to be our savior, our source of complete fulfillment, our answer to every need. When they inevitably fall short—because they’re human—we feel let down and they feel overwhelmed. Jesus offers us something revolutionary: He doesn’t just want to be our Savior; He longs to be our friend. When He told His disciples, “I no longer call you servants, but friends,” He was inviting them into the most intimate relationship possible with the Creator of the universe. When Jesus fills that eternal void in our hearts, everything changes. We stop expecting human friends to be perfect. We stop demanding that they complete us. Instead, we can appreciate them for who they are—fellow travelers on the journey of life, imperfect people just like us, companions rather than saviors. This foundation changes everything about how we approach friendship. Instead of desperately seeking someone to fix our loneliness, we can offer genuine companionship. Instead of demanding perfection, we can extend grace.

### JOHN 15:9-15

*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

### PRAYER

*Jesus, thank You for calling me Your friend. Help me find my ultimate fulfillment in You so that I can love others freely without unrealistic expectations. Teach me to be the kind of friend who points others to You. Amen.*

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### REFLECTION QUESTION

How might your friendships change if you stopped expecting people to fill the role that only God can fill in your life?

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# ROOTED: REAL ONES ONLY— THE ART OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP

5-Day Devotional • Day 3

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## SHOWING UP: THE ART OF PRESENCE

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**What we need to acknowledge is that so often, more than the perfect words we could say, our imperfect presence speaks louder.**

Great friendships aren't found—they're forged. They're built through the consistent choice to show up, again and again, through all seasons of life. This is the first pillar of biblical friendship: presence. In our culture of convenience, we've grown accustomed to relationships that require little from us. We connect when it's easy, engage when it's fun, and disappear when things get complicated. But real friendship requires something more costly: our consistent presence. Showing up means being there not just for the celebrations, but for the struggles. It means answering the phone at inconvenient times, sitting in hospital waiting rooms, and choosing to stay engaged even when the conversation gets difficult. It means showing up even when you don't have the perfect words to say. Sometimes our imperfect presence speaks louder than any perfect words we could offer. Your friend doesn't always need you to fix their problems or provide profound wisdom. Often, they just need to know they're not alone. This kind of friendship requires intentionality. It means putting down your phone when you're together, remembering important dates, and following up on conversations from weeks ago. It means building relational trust through small, consistent acts of faithfulness. Remember: you cannot call someone up if you haven't shown up for them. Trust is built through presence, and truth without trust feels like judgment rather than love.

### PROVERBS 17:17

*A friend loves at all times,  
and a brother is born for a time of adversity.*

### PRAYER

*Lord, help me to be a friend who shows up consistently. Give me the wisdom to know when to speak and when to simply be present. Help me build trust through faithful presence in both good times and difficult seasons. Amen.*

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### REFLECTION QUESTION

Who in your life needs you to show up more consistently, and what specific step can you take this week to be more present for them?

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# ROOTED: REAL ONES ONLY— THE ART OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP

5-Day Devotional • Day 4

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## CALLING UP: THE CHALLENGE OF GROWTH

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**We aren't just shaped by the path under our feet. We are also shaped by the company we keep.**

True friendship isn't just about comfort—it's about growth. The second pillar of biblical friendship is the courage to call each other up to become better versions of ourselves. This requires both wisdom and love, speaking truth in a way that builds rather than tears down. Many of us shy away from this aspect of friendship because it feels uncomfortable. We'd rather keep things light and avoid potential conflict. But a friend who never challenges you to grow isn't really a friend—they're just a companion for your comfort zone. Calling someone up means caring more about their character than their comfort. It means having difficult conversations when you see them making choices that could hurt them or others. It means asking hard questions and refusing to enable destructive patterns. But here's the key: you can't offer heartfelt advice if you don't know the heart of your friend. And you can't know their heart if you haven't invested in the relationship through consistent presence. Truth without trust feels like judgment, but truth spoken from a place of genuine love and understanding becomes a gift. This also requires humility on our part. We must be willing to receive correction as well as give it. The goal isn't to fix each other, but to sharpen each other—like iron sharpening iron. Sometimes the most loving thing we can do is hold up a mirror and

help our friends see their blind spots. Remember, we're shaped by the company we keep. Choose friends who will challenge you to grow, and be the kind of friend who lovingly challenges others.

### PROVERBS 27:17

*As iron sharpens iron,  
so one person sharpens another.*

### PRAYER

*God, give me the courage to speak truth in love and the humility to receive correction from others. Help me be a friend who cares more about character than comfort, and surround me with people who will challenge me to grow. Amen.*

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### REFLECTION QUESTION

Is there someone in your life who needs you to lovingly challenge them to grow, and do you have friends who are willing to do the same for you?

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# ROOTED: REAL ONES ONLY— THE ART OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP

## 5-Day Devotional • Day 5

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### LIFTING UP: THE POWER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

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**You may feel like you're sitting on the buddy bench alone, but there is one who will always stand with you.**

Biblical friendship is about lifting each other up—offering genuine encouragement that builds hope and strength. But there's a difference between hyping someone up and truly lifting them up. Real encouragement is rooted in truth and relationship, not just positive feelings. Encouragement means something when it's placed in the context of friendship. When someone who truly knows you—your struggles, your dreams, your fears—speaks words of affirmation, those words carry weight. They're not just empty compliments; they're truth spoken from a place of genuine care and understanding. Lifting someone up means seeing their potential when they can't see it themselves. It means reminding them of God's faithfulness when they're walking through dark valleys. It means celebrating their victories and helping them process their defeats. It means speaking life into their dreams and hope into their despair. This kind of friendship requires generosity—the understanding that there will be seasons where you're pouring more than you're receiving, and seasons where you're receiving more than you're giving. That's the natural ebb and flow of relationship. Sometimes you'll be the one offering strength; sometimes you'll be the one who needs it. As you invest in friendships, remember that you may feel like you're sitting on the buddy

bench alone sometimes, but there is One who will always stand with you. Even when human friendships disappoint or feel absent, God remains faithful. Let His love be the foundation that enables you to love others well. Become the kind of friend you want to have, and trust that God will bring the right people into your life at the right time.

#### 2 TIMOTHY 4:16-17

*At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.*

#### PRAYER

*Father, help me to be a source of genuine encouragement to others. Show me how to speak life and hope into the people around me. When I feel alone, remind me that You are always with me, and help me extend that same faithful presence to others. Amen.*

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#### REFLECTION QUESTION

How can you be more intentional about offering genuine encouragement to the people in your life, and who might God be calling you to lift up this week?

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