



Better Together

The Binder Co. Devotionals November 2018

The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Welcome to The Binder Co.: a do-it-yourself devotional and journaling experience for women who desire to grow deeper in God's Word on a daily basis. All you need is a 3-ring binder and a printer to get started — for free!

ABOUT THE BINDER CO.

The Binder Co exists to help women dive deeper into their faith and connect with others through free monthly eBooks of devotionals written by women for women. Every aspect of The Binder Co. is run by volunteers. Once a month, we release a free ebook with daily devotionals, corresponding scriptures, and daily challenges to help put what we learn into action. These daily devotionals are free to read, download, and print anytime. You can use them for yourself, your small group, friend group, or church group!

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Access the free archives of every calendar at emilyfurda.com/thebinderco

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Binder Co. (originally called Her Binder Project) was started in 2014 by Morgan Harper Nichols as a way to challenge herself to dig deeper into God's Word and put her faith into action on a daily basis. She made a calendar one month that included weekly themes, Bible verses, and daily challenges. Even though she originally started writing and designing these for herself, she felt the Lord leading her to share it with others. So, she put it on Pinterest, and was unbelievable with more women studying along each month. You can learn more about Morgan at themhn.co

When I was 11 years old, my worship dance teacher gave all of the dancers a small hot pink booklet of devotionals for Christmas. That was my first devotional, and I fell in love with studying God's word and learning how to apply it to my life. I've rarely been without a daily devotional since then. When Morgan asked me to help with The Binder Co. in 2016, it was a dream come true to be able to write devotionals. This Ministry and the women who read every day captured my heart. The more I became involved as a writer, editor, and project manager, the more it became a part of me.

In 2018, Morgan asked me if she could give me The Binder Co. I was speechless, which rarely happens. It was not an easy decision for her or one made lightly by myself. My joy comes when I see women come alive as they study each month. I'm studying and learning along with you. Today, thousands of women are joining this project each month, and we are so grateful for each one of you!

-Emily Furda Director, Editor In Chief emilyfurda.com instagram.com/emilyfurda

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12 NLT

1
1 Corinthians 12:12-27
Listen to "City on The Hill" by Casting Crowns.
youtu.be/R7MC2wu49Cw

2
Genesis 2:18
Why do you think God created us to need each other? Journal your thoughts about that and how it applies to your life now.

3
1 John 3:18
What is one way you can help someone this month? It could be in a large group or one person. Make plans to do it.

4
John 10:10
What is one area of your life you need to work on that affects your relationships? Pray over it asking God to not just show you how to work on it, but also His grace in your life.

5
1 Thessalonians 5:11
Listen to "Love with Your Life" by Hollyn.
youtu.be/XfVetZeaxuc

6
Colossians 3:15
Memorize today's verse or write it in your own words.

7
2 Corinthians 12:9
Write down what this verse means to you in regard to friendships.

8
Matthew 7:6
What does it mean to see your heart a valuable when it comes to friendships? Do you believe you're valuable? Journal your thoughts and let God speak to you.

9
Acts 17:28
Listen to "No Better U" by V.Rose.
youtu.be/oDJ2ogGrclK

10
James 5:16
Journal and pray about your view of friendship. Are there areas where walls of wise protection have become prisons of loneliness? Ask God to show you if there are safe people you can begin to let into your life.

11
Proverbs 17:17
Set aside time to pray for one of your friends every day this week.

12
Proverbs 13:20
Make a list of your 5 closest friends. Ask God for wisdom as you evaluate them. Are they friends who push you closer to Jesus or pull you farther away. Is there anything that needs to change when it comes to these relationships?

13
Zechariah 4:10
Listen to "On Time" by Joel Vaughn.
youtu.be/PzcyewHEXqU

14
Psalms 33:11
How does knowing God created you for a unique plan for you impact how you feel about your life when you look at others' lives?

15
Exodus 17:8-13
Listen to "More than You'll Ever Know" by Watermark.
youtu.be/P0UAszJCtPA

16
Romans 8:14-17
Have you ever misjudged someone based on her past or has someone ever misjudged you? Journal about how that experience can change how you see new people.

17
Proverbs 4:23
Listen to "Definition of Me" by Mandisa feat. Blanca.
youtu.be/7EpHv5ZhyCs

18
Psalms 27:10-11
Find a way to include someone in your life this week. You could invite her to do something with you or even send a message so she knows she's remembered.

19
Job 16:20-21
Pray with a friend this week. If it can't be in person, pray via phone call, video chat, or even a text.

20
Colossians 3:13
Listen to "Forgiveness" by TobyMac feat. Lecrae with Nirva Ready.
youtu.be/xfkhqpl81NA

21
James 1:19-20
Do you have any friendships where there is a deep wound? Pray over them, asking God to show how to reach out or if it's time to peacefully end a friendship.

22
Colossians 2:5
If you find yourself alone today, make plans to connect with a friend on social media. Even if you're not alone, let a friend who you primarily interact with on social media know she's important to you.

23
Ephesians 4:20-27
Listen to "Games" by Jamie Grace feat. AJ Rafael, Brittany Levox, Mariah Houghton, and Morgan Harper Nichols.
youtu.be/6jRiEj9B4wo

24
Proverbs 12:25-26
Journal your thoughts about any friendships that have you concerned. Pray over what you've written asking God for His wisdom about these relationships.

25
2 John 1:12
Why is important to sometimes talk face to face? Does that include both difficult and fun topics? Journal your thoughts, and ask God if there are any face to face chats you need to have.

26
2 Timothy 1:3-4
Listen to "Friends" by Michael W. Smith.
youtu.be/wdPE0vqh9RQ

27
1 Corinthians 12:4-6
Are you an introvert, extrovert, or ambivert? Write down of 3 strengths you have because of your personality.

28
1 Thessalonians 5:11
Listen to "Love Somebody" by Francesca Batistelli.
youtu.be/vmc-Z6wDkQg

29
2 Corinthians 1:3-5
Journal about a time in your past when you wanted a friend to help you but didn't have one. How can you be that friend to someone now?

30
Ephesians 2:19-20
Listen to "Circle of Friends" by Point of Grace.
youtu.be/zyM80i41JHI

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Thursday, November 1

Written by Emily Furda

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

This month we'll be learning about friendships. Learning how to be a friend and making friends is something that's a lifelong process. We may think we're supposed to have it figured out by the time we're adults, but sometimes, it's more confusing than ever. The older we get, the more people we meet.

Have you ever looked at someone and thought "What could she possibly have to offer me?" Maybe you were even intimidated by her. Often, we're quick to write off people who aren't like us. They may dress differently, speak differently, or act differently. Sometimes we even wonder if someone would ever want anything to do with us. We see someone who is thinner, has a better job, or more confident and think there is no way she'd want us in her life. Without realizing it, we judge people. We look down on others or we think they're looking down on us, so we retreat and isolate ourselves. The end result is we're lonely and in desperate need of love. How many times do we walk away from someone because unspoken rules and preconceived ideas say we shouldn't have anything to do with one another?

This month's verse tells us we're not supposed to be the same. We're vastly different for a good reason. Ears and feet don't seem to have much in common. They have completely different purposes, but they're both a part of one body. What the ear hears can help tell the foot where to walk. When feet step in something that makes a splash, the ears hear it and know it might be a good time to change direction.

Just like God created our bodies with different parts that all work for one common purpose, so He created each of us. We need each other. When we realize we need each other and each other's unique gifts, we shine in a way we never could on our own. We look, think, and live differently, but without each other, we're incomplete. We're better together.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "City on The Hill" by Casting Crowns.

youtu.be/R7MC2wu49Cw

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Friday, November 2

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols

Read Genesis 2:18

From the moment God created Eve to be with Adam, relationships have been a key part of our existence. We were not created to be alone. We were created to be in community with one another. As followers of Christ, we have been called to love God and love others through our relationship with our Savior; however, we can all agree relationships are far from perfect. In the chapter after we read about God creating Adam and Eve, we read how they begin to turn against Him, and in the following chapter, their son is killed by their other son.

Chapter by chapter, we see that while God is our Almighty Perfect Father, human beings are flawed. We see this in Scripture, and we see this in our own lives. Despite our flaws and imperfections, there is hope. There is hope in the friend we have in Jesus and the new life we have in Him. In Him, we have freedom to meet people and build friendships and community with others, even though we know the relationships won't be perfect.

Whether we're introverted, extroverted, or somewhere in between, whether we are in a thriving community of people like us or we are lone wolves and outsiders, God has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. In Him, we can rest assured, knowing He did not create us to walk alone. We can find peace in knowing we have a friend in Jesus, and He will provide what we need in every friendship, community, age, stage, and season of life.

Daily Challenge

Why do you think God created us to need each other? Journal your thoughts about that and how it applies to your life now.

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Saturday, November 3

Written by Emily Furda

Read 1 John 3:18

Have you ever found yourself in a phase of life when you need to make friends? Maybe you just graduated or moved and the Christian friends you saw all the time are no longer there in person. Maybe your job situation changed, or your closest friend moved. You stay in touch through calls, texts, and social media with your old friends, but you need friends where you are. You need friends you can show God's love to and receive love in return.

How do you make friends when it's hard to know where to start? One great way to show God's love and make friends is to volunteer. Look for small but often overlooked opportunities. Consider things you like to do and look for ways you can help. Maybe your church nursery needs a volunteer or a soup kitchen needs someone to help serve food. Pay attention at an event you're attending. If you see people putting away chairs, ask if you can help. Helping behind the scenes is less intimidating than being the new person having all eyes on her, and conversation naturally flows while accomplishing a common task. There aren't awkward pauses when a baby is crying, you're serving food, or you're lifting chairs. Try out different areas where you can help. You'll meet new people and fill a need for someone else at the same time. Many times, friendships are made when you find a common goal you can accomplish together. You'll develop a bond as you both show love towards each other and other people.

Daily Challenge

What is one way you can help someone this month? It could be in a large group or one person. Make plans to do it.

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Sunday, November 4

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols

Read John 10:10

When you are more intentional about your relationship with Jesus, it will prepare you to be more intentional about friendships and other relationships.

Your relationship with Jesus gives you direct access to God. This means the same God who created the universe is the same God who wants to know you personally. Not only does He want to get to know you, but He wants you to give your life abundantly; a better life than you've ever known. He wants to give you a life that isn't guided by insecurity, doubt, fear, or shame, but a life that is guided by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Having a life that is guided by Him, not fear, anxiety, insecurity, or anything else, is absolutely necessary for any healthy friendship or relationship. It doesn't matter if you already have great friendships, if you're struggling, or somewhere in between. It is absolutely vital that you work on whatever issues of insecurity, doubt, fear, pride, patience, temper, communication, unforgiveness, or anything else keeping your heart burdened and unable to build healthy relationships with others.

This does not mean you have to be without flaw in order to be someone's friend, or start a small group, or get more involved in church. With Jesus at the center of who you are, making you better day by day, you now have the strength and courage to deal with any dynamic of any friendship. Through Jesus, the Lord wants to do a work in you, and in your brothers and sisters in Christ. He wants to give the kind of joy, peace, patience, and confidence that isn't just what creates a solid group of friends or a strong community but makes the difference in every single person you encounter. So, keep on praying, worshipping, and serving the Lord. Fall more and more in love with Him every day and let Him give you a much better life, not just here on earth, but Eternally.

Daily Challenge

What is one area of your life you need to work on that affects your relationships? Pray over it asking God to not just show you how to work on it, but also His grace in your life.

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Monday, November 5

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11

On a daily basis, we have the opportunity to encourage and build one another up in the name of Jesus. Whether the only people we see in a day are a handful of family members or coworkers, or we find ourselves in large crowds with people we do not know well, wherever Jesus is, there is an opportunity to love, and He is everywhere! So, say goodbye to watching others from afar and waiting for certain things to fall in place before you actually engage in building community with others that is based on encouraging and uplifting one another. The person working at the grocery store or the gas station where you regularly visit may not be the kind of person you think of as a friend, but when you are with her, even in those few moments, you can treat her as a friend. When you are at church, and you're around those whom you don't have much in common with outside of church, you can still be a friend.

This is who Jesus was in the Gospels. He was constantly building the lives of others with whom He did not have anything in common with according to the cultural standards of His time. Yet still, He was The Way for people, both Jew and Gentile to enter the Kingdom of God. So, He made Himself open to all. This is the best way to view friendship and community. It can be challenging at times to find people who really, truly get us, who we feel like we can open up to. Instead of worrying about who, when, and where these people are going to come from, let us open our eyes to who God has already placed in our lives. This doesn't mean we always have to be social in every single moment of our lives. You can encourage someone by writing them a note or giving them a gift. You never know how God can use you to be a friend to someone. Keep your eyes open to what He is doing all around you in the people He has already placed in your life.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Love with Your Life" by Hollyn. youtu.be/XfVetZeaxuc

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Tuesday, November 6

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols

Read Colossians 3:15

Remain at peace when friends have let you down. Even when someone you deeply cared about didn't stay around as long as you thought she would, remember her absence does not have to rob you of the peace you find in the Lord.

And you know what? It's okay to admit you miss her. It's okay to acknowledge you miss having someone to talk to and you miss her being around. The reason why this is okay, is because when you acknowledge these things at the feet of Jesus, there is healing and freedom from the burden of what you miss. There is shelter and relief for the rain that seems to pour down on you relentlessly. At His feet, you are loved and reminded that no matter who or what you've been missing, you don't ever have to miss out on His presence and His peace written all over your life.

So, in the same way you may feel the impact of the missing piece of the person who used to be in your life, you can feel the peace of God keeping your heart and mind steady all the more. It's hard to see people go but hold onto the beautiful truth that the peace of God never leaves. Carry that peace with you, and let it become a part of who you are!

Because of the peace we find in our relationship with Christ, we don't have to let our worries about what if and what could have been take over our minds anymore. God can and will place new people and new opportunities in our lives, but we have no need to carry our old mindset of regret, doubt, and shame with us. Today is a new day in Him to remember He's not going anywhere. No matter who or what comes and goes or stays, His peace will always be with you.

Daily Challenge

Memorize today's verse or write it in your own words.

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Wednesday, November 7

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols
Read 2 Corinthians 12:9

It can be hard to watch friends or people you admire distance themselves from you when you don't know why. Whether it's something as small as being unfollowed on social media or no longer being invited to their parties or events, it can leave you wondering:

Am I no longer interesting enough to them? Is it because we no longer see each other all the time? Were they only my friend when we lived in the same dormitory or went to the same church?

And just like that, your mind begins to wander. You start thinking maybe you're not as interesting or exciting to be around as you used to be. You start to wonder if others are threatened by you or if they're bored of you. You start to wonder if you need to change things about yourself in order to be better received. Now, when you scroll by their photos on social media or you see them in passing, you still feel the pain of those wandering thoughts, and you let it affect the way you view yourself. Even if it hurts to see them distance themselves without you knowing why, know you have not lost any value because of it. Your value is still in Christ. His grace is still sufficient for you, and He will place people in your life who will add joy to your life. He will give you a peace that is not reliant on other people but in Him. So, don't focus so much on who is no longer there. Focus on the One who has never left: Jesus. He is the only one who will provide you with what you need when it comes to who is going to be in your life and why they are in your life for this particular season. Find peace in knowing in that. God makes no mistakes in putting people in our lives for the times they are there, and the love of Jesus will keep us, even when we don't know why people distance themselves or draw conclusions. His grace is still sufficient for us!

Daily Challenge

Write down what this verse means to you in regard to friendships.

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Thursday, November 8

Written by Emily Furda
Read Matthew 7:6

Sometimes it's hard to know how much to share when you meet a new friend. Do you open up right away, or stay where it's safe but lonely? Consider thinking about it this way:

When you go swimming, you'll likely encounter at least two types of people. There are those who dip their toe in the water to test the temperature, then slowly wade in a little at a time. Then there are those who dive in head first not caring about the temperature. There is nothing wrong with either approach when it comes to a well-known swimming spot, but if it's unfamiliar territory, it's always safest to slowly ease in.

Making new friends is unfamiliar territory. Sometimes in our desperation for friendship we can dive in head first, only to discover what we thought was a pleasant lagoon is really shark infested waters, but that doesn't mean we need live like a hermit crab on the sand fearful of every person we meet.

When it comes to meeting new people who you think you might connect with, it's healthy to have boundaries. Start off by testing the waters. Share things you're comfortable with most people knowing. If you feel uncomfortable, you can easily retreat to dry land. If you feel safe, and the other person shares too, go ahead and share a little more. Take it slow, and gradually develop a deeper friendship. It's okay if you choose to not let someone into your heart as deeply as others. Like a pearl found deep in the ocean, you are precious. You deserve to be treated with love and respect. Just like cool water on a hot day, true, Godly sisters in Christ will refresh you.

Daily Challenge

What does it mean to see your heart as valuable when it comes to friendships? Do you believe you're valuable? Journal your thoughts and let God speak to you.

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Friday, November 9

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols
Read Acts 17:28

So much of the advice out there about making new friends and finding community revolves around "being yourself." But how can we "be ourselves" when we find ourselves in a place we never saw ourselves at?

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are given access to God and Eternal Life in Him, which we could not have possibly attained before. We can walk with a renewed hope and a renewed mind, knowing that no matter the darkness and uncertainty that tries to fill our being, our hearts are already secured in Jesus' name. We can have confidence no matter what comes our way, because we know Who is with us.

We may hesitate to invite people over because everything is not decorated or organized the way we want it to be, but we should not let that stop us from inviting friends over. We may not feel comfortable making new friends at church or in our community because we're not that comfortable socializing, but we can't let that stop us from being friendly and showing Jesus to others, even we don't know what they'll think about our personality. We may desire to be in a better financial situation or have a better means of transportation, but that shouldn't stop us from making the sacrifice to go out of our way to spend time with others. These are just a few ways that we can be ourselves, who God has called us to be as His children.

We don't need to have it all together when we know He is the One who holds us together. When we know He is the One who gives us confidence and strength, we can engage with the people and the world around us with freedom. Even when being yourself seems uncertain, God's love for you is certain, and He will continue to use you on a daily basis!

Daily Challenge

Listen to "No Better U" by V.Rose. youtu.be/oDJ2ogGrckk

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Saturday, November 10

Written by Emily Furda

Read James 5:16

What have you learned about relationships this week?

Journal, draw, write a poem, or write a prayer about it below.

Are there parts of your life you want to hide because you're certain no one would love you if she saw them? Maybe it's shame about something you've done, something done to you, or sin you find yourself currently trapped in. Deep down you know you cannot escape this dungeon in your soul alone but letting a friend in is terrifying. Maybe you've tried before, and the person walked away leaving you with a gaping wound, or instead of helping you find your way, she controlled you. In self-defense, you haven't just built a wall around your heart, you've built a fortress complete with a moat filled with hungry alligators.

In today's reading, we see the power of talking about things we'd rather hide. Our hearts can be healed from anything, but we can't do it alone. Healing comes when secrets are shared in safe places, so the light of Jesus' love can shine. If you find yourself needing a friend who can be a safe place, pray about it. Ask God to bring someone into your life who can help you and shine His light of unconditional love in your dark places. Pray about it, even if you're afraid God might not care enough to help. He will answer that prayer when He knows you're ready.

It's scary to let someone in, but you don't have to do it all at once. The fortress you once built for protection can become a prison of loneliness. Little by little get to know this sister in Christ. If she's willing to take a raft across your moat filled with alligators, she just may love you enough to shine Jesus's light without judgment and walk with you. Maybe it's time for you to call off the alligators in the moat, or at least feed them so they don't attack.

Daily Challenge

Journal and pray about your view of friendship. Are there areas where walls of wise protection have become prisons of loneliness? Ask God to show you if there are safe people you can begin to let into your life.

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Sunday, November 11

Written by Heather Golden Horton
Read Proverbs 17:17

Written by Heather Golden Horton
Read Proverbs 17:17

Once you have found a close friend or a tribe of like minded friends, it may seem as if the journey of friendship will be a simple road. You may laugh together until you can't breathe, make memories together in your favorite places, and even walk through the mundane seasons of life without a single dent in your friendship. In order to foster the strongest friendships, you must ask yourself an important question, "What will happen when friendship gets messy?" You also must embrace the fact that every long-lasting friendship will eventually have its share of messy moments.

Nurturing deep, abiding friendships takes cooperative work. This is where Proverbs 17:17 speaks of loving "at all times". It is impossible to see the true strength of this kind of love until friends have walked through deep, messy moments together: the struggle of disagreement, a crisis in health, the disappointment of unrealized dreams, or anything that threatens to choke growing friendships. In these moments, love is often shown by action. These are the seasons where showing God's love to a friend will require sacrifice, prayer, and possibly forgiveness. In these moments, love might be best shown without words, simply by being present and listening.

In the end, whether you and your friend walk together for just a season or a lifetime, is truly in God's hands. Make a prayerful commitment to seek a friendship that is healthy for all involved. Strive to consistently show God's love. Finally, let God lead you each through the joy and messiness of life.

Daily Challenge

Set aside time to pray for one of your friends every day this week.

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Monday, November 12

Written by Diane Marie
Read Proverbs 13:20

What are your friends like? Do they love and serve the Lord? Do they encourage you to love and serve the Lord? Where do they like to go? What do they like to do? These questions are more important than they may seem. Let's look at Proverbs 13:20.

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. NLT

That's pretty black and white, isn't it? Assuming you want to be wise and want to stay out of harm's way, you need to take a good look at the company you keep.

You might be wondering how this fits in with evangelism. Didn't Jesus spend time with sinners? Didn't He dine with tax collectors and prostitutes? Of course He did, but what was His intention? Was He just with them to hang out and have fun, or was He there to love on them and draw them to Him? It's not an easy distinction to make; however, we need to be as prayerful and intentional about the friends we have. It's a big deal.

The Bible tells us we are to be in the world but not of it. We can spend time with people who are in the world, but we can't become one of them. We need to make sure we have a few close friends who are solid in their relationship with Christ.

Sometimes, you have to really seek them out. If you don't have friends like that, ask the Lord to help you find them. Yes, you can still spend time with your unsaved friends. Just make sure your intention is not just to have fun but to love on them and lead them to Jesus. Yes, you might lose a few friends, but you may lead some to the Lord. That is the most important relationship of all!

Daily Challenge

Make a list of your 5 closest friends. Ask God for wisdom as you evaluate them. Are they friends who push you closer to Jesus or pull you farther away. Is there anything that needs to change when it comes to these relationships?

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Tuesday, November 13

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols
Read Zechariah 4:10

Finding and cultivating true friendships and community takes time, and that's okay. Continue to sow seeds, and trust that God will grow everything in His timing.

Today's verse is a part of one of the eight visions God gave to the prophet Zechariah where He would reveal to Zechariah His plan for Israel. This vision was about Zerubbabel, who was the head of the tribe of Judah and the one who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. What's important to know here is that while the temple needed to be built, it didn't happen right away. The foundation was laid down, but it took years for the temple to be finished.

Remember this when it comes to your friendships and the community that is being built around you. Maybe you started a small group that only two other people regularly attend. Perhaps you feel like it's taking much longer than it should to build more authentic relationships at your church or in the community where you live. Maybe you feel, that in this season of life, your friend group is dwindling instead of growing, and you don't know what you're doing wrong.

If you're feeling this way, continue to be faithful to the Lord. Continue to be faithful to uplift those around you, even if they are small in numbers. Whether God is building or rebuilding community in your life, be patient. Know even if you only talk to one person today, and even if that person is your spouse, child, mother, or best friend, God is still working! He is always building and rebuilding in our lives. When we don't see the final result right away, we have to trust the foundation has already been laid down, and every single thing is built in His perfect timing.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "On Time" by Joel Vaughn. youtu.be/PzcyewHEXqU

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Wednesday, November 14

Written by Danielle Nicole
Read Psalm 33:11

Have you ever doubted your life has purpose? When we look at our lives, sometimes it might look like nothing is happening. We feel as if we have no purpose or maybe God doesn't have a plan for us.

In today's scripture, we are promised God's plans stand firm forever. He promises there is a plan for our lives and purpose for us. We can easily miss seeing our purpose when we set our eyes on what others have and what they do. Focusing on how other people serve a purpose can cause us to miss the purpose we have been promised. When we are comparing who we are with others we miss seeing who God intended us to be. We might start to think the only way we can successfully serve is if we are being just like someone else.

You weren't created to be like someone else. God's plan for your life isn't going to look like someone else's, and it might not look like what you pictured. We have no need to worry about God's plan for us because it is in His control. He is holding you in this season of unknowns and is with you through every moment. Though His plan may not be revealed to you right now, you will know it in time and until then, He will guide through every minute of every day.

So, we don't need to be afraid of what is to come, for He promises to go before us. When we are seeking to find our purpose, pray about it. We must hold to the promise that He has a plan for us and trust He will lead us to where we are meant to be.

He will open your eyes to His plan for your life in His timing. The key is to just keep praying and holding to His promise for you.

Daily Challenge

How does knowing God created you for a unique plan for you impact how you feel about your life when you look at others' lives?

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Thursday, November 15

Written by Emily Furda
Read Exodus 17:8-13

It's easy to look at someone who continues to fight no matter what is thrown her way, see her seemingly unwavering faith, and assume she has all the strength she needs. It's easy to forget even the strongest among us, even the most revered leaders, need help at times. Even the most battle tested soldier becomes battle weary at times.

In today's passage, we see Moses needed help. As long as his hands were held up, the Israelites were winning the war they were fighting. If his hands fell, so did the troops. God told Moses to keep his hands up, but He never said Moses had to do it alone.

We see two friends, one was his brother, come alongside him. They gave him a place to sit and held his arms for him. We all need others to hold our hands sometimes. Just because someone is used to fighting a difficult battle, doesn't mean she's capable of doing it alone. Your friends need you. Even if it's nothing more than a comfy place to sit, you can offer her something. You can hold her hand and lift her up in prayer. You can encourage her and strengthen her. You can help her fight off her enemies.

Sometimes, when someone is in the middle of a raging battle, she is focused only on what is right in front of her. She may be exhausted but not see any way out. She may be so focused on what she has to do that she can't even think of the help she may need. Sometimes it's helpful to ask a friend if you can do anything for her. Other times, it helps to offer something specific. Ask if she needs someone to play with the kids so she can take a nap or get her hair done. Send her a gift card for her favorite coffee shop or something you know she wants but wouldn't spend money on for herself. Sometimes, encouraging her spirit is more important than trying to change her circumstances. When you encourage you friend's heart, you help strengthen her. You might not be able to fight your friend's battle, but you can help her to continue to fight. That is a priceless gift.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "More than You'll Ever Know" by Watermark.
youtu.be/P0UAszJCtPA

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Friday, November 16

Written by Emily Furda
Read Romans 8:14-17

None of us have a choice about what family we're born into. Sometimes that feels unfair. Abuse, absent parents, or financial hardships growing up can make you feel as if you can never escape. Maybe you feel tied to your family either as a responsibility or as if you can't break free from choices others made. You look at others and wish you had their life.

Sometimes the other life isn't what it seems. Parents' and siblings' reputations create a standard that feels like a heavy burden. There can be expectations from within your family to achieve certain things. You can feel as if you must attend a certain college or must be perfect in everything from your grades to your Christian walk.

When you meet someone who comes from an entirely different background, chances are you have more in common than you think. You both are trying to create your own lives but may still feel tied to your family in a way you don't want to be. Your pasts may be different, but as women in Christ you now have a common bond. If you've accepted Jesus as your savior, then you are God's child. You have the same Father. Today's verses say you can call God "Abba," which means "Daddy." He's not there to hurt you or to give you some kind standard you can never measure up to.

Instead of focusing on what makes you different, focus on what you have in common. You have the same loving heavenly Father who wants to heal every wound and take every burden from you. You both can help each other, and in doing so you're creating your own family of sisters in Christ. No matter what your past looks like, you have a glorious future waiting for you, and now you get to choose who is a part of your future.

Daily Challenge

Have you ever misjudged someone based on her past or has someone ever misjudged you? Journal about how that experience can change how you see new people.

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Saturday, November 17

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols

Read Proverbs 4:23

What have you learned about relationships this week?

Journal, draw, write a poem, or write a prayer about it below.

There will be some people who only want to know you in the moment: when you look your best, when you feel your best, or when you can best meet their momentary needs. It can be tempting, at times, to seek comfort and satisfaction in their attention and affection, but please know this:

Your heart is attached to something far beyond the shallow end...out in the deep, beyond the boundaries of the comfortable, casual place where far too many people have settled, because they don't want to commit to anything beyond the shore. Please remember, you were made for more. Please remember, God has been calling you deeper from the start, for He has set Eternity in the human heart. He has created your heart, like a water well, filled with life, and everything you do flows from it.

Remember this when it seems like they only love you in passing or they get what they want and leave. Not everyone will be ready for depth. Not everyone will be willing to catch more than a glimpse of what God is doing in your heart, but you will be okay because when you know Jesus you know there is more to you, and you know there is more to come. When you know eternity awaits you, you know your life is not controlled by what happens on the shore because you are constantly being drawn deeper into His grace and truth, further than you've ever gone before.

This is what God is doing in the water well of your heart, so protect it. Guard it. Keep watch of those who only want to come in and out. Pay attention to who stays and is willing to go deeper, not just because of you, but because they are exploring the glorious depth God has placed in them as well.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Definition of Me" by Mandisa feat. Blanca.

youtu.be/7FpHv5ZhyCs

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Sunday, November 18

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols
Read Psalm 27:10-11

Sometimes, even as adults, we can feel left out. We can even feel left out in our own friend groups, in our families, and even at church. These are not easy feelings to navigate through, especially in the places where we should always feel accepted and received; however, when that feeling comes about, no matter the reason, hold onto this:

You may not feel like you fit in everywhere all the time, but when you know, through your relationship with Jesus, you fit into the Kingdom of God, you realize that belonging there is the foundation of the true, authentic community you need, even while you're here on earth.

The more time you spend with Jesus, the more peace you will begin to have when you start to feel left out or as if you don't belong. We cannot control how other people respond or react to us, but we can choose to react in a way that reflects Jesus. We can choose to not let it get to our core if a family member makes a passive aggressive comment to us or friends from church seem to always get together without us. These feelings can be hard to navigate through on our own terms, but when we know our foundation is Jesus, and through Him we belong in the Kingdom of God, we will be reminded to put our hope in the bigger picture.

So, keep your head high and your eyes fixed on Jesus and the Kingdom work you have been called to. Everyone may not always "get" you, and there may be times where you aren't invited, and you have no idea why, but Jesus is still your hope. Through Him, you are provided for, and He will continue to give you everything you need.

Daily Challenge

Find a way to include someone in your life this week. You could invite her to do something with you or even send a message so she knows she's remembered.

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Monday, November 19

Written by Emily Furda
Read Job 16:20-21

Even the strongest of your friends will have moments when she is weak and maybe even question if God can hear her. In those moments, she doesn't need a lecture; she needs a friend. Sometimes, we feel helpless because we can't do anything for our friends, but as Christians, we bring something unique to any relationship because we have a relationship with the Lord who loves our friends more than we do. We can pray.

Praying is the most powerful thing you can do because it brings our all-loving all-powerful God into any situation. Yes, when we can, tangible actions are important, but God wants us to always come to Him as well. He can heal your sister's heart in a way you can't. When it seems as if your sister in Christ has lost all hope, hope for her. When she feels too broken to pray, pray for her.

Never underestimate the healing power of praying with her. If you're talking, stop and pray. Even if you stumble over your words, your friend knows your heart and so does God. If you can't talk, then type a prayer, and text it to her. If the opportunity comes up, send a voice message or short video of you praying. It doesn't have to be fancy, and you don't even need makeup. Hearing you caring enough to pray, and sharing that prayer with her, can help your friend to hope and pray again. Your example of love reminds her of God's love for her.

You may not be able to change anything for your friend, but you know the God who can, and you can lead her to Him.

Daily Challenge

Pray with a friend this week. If it can't be in person, pray via phone call, video chat, or even a text.

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Tuesday, November 20

Written by Emily Furda
Read Colossians 3:13

We all face times in our lives when we need to give forgiveness. Sometimes forgiveness is harder to give than others. It may not even be friends who hurt us, it's people we don't even know. We may see strangers as enemies because of our own preconceived ideas. When people wound us deeply, we don't feel like forgiving, yet we know God calls us to forgive. The good news is we don't have to forgive in our own strength. Just like loving others flows from the love we receive from God, forgiveness comes from the forgiveness we receive from God. You may be thinking "But you have no idea what happened to me!" That's true. Only you and God know the depth of your pain. In order to truly forgive, we have to face the pain and fully acknowledge what it is we're forgiving. When we're hurting beyond belief, forgiveness is the last thing we want to do. In Psalm 52:12 we see David knew what it was like to not want to surrender to God. This was part of his prayer.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. NIV

When forgiveness is hard to give, consider praying like David did. Ask God to change your heart. Author and speaker Marilyn Meberg suggested to pray this prayer when you want to follow God, but you also don't want to forgive: "Lord, make me willing to be willing to forgive."

When we acknowledge we want to honor God and we need help to even want to forgive, God can change us. It likely won't happen overnight, but as you begin to allow God to change your heart, you'll see others differently. Forgiveness doesn't always mean reconciliation. Sometimes we need to maintain healthy boundaries, but we can still forgive. God can change our hearts to love like He does and see people the way He wants us to see them. It takes courage to ask God to help you to want to forgive, but choosing to ask God to make you willing to forgive can lead to healing for your hurting heart.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Forgiveness" by TobyMac feat. Lecrae with Nirva Ready. youtu.be/xfkhqpl81NA

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Wednesday, November 21

Written by Emily Furda
Read James 1:19-20

Friendships are beautiful, but they can also be difficult. We're all flawed people who will hurt each other at times. When we're hurting, we often act on emotion, not considering the long-term consequences. We can make an angry social media post, yell, gossip, or refuse to speak. We can even let our minds wander to the point of a panic attack or a sleepless night.

What would happen if we stopped and prayed instead?

If we want to have Godly intentional friendships, we must handle conflict in a Godly way. Instead of running to another person or letting your thoughts spiral, run to the Lord. Ask Him for wisdom. Sometimes we do need to distance ourselves from a friend who habitually hurts us. Sometimes, we just need a conversation. Reach out to your friend as soon as possible instead of waiting for her to come to you. Reach out even if it's awkward. Keep in mind today's verse. Ask questions without accusing so you can understand what happened. She may not have meant to hurt you and you may not have been the only one in tears. She just may not have known how to reach out. Also, be willing to listen if she says you hurt her.

Instead of fighting with your friend, fight for your friendship. Beautiful things can happen when we're willing to set aside pride, listen to each other, and be honest in a gentle manner. We have an opportunity to show and receive love. When you know you can talk about hurt feelings, it builds your trust and makes your friendship a safe space. You just may come out of a hurtful situation closer friends than you were before.

Daily Challenge

Do you have any friendships where there is a deep wound? Pray over them, asking God to show how to reach out or if it's time to peacefully end a friendship.

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Thursday, November 22

Written by Emily Furda
Read Colossians 2:5

Have you ever panicked as you watched the battery symbol on your phone get lower and lower? As you get closer to being cut off from your phone, you realize something. Your friends are in there!

While social media can be distracting, it also has the power to sustain or even create friendships. Many people have friends whom they've never met in person. They may have met in a group on Facebook, have a mutual friend who digitally introduced them, frequently interacted on someone's livestream, or connected by engaging on an Instagram post.

Even without Facebook, the Apostle Paul had friends he never met. His letters comprise much of the New Testament, including today's reading. Some of those letters were to people he never met. Online friendships can be just as meaningful as ones in person, but they do require some different navigation. Always use extra caution. People can easily pretend to be someone else, so ease into things. Since you don't have the convenience of close proximity, be intentional about communicating. Reply to messages in a timely manner, comment on social media posts, and when possible, set aside time to talk. Just because you can't be together in person, doesn't mean you can't do something together. Why not read the same book and discuss it? You can even have coffee together. Grab your favorite blend and enjoy a video chat.

Never ignore those who are physically near you because social media feels easier. At the same time, you don't have to exclude people just because you've never met them. Remember, if you're sisters in Christ, you will meet someday, and have all of eternity together.

Daily Challenge

If you find yourself alone today, make plans to connect with a friend on social media. Even if you're not alone, let a friend who you primarily interact with on social media know she's important to you.

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Friday, November 23

Written by Emily Furda
Read Ephesians 4:20-27

Why do we hurt each other? One minute we're saying something nice to a friend, then as soon as she's gone, we say the opposite.

You complimented the picture of her outfit she sent you. Then, you immediately forward the photo to another friend and ask if she's ever seen an uglier sweater. Someone suggests meeting up for coffee after church and you readily agree. In the back of your mind you remember you told your friend you'd include her, but you keep quiet. You try not to think about it until you realize you're at your table laughing and she locks eyes with you as she's paying for her mocha latte to go. When someone else brings her up, you might not be insulting her, but you're not bothering to stop the gossip another friend is spreading. You think as long as you don't repeat it, you're not really gossiping, but you are. You're letting another person say something mean without being a voice of truth.

"Ghosting" has been around for years. It's just recently that it has a name. At some point you decide you don't want to be friends with someone. So, instead of being honest, you stop replying to messages, texts, and emails. Maybe you occasionally click "like" or comment on one of her social media posts just to be nice, but you're sending mixed signals. Sometimes, friendships run their course. It's okay to not be as close as you once were, but if there is a reason for suddenly and intentionally backing away from a friend, be honest.

At some point we've all been on the receiving end of these kind of hurtful situations, yet most of us are also guilty of playing them ourselves. Human beings aren't pawns to be used in a game, so we can become the victorious queen. Those around us are real people with real feelings. As Christians, we're called to love with the same kind of love Jesus gives us. That means we stand up for truth, we speak gently, and we consider each other's feelings. Sometimes, it's hard to live out that kind of love, but the reward of rich friendship is greater than any fake victory gained at another's expense.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Games" by Jamie Grace feat. AJ Rafael, Brittany Levox, Mariah Houghton, and Morgan Harper Nichols.
youtu.be/6jRiEj9B4wo

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Saturday, November 24

Written by Emily Furda

Read Proverbs 12:25-26

What have you learned about relationships this week?

Journal, draw, write a poem, or write a prayer about it below.

Every friendship you have will change you. Some more than others, but change is inevitable. When you let people deep into your personal life, they have power. If you've been deeply wounded, giving someone power is terrifying. Some people seek to control and manipulate you out of their own selfish desires. At first, it may seem as if you're being changed for the best, but you eventually realize your heart is shattered. Sometimes, it can feel as if walking on broken glass is less painful than letting a new friend into your heart, so you decide not to step out at all. Simply looking out the window is safer, but it's lonely.

So how do you decide who can get close and who can't? One way is to keep in mind the difference between power and control. When you let someone into your private life, they have power. Their words and actions can heal or hurt you. Someone with selfish or unhealthy motives may use that power to control, hurt, or manipulate you, but a Godly friend will use that power for good. She can speak life into the places you thought were dead and help you pick up the shattered pieces of your heart. Those friends are priceless and will change you by bringing you closer to Jesus.

If you feel afraid because of the power you've given someone in your life, stop and ask yourself what is doing with the power she has. If she is respecting who you are and understanding of your anxiety about friendship, try letting her in. Letting in safe friends may feel like walking on broken glass, but on the other side of the shattered window, is a new world of freedom and love.

Daily Challenge

Journal your thoughts about any friendships that have you concerned. Pray over what you've written asking God for His wisdom about these relationships.

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Sunday, November 25

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols
Read 2 John 1:12

In today's passage, we see John knew speaking face to face was far more valuable than firing of a letter. He made it a point to let the recipients of his letter know he valued their face to face interaction, and he would wait until they were together to really speak with them.

Be careful of the letters you send to others. Whether they're being sent in the form of a text, a social media message, or an email, ask yourself, "Should I make a point to speak with this person face to face? Is it absolutely mandatory I send them a text right now?"

This is especially important to remember when it comes to disagreements or challenging matters. It can be so tempting to want to draft out all of your feelings to that person, but even though there is a time and place for the written word, the emotion and true intent behind your words are lost. When it comes to dating and relationships, texting has quickly become the primary source of communication for many; however, it's not representative of a true connection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in the words you choose to text and the words you choose to speak. There is a time and a place for both, but don't neglect face to face interaction for the sake of convenience.

Daily Challenge

Why is important to sometimes talk face to face? Does that include both difficult and fun topics? Journal your thoughts, and ask God if there are any face to face (or video) chats you need to have with a friend.

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Monday, November 26

Written by Emily Furda
Read 2 Timothy 1:3-4

It can be hard to say goodbye to a friend, yet we say it more often than we'd like to admit. We graduate, and friends move away. New jobs may mean new schedules and you can't see each other often. One person is getting married or having children while another friend is still single. You don't mean to lose touch, but you're interests pull you in different directions. Whether you had to say goodbye or you slowly lost touch, you often miss your once close friends.

Even with your current friends, chances are you won't all always live in the same area or see each other as often as you do now. It may be painful, but it's okay. Celebrate your friends. Take pictures together. Then, put the phones down and enjoy talking about everything and nothing. Don't let the fear of changing friendships stop you from opening your heart up to others.

Today, with social media, it's easier than ever to keep in touch with friends who are no longer physically present in our lives. It's also possible to find the friend who you once spend many summer days playing with in your neighborhood. She may even be the one looking for you.

Remember to keep praying for your friends, even the ones you haven't seen in years. You may not know this side of heaven how your prayers impacted their lives. If Jesus is the Lord of your land your friends' lives, you will see each other again.

Don't hold back when it comes to making new friends because you're afraid they'll leave. Keep loving your friends. God knows your need for friends in every stage of your life, past, present, and future. It's okay to say goodbye, and it's okay to say hello.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Friends" by Michael W. Smith.
youtu.be/wdPE0vqh9RQ

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Tuesday, November 27

Written by Emily Furda
Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Sometimes, the most meaningful friendships are between people who have different styles relating to the world. They see qualities in each other that are sometimes overlooked, they broaden each other's perspectives, and challenge each other to become better.

Do you know someone who is an extrovert, or are you an extrovert? She's the kind of woman who seems to make friends everywhere she goes. If no one is around, she can make friends with a potted plant. Her natural charisma draws people to her, but when you know many people on a surface level, it's hard to find women you can let into your heart. If you're an extrovert, look at those you interact with regularly. Is there someone who often seems quiet? Intentionally take time to remove yourself from the center of the action and start a one-on-one conversation with her. You may be surprised to learn the woman who is an introvert or ambivert (someone who doesn't clearly fall into either category) isn't quiet, she's actively observing the world around her in a way you miss.

If you are an introvert or ambivert, don't assume an extrovert who seems popular has no space for you in her life. She needs you, someone who observes things she may miss. Sometimes, she needs a break from her social butterfly ways, and you can show her how. She may also be the one to bring some fun adventures to your life. There are no right or wrong personalities. God gave you your personality for a reason. Everyone has a different way of showing God's love, and that is important. Celebrate each other's personalities! God made us unique because He needs each of us, and we need each other.

Daily Challenge

These personalities don't necessarily mean shy or outgoing. An introvert is someone who often feels drained after being with people. An extrovert often feels energized after being with others. An ambivert is a mix of both, depending on the situation. Are you an introvert, extrovert, or ambivert? Write down of 3 strengths you have because of your personality.

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The Binder Co Devotionals November 2018: Better Together

Wednesday, November 28

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols
Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11

On a daily basis, we have the opportunity to encourage and build one another up in the name of Jesus. Whether the only people we see in a day are a handful of family members or coworkers, or we find ourselves in large crowds with people we do not know well, wherever Jesus is, there is an opportunity to love, and He is everywhere! So, say goodbye to watching others from afar and waiting for certain things to fall in place before you actually engage in building community with others that is based on encouraging and uplifting one another. The person working at the grocery store or the gas station where you regularly visit may not be the kind of person you think of as a friend, but when you are with her, even in those few moments, you can treat her as a friend. When you are at church, and you're around those whom you don't have much in common with outside of church, you can still be a friend.

This is who Jesus was in the Gospels. He was constantly building the lives of others with whom He did not have anything in common with according to the cultural standards of His time. Yet still, He was The Way for people, both Jew and Gentile to enter the Kingdom of God. So, He made Himself open to all. This is the best way to view friendship and community. It can be challenging at times to find people who really, truly get us, who we feel like we can open up to. Instead of worrying about who, when, and where these people are going to come from, let us open our eyes to who God has already placed in our lives. This doesn't mean we always have to be social in every single moment of our lives. You can encourage someone by writing them a note or giving them a gift. You never know how God can use you to be a friend to someone. Keep your eyes open to what He is doing all around you in the people He has already placed in your life.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Love Somebody" by Francesca Batistelli.
youtu.be/vmc-Z6wDkQg

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Thursday, November 29

Written by Morgan Harper Nichols
Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Think about the variety of people you have met and the things you have been through in your life. Think about where you grew up, the friends you had ten years ago, the mentors and teachers you've had, and think about the people you know today. Even though some relationships may have left you heartbroken and scarred, by the grace of God, you are still here, and you are stronger than you've ever been.

At the end of the day, you can look back over your life and live to tell the story of the mountains and valleys He has brought you through. You can think back on certain conversations and certain moments with people from every phase of your life and thank God for the lessons learned and the opportunities to be healed and grow.

With every word in every chapter of your story, God is able to stir wisdom and strength in you that can be a blessing to those you encounter today. Have you experienced heartbreak? Become friends with someone who is dealing with that now. Tell her your story. Walk with her through this. Are you battling something with your health that is hard to talk about? There is someone else out there in your church, in your favorite Facebook group, or even in your own family who is scared and unsure of how to talk about her own health diagnosis. Have you been mistreated or dealt with things society often treats as taboo? The wisdom you have now from that experience can help someone in your small group or someone at your job.

This is what it means to be a friend. This is what it means to build community. Pray and ask the Lord to help you nurture the wisdom He has stored up within you from your life's experiences and how it can be used to help others. We cannot change what we've been through, but we can help others get through those same things. We can be the friend to others who we needed. We can build community woven together by the grace of God and what He gives us to share with one another.

Daily Challenge

Journal about a time in your past when you wanted a friend to help you but didn't have one. How can you be that friend to someone now?

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Friday, November 30

Written by Emily Furda
Read Ephesians 2:19-20

No matter who we are or where we come from, we were designed to need each other. Yet, we all have days when we feel lonely. What does God say about that? What do we do when we desperately want friends? Psalm 68:6 is a promise we can cling to:

God sets the lonely in families. NIV

It may take time, but He will never forget His promise to you. Ask Him to keep your heart open to the people He brings into your life.

When we choose to make Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, we are part of the family of God. We're more than friends, we're sisters in Christ. Whether our friends live next door or on the other side of the world, we have a promise of eternity together, because of Jesus.

Pause for a moment. Where are you right now as you read this? Are you at your kitchen table, curled up in bed, or at your favorite coffee shop? There are women all over the world in cities you've never heard of reading these same words. Together we're learning about the incredible gift God has given us: each other.

One day, we will meet. It may not be this side of heaven, but when we do, we will have eternity together. Until then, remember, you are not meant to go on this journey of life alone. We were created to be better together.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Circle of Friends" by Point of Grace.
youtu.be/zyM80i41JHI

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