

# THE LOST ART OF

# FRIENDSHIP

## WORKPLACE EDITION

You may be thinking, “I have enough friends outside of work.” or “My coworkers and I don’t have different values, so why bother trying to be friends?” or “What’s the purpose of building a friendship with my coworkers?” For those of us who interact with others at or within our work, we often find ourselves compartmentalizing our lives, neatly separating our work from our personal relationship with Jesus. But what if we could blur those boundaries, allowing our work relationships to evolve beyond the traditional coworker role into a space where we could feel comfortable to show the love of Jesus? In this 5-week study, we’ll explore the concept of moving from the coworker level to becoming true acquaintances or even friends with our colleagues.

While maintaining a professional distance is fine, let's open our minds to the idea of nurturing deeper connections with those we spend a significant amount of time with to be able to live out our faith at work without an agenda. What would it look like to show the love of Jesus and bridge the gap between coworkers and friends? How might this positively impact our work environments, relationships, and possibly point them to a relationship with Jesus? Join us on this journey together as we learn how Jesus is the model for authentic friendships and explore how to apply these principles in our workplaces.

### WEEK 1- INITIATE: FOLLOW JESUS’ APPROACH

1. Thinking about your workplace, have you ever initiated a friendship with a colleague or someone from a different team? What was your experience like?
2. How can we apply the lessons from Martha and Mary’s story in our workplace by initiating or nurturing friendships with colleagues amidst our busy work schedules?
3. What thoughts come to mind about the Parable of the Sower passage? Have you seen this principle play out in your life? If so, how?

## WEEK 2 - INVEST: BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION

1. Do you believe it's important to invest in friendships at your work? Why or why not? How can investing in these relationships positively impact the work environment and team dynamics?
2. The Bible reading from Acts 2:42-47 shows the early church investing in their friendships by devoting themselves to teaching, fellowship, sharing meals, and prayer. How can we apply these principles in our workplace to foster a sense of community and support among coworkers?
3. Share a time when someone at a place you worked at invested in their relationship with you. What was it about their investment that makes it so memorable to you today?

## WEEK 3- ENRICH: EXPERIENCE GOD'S BEAUTIFUL AND DIVERSE FAMILY

1. Reflecting on Jesus' diverse group of disciples, what can we learn about the value of diversity in our friendships? How does embracing diversity enrich our lives and help us grow in our faith?
2. As you saw in the daily Bible reading, there are many ways to enrich your friend circle (generationally, racially, ethnically, politically, etc.). What is something you have learned from a friend who is different from you that you would likely not have known otherwise?
3. How can we apply the lessons from the stories we read this week of the Good Samaritan and Jesus and Zacchaeus in our workplace to demonstrate love, kindness, and inclusivity?

## WEEK 4- STRENGTHEN: CULTIVATE OPENNESS AND HONESTY

1. How have you generally approached openness and vulnerability? Would people say you're an open book, guarded, or somewhere in between? Why do you think that is?
2. How would you define the type of person or coworker you would trust being open and vulnerable with? How could you grow to be more of that type of person for somebody else?
3. How can we emulate the faith and commitment displayed in the story of the four friends bringing the paralyzed man to Jesus, and support our colleagues during their workplace challenges? What benefits can arise from this mutual vulnerability in a professional context?

## WEEK 5- DISCERN: SELECT THE RIGHT FRIENDS

1. Take all five weeks of this study into consideration. How would you define the type of friend you should be, and what should your friendships look like?
2. How have your workplace friendships influenced your behavior and character?
3. How might deepening your friendship with Jesus help you grow your friendships in the workplace or look for friendships outside of the workplace?

Friendships have a powerful influence in our lives and the lives of others. As we take what we learned from our time together, let's be intentional in choosing friendships that nurture our growth as followers of Christ and continue to reflect God's love and grace in and out of our workplace.