

AUTHENTIC DISCIPLESHIP AND
INTENTIONAL DISCIPLEMAKING

“LOVING OTHERS”

Small Group Disciplemaking
Foundations



COVENANT EFC

Session 3

"Loving Others In God's Family"

Rev. Ivan Ho





Welcome & Warm Up (10 mins)

Count the number of very close friends you currently have (i.e. trusted friends with whom we can be vulnerable and share our lives openly).

By a show of hands, how many among us have **more than four** such friends? For those who raised their hands, let's have a few of us briefly share about one very close friend – what qualities make this person suitable as a very close friend.



Worship (15 mins)

Worship the God who knows us, loves us and calls us His friend with the songs below or any song of your choice.

The Power of the Cross (Keith & Kristyn Getty)

Known and Loved (CityAlight)

He Calls Me Friend (CityAlight)

Note: These are suggestions. You may select other songs.



Word (10 mins)

Play Teaching Video. You can turn on the subtitles if it is helpful.

After watching the video, proceed to the activities that follow.





Activity 1: Discuss & Share (10 mins)

In pairs, read aloud John 15:15 and Proverbs 18:24 slowly. Pause for a few moments. Then share with each other:

1. What are a few things that stood out for you from those two verses?
2. What does the idea of “spiritual friend” mean to you?



Activity 2: Discuss & Share (30 mins)

In **Groups of 3 to 4 members**, take turns to share either **A or B**. Do allocate equal time for each person to share, while the others practise loving the speaker by listening really well.

A. If you currently have a group of spiritual friends

1. How many persons are there in the group (without specifying names)?
2. What does the group do in practice (e.g. frequency and manner of meetings, nature of activities, key principles)
3. What blessings have you personally enjoyed?



Group Activity 2: Discuss & Share (30 mins)

B. If you currently do not have a group of spiritual friends

1. What are your thoughts about the idea?
2. What initial steps, if any, would you like to take?
3. By when – towards developing such friendships over the next 6 months?

(For example, as an initial step, you could start by asking God for a name – perhaps someone in your CG – a person whom you could begin to regularly pray with as a prayer buddy.)



Group Activity 2: Discuss & Share (30 mins)

Spend the **last 10 minutes** of this segment in prayer for one another in light of what each person has shared.

Ask God to help each one to grow as a friend to others, and to bless and be blessed by a group of spiritual friends.



Scripture Memory (5 mins)

Pair up with someone and review/recite John 13:34-35 and 1 Corinthians 13:7-8a from the previous sessions. Then practice memorizing the following Scripture for Session 3: "Loving Others in God's Family".

Jesus said to His disciples, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."

– John 15:15 (ESV)



Next Steps (5 mins)

Ask God for a prayer buddy, if you currently don't have one.

Take steps towards developing spiritual friendships, e.g. using the 3-2-1 model.

Check out the Additional Notes and Further Workshops & Resources for Growth.

Additional Notes (for reading after CG time):

1. God created us to live in community. A person's need for fellow human companionship existed before the Fall of humankind. Regarding Adam's lack of human companionship, God said, "It is not good..." (Gen 2:18). It is striking to note that God said this in the context of the first human being, Adam, living in a pre-Fall state and with full access to and communion with God! This tells us that God created us for community, i.e. He created us in such a way that we fundamentally need human companionship in addition to communion with God. In reality, we also experience God through our relationships with other human beings created in His image (Gen 1:26-27).
2. It is interesting that [a UK research article](#) published online in 2016 by R.I.M. Dunbar in the Royal Society Open Science journal found that the average person, notwithstanding having hundreds of Facebook "friends", has just **14** close friends (referred to as "sympathy group"), and only **four** very close friends (referred to as "support clique") whom one would actually depend on for emotional and social support in times of crisis. The small number of such friends appear to be due to cognitive constraints, limited time for face-to-face interaction, combined with a relationship between time invested in a friendship and its quality as rated in terms of emotional closeness.
3. In his book *Sacred Companions*, David Benner wrote on how Christians can learn to be spiritual friends who pay attention and listen to one another's experiences of God in the journey of life. In this way, we love, support and pray for one another as we seek to do the will of God. It's well worth a read!



Further Resources

Online Resources:

- [Spiritual Friendship – Dr Timothy Keller \[Sermon\]](#)
- [Friendship – Pastor Colin Smith \[Sermon\]](#)
- [Spiritual Friendship Stories | Graceworks](#)
- [Spiritual Friendship | Discipleship Resources | The Navigators](#)



Further Resources

Recommended Books:

- David Benner, *Sacred Companions* (2004)
- Tan Soo-Inn, *3-2-1: Following Jesus in Threes* (2013)
- Drew Hunter, *Made For Friendship* (2018)
- Kelly Needham, *Friend-ish: Reclaiming Real Friendship in a Culture of Confusion* (2019)
- Jennie Allen, *Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World* (2023)



Workshops & Resources for Growth:

BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Through D.R.E.A.M.S. (Didactic, Reflection, Experiential, Accountability, Modeling and Spiritual growth), Presence & Pitfalls, Pastor Valerie will show participants what it looks like to practice the presence of God when we relate to one another and what pitfalls we can avoid to minimize conflicts in relationships.

Date: 23 and 30 May 2026 (2-part series)

Time: 0900 to 1300h (per session)

Venue: CT Hub #10-10, ACK Centre

Registration: Please register by 18 May 2026, 6pm.



Workshops and Resources for Growth:

The art of marriage @CEFC

The Art of Marriage (AOM) retreat seeks to strengthen marriages leveraging 6 well-choreographed biblically-based video teaching sessions covering how **“love happens, fades, dances, gets interrupted, sizzles, and leaves a legacy”** including couple and group discussions and ministry time.

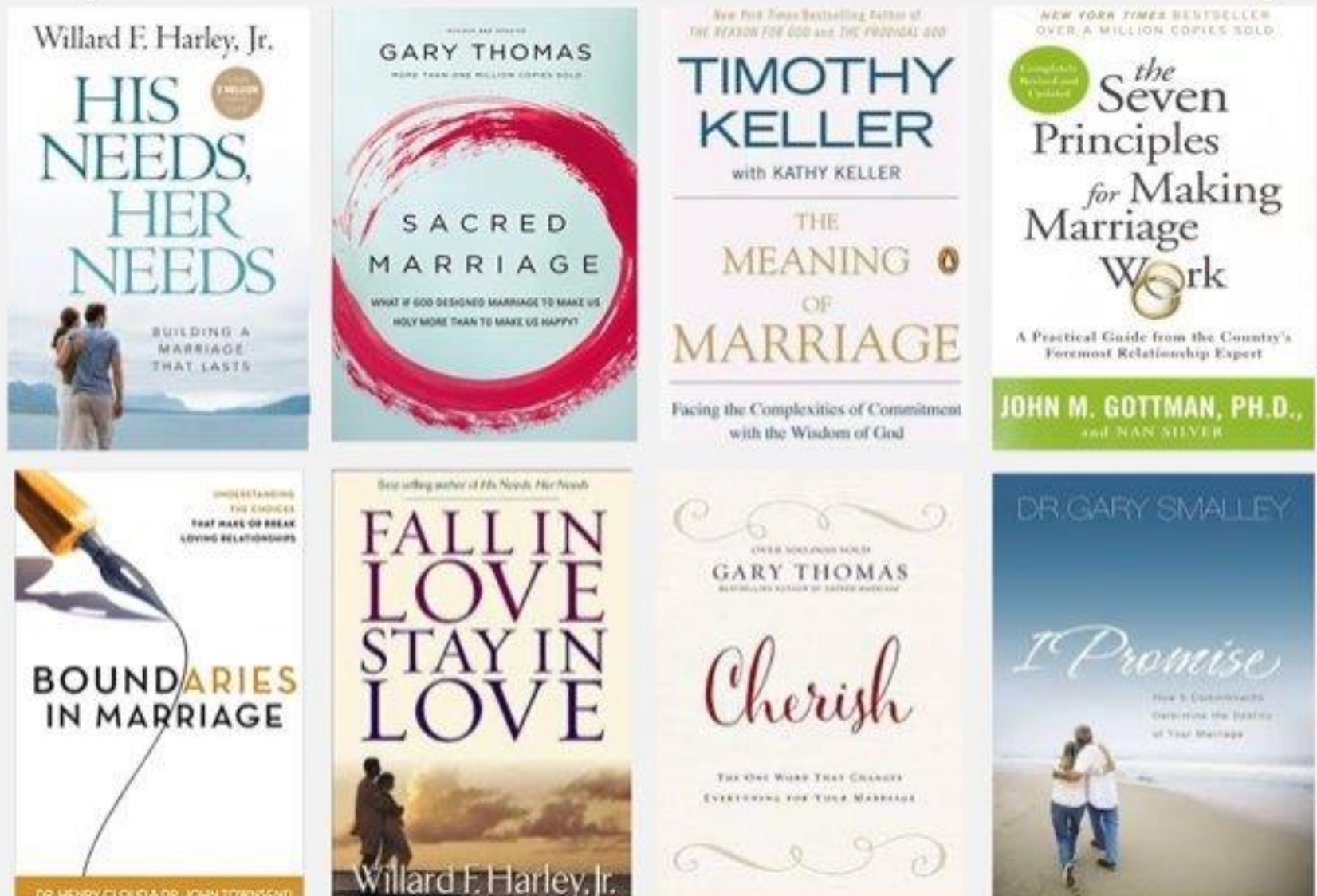
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Highlights
Expert interviews • Real-life stories.
Humorous vignettes • Couple projects
Time with spouse and other couples
Full-colour manuals



BOOKS ON MARRIAGE



The image displays a collection of eight books on marriage, arranged in two rows of four. The top row includes 'His Needs, Her Needs' by Willard F. Harley, Jr., 'Sacred Marriage' by Gary Thomas, 'The Meaning of Marriage' by Timothy Keller, and 'The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work' by John M. Gottman, Ph.D. The bottom row includes 'Boundaries in Marriage' by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, 'Fall in Love Stay in Love' by Willard F. Harley, Jr., 'Cherish' by Gary Thomas, and 'I Promise' by Dr. Gary Smalley.

- HIS NEEDS, HER NEEDS** by Willard F. Harley, Jr. (1 million copies sold)
- SACRED MARRIAGE** by Gary Thomas (More than one million copies sold)
- THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE** by Timothy Keller (New York Times Bestselling Author of *The Reason for God* and *The Prodigal God*)
- the Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work** by John M. Gottman, Ph.D., and Nan Silver (New York Times Bestseller, Over a million copies sold)
- BOUNDARIES IN MARRIAGE** by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend (Understanding the choices that make or break loving relationships)
- FALL IN LOVE STAY IN LOVE** by Willard F. Harley, Jr. (Best selling author of *His Needs, Her Needs*)
- Cherish** by Gary Thomas (Over 500,000 copies sold, Illustrated edition of *Saved by Grace*)
- I Promise** by Dr. Gary Smalley (How 5 commitments determine the destiny of your marriage)

Save the dates: 6, 7 & 9 Nov 2026