



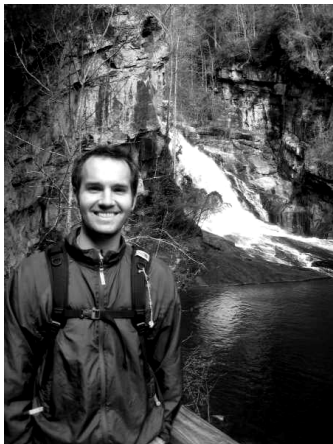
CONNECT

# AFTER CAMP

BIBLE STUDIES

2011

## ABOUT THE WRITER



### JAMIE CLEMENTS

Jamie currently resides outside of Atlanta, GA where he works with a non-profit ministry and serves as a private music instructor and professional vocalist. He received his Bachelor's degree from Shorter College in Music Education and his Master's degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Vocal Performance and Church Music. Over the past two years he has written materials for various devotional books and studies for First Baptist Church Woodstock where he was on the student ministry staff from 2008 until 2010. Jamie has served on Fuge staff as a Bible study leader, Development Director and Camp Director.

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COPY AND CONTENT EDITORS \_ ANNA MILLER AND KYLE CRAVENS  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER \_ AMY HAYWOOD  
THEOLOGICAL EDITOR \_ DR. ED THIELE

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# DAY 1: CONNECT WITH LOVE

## TEACHING AIM

Students will learn the value of love in developing lifelong relationships that are pictures of our relationships with Christ.

## STUDY PASSAGES

Romans 12:9-18

## LIFE QUESTIONS

- + Do you often love while expecting something in return?
- + Do you consider loving others an act of service to the Lord?
- + How willing are you to love someone in need of love?
- + What kind of love are you showing to your family?
- + How much do you actually hate (detest) evil?
- + What kind of love do you show to those you care about?
- + Are you at peace with everyone in your life?

## SCRIPTURE TRUTHS

- + God expects us to love others with “family affection.”
- + God expects us to do our part to live at peace with everyone.
- + Service to others is service unto the Lord.
- + Loving the “least” brings God the most honor.
- + Honor is found in loving others and keeping peace.

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## SUPPLIES

- + Large pieces of paper
- + Markers
- + Paper and a writing utensil for each student
- + Optional: copies of discussion questions under EXAMINATION


## MOTIVATION

Red Rover

Give the ground rules of playing the classic “Red Rover, Red Rover” game. (Be sure to make a “no clothes-lining” rule!) After dividing the group into two teams, allow them to play the game for about five minutes. Gather the group back together and debrief the game.

Ask: **“What was the best strategy for playing this game? What happens when you have a weak link on your team? How strong were some of your opponents? How did it feel to add people to your team after they tried to break through but realized that your bonds were too strong? How did it feel when you lost people from your team?”**

Be sure to emphasize the importance of strong bonds with everyone on the team. Although we are all very different, as Christians we have a responsibility to one another to form strong bonds for the sake of winning others to our team. We want to bring as many from the world as we can into fellowship with Christ and with fellow believers.



This game is a fun example of how we should approach not only relationships with fellow believers, but also relationships with new believers and potential believers. We should stand firm in our convictions against adversity, but we should also be welcoming to those who have tried to break us in the past.

## EXAMINATION

Say: **“The goal of this session is to help us realize how the strong bonds that we build with our friends and family can help us bring honor to God and be obedient to His will for our lives. If we allow bitterness and revenge to overtake our lives, we will be very ineffective both in serving God and winning others to a relationship with Christ. However, if we allow God’s love for us to flow through our lives and invest it in others, we will develop lifelong friendships that will impact God’s kingdom in a positive way.”**

Divide students into three groups and give each group one of the following activities. Instruct them to use Romans 12:9-18 to complete their tasks. When teams are done, call them back together for a time of presentation.

**GROUP ONE:** Make a list of each of the commands within this passage. (Example: Rejoice, Share, Conquer). Write each of these in a different color on a large piece of paper. Choose three commands and create a comic strip for each on separate large sheets of paper.

**GROUP TWO:** Create a skit that portrays the commands within this passage. (Each group member must participate in the skit.)

**GROUP THREE:** Re-write this passage in your own words and provide two narrators to read aloud.

Direct the first group to share their large piece of paper where they wrote each of the commands. Before they share their comic strips, ask the other groups if they got all of the commands in the passage. Once all commands are written out, allow the first group to share their comic strips with the whole class. Direct the second group to share their skit with the rest of the class. Direct the third group to share their re-written passage with the whole class.

Lead a large-group discussion by asking:

1. **What was surprising to you about this passage?**
2. **How difficult is it to live at peace with everyone in your life?**
3. **What does “honor” mean to you?**
4. **How do we “outdo one another in showing honor”?**
5. **What does it mean to be “wise in your own estimation”?**
6. **How will these actions help bring others to Christ?**
7. **How did Jesus exhibit these commands in His own life?**

After a good amount of discussion, ask students to take out a piece of paper and write down the following questions: (You may want to have these printed on handouts.)

1. **With whom do you find it most difficult to live at peace?**
2. **How have you tried to love this person and promote peace on your side?**
3. **How have you actually loved those who have persecuted you?**
4. **What keeps you from having honor in your life?**
5. **How seriously have you taken the command to bless those who persecute you?**
6. **How will promoting peace and living through love help you win others to Christ?**

After students have had time to answer these questions, ask if any would like to share their answers with the class—focusing on the final question.

As a large group, create a list of things that can be done to promote peace and love among both friends and enemies. One column of ideas for each will help students see the different approaches we have to take to reach different people. Engage students in discussion about each of these ideas for promoting peace and love.

## APPLICATION

Divide students into three new groups. Give each group a large piece of paper with several different colored markers.

Direct one person in each group to write the following questions on the team sheet:

1. How many friends do you have on Facebook® and other social media combined? (Write down each person's total and then add up all of them to get the group total.)
2. How many friends do you talk to in one week? (Add each person's total in the group.)
3. How many of these friends are "best friends"?

Give groups a few minutes to complete the questions, and then lead each team to elect a representative to bring their sheets to the front of the classroom.

Direct the representatives to read aloud the results from their groups. Use one sheet of blank paper at the front of the classroom on which to total the three groups' results. After totaling the results, write the total number on a large sheet of paper and post it in the front of the classroom.

Lead the students in discussing these questions while referencing the totals on the sheets of paper:

1. **What positive things are you doing with all of these connections?**
2. **How can you use your Facebook/MySpace/Twitter® accounts to bring honor to God?**
3. **How can you use your profile pages and tweets to be a positive influence and promote peace, love, and honor?**
4. **How can these things negatively impact your witness?**
5. **How can social media sometimes get in the way of us serving God?**
6. **How do these Web sites take the personal aspect out of relationships?**
7. **What are you doing to strengthen the relationships you have in the real world?**
8. **How can the two worlds be united to bring others to Christ?**

Answers in this section of questions should be steering toward: cleaning up language and pictures on social media; being aware of what groups and pages you are a fan of or a part of; using posts to build others up and honor God, friends, and family; using "info" sections to steer others to Christ and show them how He has changed your life.

Be sure to make students aware that their sphere of influence is not only everyone THEY are friends with, but also everyone their friends are connected to, as well.

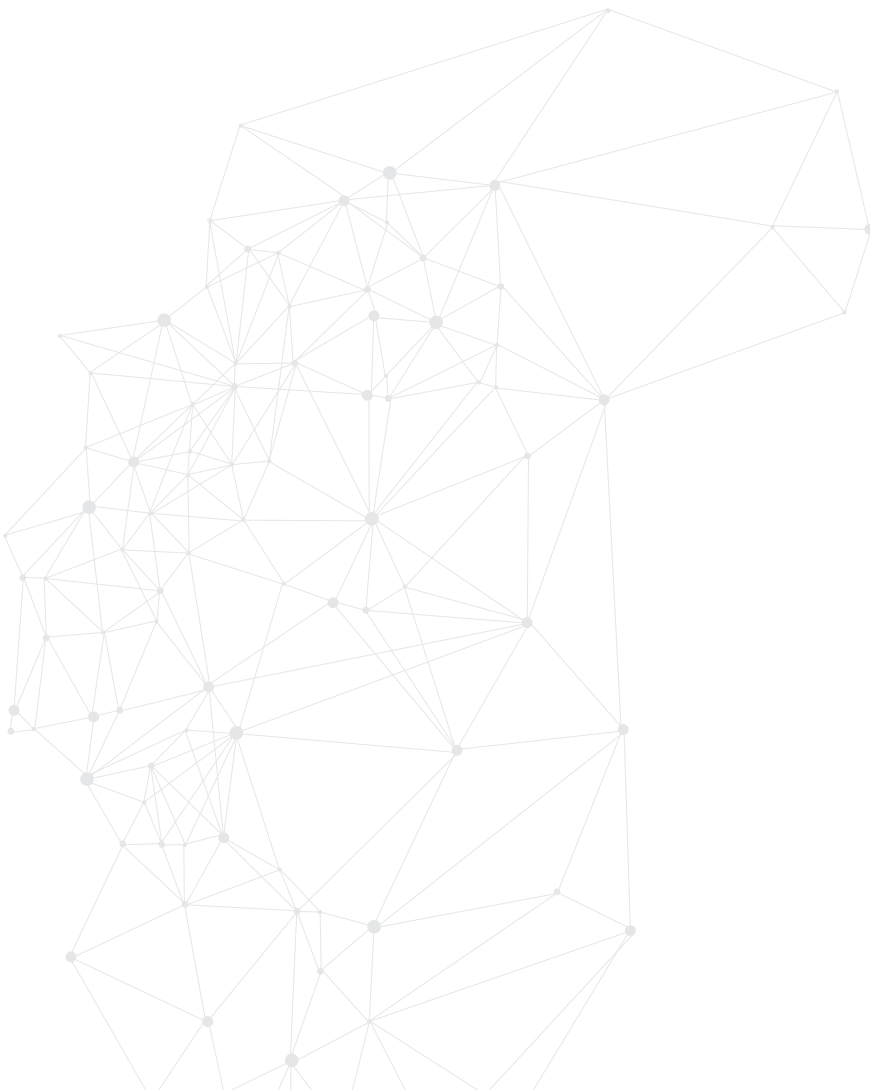
The connections we make on even the most basic level can truly mean the difference of eternity for someone. We have to be sure that we are seeking honor, love, and peace in every relationship we pursue.

## PRAYER TIME

Invite students to enter into a time of prayer. Read through the life questions on page 4. Instruct students to pray through these as you share them.

Focus the remainder of the prayer time on letting students pray for one another. Guide students to take requests within their group. Lead several people to pray within the group. Remind students that the connections they make in this room are some of the connections that will keep them from making dishonorable and unloving choices in the future.

Close in prayer by asking that God would give each person the boldness to love others and to do what is honorable in every situation.



# DAY 2: CONNECT THROUGH SERVICE

## TEACHING AIM

Students will learn how they are called to make connections with those in need by serving them. They will learn how the relationships they have on earth can be a direct reflection of their relationships with God.

## STUDY PASSAGES

Matthew 25:41-46  
John 13:34-35

## LIFE QUESTIONS

- + What do you do for those who are considered the “least of these”?
- + How often do you think of doing something for someone other than yourself?
- + For what do you want your life to count?
- + How can you make a difference with what God has provided you now?
- + How will you make a difference as God provides more and more resources to you?
- + What keeps you from making a difference now?
- + How can you remove those obstacles from your life?

## SCRIPTURE TRUTHS

- + God gives us many opportunities to show our love for Him in everyday life—we often overlook them.
- + God expects us to use the resources He has given us to bless others.
- + Jesus expects us to treat everyone as He would treat them.
- + There will be a day of judgment when we will account for all that we have and have not done in our lives.
- + Others will know you are a follower of Christ by the love that you show.

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## SUPPLIES


- + Large sheets of paper
- + Markers
- + Note cards
- + Pens

## MOTIVATION

Elbow Tag

### HOW TO PLAY:

Everyone links arms with a partner and spreads out around the room. Two people are chosen to split up. One will be “it” and the other will be chased. Whenever the person being chased links with one side of a pair of players, the person on the opposite end must



break off. They will now become chased. If the person being chased gets tagged, they become “it.”

NOTE: Before you begin playing this game, choose two students to be the “secret blockers” for the second round of the game. Give each a piece of paper with the word “blocked” written on it. Instruct them to hide this until the second round. These two will play the game normally for the first round.

After a few minutes of playing normally, you will stop the game and guide students to find a new partner. Explain that there are now two individuals in the game with whom they cannot be linked. They do not have any outward signs that they are any different, but when you try to link with them, they will show you their “blocked” sign and you will have to find someone else with which to link.

Play this game for 5-10 minutes, depending on how much fun the group seems to be having, or until both “blockers” have been discovered. When it seems that the game is either right at the peak of excitement, or just on the other side of excitement, direct the students to return to their seats.

Lead students in discussion of these questions:

1. **What was it like to be the person being chased?**
2. **What was it like to be the person chasing others?**
3. **What did it feel like when you reached the arm of someone else and were no longer being chased?**
4. **How was this like a situation in your life where you needed help and found it?**
5. **What did it feel like the moment when you realized that you were now running from “it”?**
6. **What is a situation in your life where you have felt “chased” by something or someone that was out to harm you?**

Transition to the next section of the Bible Study by asking: **“What did it feel like to be ‘blocked’?”**

## EXAMINATION

Instruct students to turn in their Bibles to Matthew 25:41-46.

### TRANSITION

Say: **“Today, we will be examining how we are called to make connections with those in need by serving them.”**

Ask for two volunteers. The first will read verses 41-43, and the second will read verses 44-46.

After the two students have finished reading aloud the passage, divide the group into four equal groups.

Groups 1 and 3 will separately brainstorm lists of all of the ways we, as believers, can fulfill the needs of those in the situations of this passage.

+ First, have the two groups identify the needs mentioned in the passage and write them as categories on a large sheet of paper. (Hungry, Thirsty, Naked, A Stranger/Alone, Imprisoned, Sick)

+ After they have identified the categories, instruct them to spend the remainder of their time brainstorming ways that we can fulfill those needs both on an individual level, and as a larger community of believers.

Groups 2 and 4 will separately brainstorm lists of all of the ways we, as believers, ignore the needs of others around us every day, and others around the world.

+ First, direct the two groups to identify the needs mentioned in the passage and to write them as categories on a large sheet of paper, just as the other groups are doing.

+ After they have identified the categories, instruct them to spend the remainder of their time brainstorming specific lists of the things and situations around us (our specific cities) that we choose to overlook or ignore all together. (Specific areas of poverty/hunger, nursing homes/hospitals, homeless shelters/benevolence shelters, strangers at school/in church, etc)

After the groups have had ample time to make their lists (probably between 5-10 minutes), instruct the groups to return to the discussion area and choose a representative from each group to present their brainstorming lists one at a time. Direct groups 2 and 4 to begin the presentation portion.

After groups 2 and 4 have finished presenting their lists, take four to five minutes to discuss some of the glaring ways that we ignore needs in our communities and schools around us. Poll students by a show of hands to see how many of them have overlooked, or chosen to ignore, one of the needs listed on the sheets from groups 2 and 4.

Next, allow groups 1 and 3 to present their ideas for positive change in the way we address needs.

Take four to five minutes to discuss interesting ideas that students come up with in the brainstorming time; these discussion ideas will be specifically related to the practical surroundings of the group: school, work, home, and community.

After groups have discussed their ideas from the brainstorming session, display the large sheets of paper at the front of the discussion area.

Say: **“Sometimes when we refuse to help people who are in need, or we choose to overlook them and ignore their needs. We are really overlooking God around us and an opportunity to prove to Him that we love and submit to His authority by helping His children in need.”**

As a transition to the next portion of the discussion, instruct students to turn in their Bibles to John 13:34-35. When each student has found the passage, ask for one volunteer to read aloud the passage.

Ask the following questions and allow two to three students to discuss their views after each question:

1. **What are some specific examples of how Jesus exhibited His love for humanity while He was on earth?**
2. **How did people recognize Jesus’ disciples?**
3. **How, then, should we treat those around us?**
4. **Do you think this is especially true for how we treat other believers? (Re-read v. 35)**

## APPLICATION

Say: **“God has a direct interest in how we treat those we are connected to here on earth. Today we learned that He considers how we treat those who seem to be the “least” among us as how we actually treat Him, as well. The world around us is watching to see not only how we treat each other as believers, but also how we treat those we claim to be here to help. We have seen quite a few very easy ways that we can change the way we connect with the world. We have also seen a few not-so-easy ways of how we need to change the way we connect with each other and the world around us. Jesus came to the earth to change those around Him for the better. He came to give life. We should be here to do the same things. We should be looking for ways around us to show the love that Christ so willingly showed to us.”**

**Be sure that you are not a “blocker” to those around you in need. When we refuse to help those around us, we are actually refusing to extend the love to God that He has extended to us.**

Distribute a note card and pen to each student. Refer back to the large sheets of paper on display.

Instruct students individually to write down the top three areas they ignore the most and the top three positive ideas they would like to explore further. Ask for three to four volunteers to share their top-three lists and to provide a brief explanation of how they plan to change the way they connect with the world around them.

## PRAYER TIME

Ask two volunteers to close out the session in prayer. Instruct them to pray for all those around us who are hurting. Instruct them to pray for boldness of character and boldness of love to be shown by everyone in the room toward fellow believers and toward a lost and hurting world.

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted From: [www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/elbow-tag.html](http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/elbow-tag.html)

# DAY 3: CONNECT OTHERS TO CHRIST

## TEACHING AIM

Students will learn how to develop effective connections and relationships that will last. Students will learn how to use their own walks with God to draw others into right relationships with God.

## STUDY PASSAGES

John 15:12-17  
Proverbs 17:17  
Proverbs 22:24-25  
Proverbs 27:17  
1 Corinthians 15:33

## LIFE QUESTIONS

- + Do you consider Jesus to be your friend?
- + Have you ever thought of your relationship with Christ as a friendship?
- + When do you most depend upon your friends?
- + How do you make friends? Do you have qualifications or restrictions on those whom you consider friends?
- + Do you see your friendships as opportunities to grow in Christ?
- + Do you evaluate the company you keep? Do you notice how your own behavior changes around certain people? Do you change for the better or for the worse?

## SCRIPTURE TRUTHS

- + Jesus, while He was here on earth, commanded us to love one another as He has loved us. He gave us a perfect example of what love and devotion to one another as friends should be.
- + We are considered friends of Christ if we keep His command to love one another.
- + Friendships are designed to bear us out of difficult times.
- + Scripture warns us time and time again to be careful of the company we keep.
- + Scripture tells us that our goodness and morality can be taken away and corrupted by hanging around the wrong people.
- + Christ followers sharpen other Christ followers in their relationships with God and in their relationships with those around them.

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## SUPPLIES

- + Strips of cloth
- + Large pieces of paper
- + Markers
- + Paper and a writing utensil for each student
- + Optional: candy prize

## MOTIVATION

Direct several heats of the classic “Three-Legged Race.” You will need several strips of cloth to bind the inside ankles of pairs of students standing side by side. This game can be played with pairs broken up by gender, height, hair color, and so forth.

NOTE: Before you begin the activity, choose two students who will intentionally slow down their partners during the race. These two will be simulating “bad company” and how it can affect the way we finish the “race of life.” You may want these two to play normally the first round and then intentionally slow down their partners during the second or third rounds, depending on how far they make it in the tournament. This can be applied later in the lesson when you discuss how sometimes friends can grow apart from God and begin to slow us down in our own pursuit of a Christ-like life.

As you begin the race, inform students that there will be an overall winning team at the end of the various heats. Run the race several times with two to four teams each time, depending on how many teams you have; the winning team from each heat will advance to the final race for the prize. (Have some candy or another small prize for the overall winning team.)

## EXAMINATION

After the winning team has been crowned (or candied) instruct the students to return to the discussion area and to open their Bibles to John 15:12-17.

Before reading the passage of Scripture, ask and discuss the following questions, allowing two or three students to answer each question to gain different perspectives.

1. **How can this game help us understand the connections and friendships that we have here on earth?**  
(Possible answers: teamwork, leadership, cooperation, fun, enjoyment, running the race of life together, etc.)
2. **When some of you fell down, how much help did your partner give you in getting up? Was it a team effort?**
3. **Did any of you have a partner who drug you down on purpose? How did that make you feel?**
4. **Was it difficult to reach the goal with a partner who didn't have the same goal in mind? What was their goal?**

Say: **“Today we are going to discuss the importance of friendships and connections that matter. We will also discuss friendships and connections that may get you off track on the race for finishing a life that matters in the eyes of God.”**

Ask a student to now read aloud John 15:12-17.

Divide students into two groups and instruct each group to compile on large pieces of paper two separate lists titled: “Qualities of a Good Friend” and “Qualities of a Bad Friend.”

Instruct the students to write down as many qualities under each heading as they can come up with in five minutes. Ask the students also to prepare examples for five or six of the qualities from their own experiences.

Bring the group back together in the discussion area and allow the groups 5-10 minutes each for the presentation of their lists and examples.

Say: **“Many of the qualities that you wrote down on your lists for ‘qualities of a good friend,’ can be found here in the text of John 15.”**

Lead students in a discussion of the passage verse by verse. Here are some pointers for each verse.

VERSE 12: Discuss what it means to be commanded by Christ to love one another. Ask students how it is that Christ has loved us in many ways. Key words: sacrifice, example, healing, comfort, protection, and guidance.

VERSE 13: Discuss the meaning of laying down your life for a friend. Discuss the sacrifice that people in the military make for their friends and family. Discuss the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross. Key words: loyalty, dedication, responsibility, and sacrificial love.

VERSE 14: How important is it to obey the commands of Jesus? What benefits are there to being a friend of Christ? Key words: obedience and security.

VERSE 15: How has Christ included believers (friends) in the mission He received from His Father? Key words: great commission and personal relationship. How should this change the way we live our lives and follow God's Word? Key words: ownership, partnership, and perseverance.

VERSE 16: What should we gain from being chosen by Christ to produce spiritual fruit here on earth? Key words: Confidence and dedication. What are the fruit to which he is referring? Keywords: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control.

VERSE 17: What is the significance of Christ repeating His command here in verse 17? Key words: importance of the command and obedience.

#### TRANSITION

Say: **"We have discussed many of the qualities of a good friendship that are found in Scripture; now we will discuss what the Bible has to say about qualities of bad friendships and connections."**

Instruct two students to read aloud Proverbs 22:24-25 and 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Discuss the following questions as a large group:

1. **How contagious is anger?**
2. **What would your life be like if you were only ever around angry people?**
3. **How can anger and hot tempers get in the way of your goal in life as a believer in Christ?**
4. **What is the meaning of "bad company"?**
5. **How can bad friends influence your decision making and morals?**
6. **Who is ultimately responsible for choosing whom you hang out with?**
7. **What can you do to safeguard yourself from hanging out with "bad company"?**

#### APPLICATION

Distribute a single sheet of paper to each student along with a writing utensil if they do not already have one.

Write the fruit of the Spirit (found in Galatians 5:22) on a large sheet of paper and display it beside the two large sheets with good and bad qualities from the earlier exercise. Display all three at the front of the discussion area so that everyone has a clear view.

Read aloud Proverbs 27:17.

Guide the discussion of how this verse in Proverbs should direct our paths as believers and how it should affect the way we interact with the friends to whom God has connected us.

Ask the students to call out and discuss four to five ways to “sharpen” each other in friendship. Key words: accountability, devotion, prayer, Bible study, encouragement, honesty, and trustworthiness.

Read aloud Proverbs 17:17.

Ask students to recall a few times in their lives when their friends have been there for them, or when they have been there when one of their friends was in need.

In light of these discussions and the three large pieces of paper displayed at the front of the discussion area, ask students to write down five goals to becoming a better friend over the next several days, weeks, and months.

Allow the students four to five minutes to write down their goals and then ask three to four volunteers to read aloud one to two of their goals.

Say: **“Each one of us in this room has the opportunity each day to be a friend and connection to Christ in each of our relationships. Many times, we miss these opportunities due to our own selfishness or greed. Some of us in this room can occasionally even exhibit the ‘bad qualities’ that we discussed today.”**

It is ultimately our own responsibility as a follower of Christ to maintain quality, sharpening relationships with all of our friends—believers and non-believers.

## PRAYER TIME

Ask God to bless the reading and study of His Word. Thank God for His faithfulness and grace in sending His Son to be our example here on earth.

Ask God to give everyone boldness and wisdom to develop biblical friendships and faithfulness to Christ in the relationships that we have with Him as believers.