



WEEK 8 DEVOTIONAL

The Good Returns | Renewing the Fabric of Friendship

RECEIVE

Take a few moments to read **Ecclesiastes 4:7–12**; **John 15:9–17**. Read it slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully. Read it in such a way that you believe the Holy Spirit is trying to speak to you through it. Because you know what? The Holy Spirit is trying to speak to you through it. As you read, journal words or phrases that stand out to you and why those words and phrases caught your attention.

REFLECT

1. Which of the following friendship-building practices am I currently employing on a regular basis in my important relationships?
 - Play – I take time to recreate with and enjoy people
 - Lift – I help people up when they are down
 - Warm – I express fondness and affection for people
 - Defend – I stand up for my people and protect them

2. What are some specific examples of the way I am actually practicing or can practice these?

- Play
- Lift
- Warm
- Defend

3. Which of those practices do I sense Christ is calling me to take up more purposefully?

- Play
- Lift
- Warm
- Defend

RESPOND

4. In which particular relationship(s) do I need to work at building a better friendship so that good returns?

5. What does it mean that Jesus has called us “friends”? (John 15) How did Jesus model any of the friendship practices?

6. End your time by talking to Jesus as one does with a friend. From this devotional time share what you are learning and where you would like Jesus to help you live into that. End by telling Jesus why you are grateful to be called His friend.

SCRIPTURE

Ecclesiastes 4:7–12 | New International Version

⁷ “Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

⁸ If There was a man all alone;
he had neither son nor brother.

There was no end to his toil,
yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.
“For whom am I toiling,” he asked,
“and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”
This too is meaningless –
a miserable business!
⁹ Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:
¹⁰ If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.
¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
¹² Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

John 15:9–17 | New International Version

⁹ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.