

friend•öl•ō•gy

n : the study of friendship

Week Two: The Story Beneath the Story

Scripture

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

— *Matthew 19:14*

"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put the ways of childhood behind me."

— *1 Corinthians 13:11*

Reflection: Leaning In with Curiosity

This week, we are invited to lean in with curiosity. The stories we carry about friendship were shaped long before we had words for them—through the ways we were comforted, seen, corrected, included, excluded, celebrated, or ignored. Our hearts were already learning:

- *Can people be trusted?*
- *Am I safe with others?*
- *Is it okay to need people?*
- *What happens when I express emotion?*

These early experiences often become the **mindsets and narratives we still carry into friendships today**. Instead of judging ourselves, we ask:

Where did I learn to relate the way I do?

What story am I still carrying?

Looking Back: Early Formation

Erik Erikson helps us see how early development shapes our ability to trust and connect.

Trust vs. Mistrust

- *Did I experience safety and consistency early in life?*
- *Do I naturally trust people, or expect disappointment?*

Parent / Grandparent

- *Does my child know they are safe bringing me big feelings?*

Autonomy vs. Shame

- *Do I feel shame when I make mistakes?*
- *Do I struggle to express needs or boundaries?*

Parent / Grandparent

- *Am I allowing healthy freedom while staying emotionally present?*

Initiative vs. Guilt

- *Was my voice welcomed as a child?*
- *Do I hesitate to initiate friendship now?*

Parent / Grandparent

- *Am I encouraging curiosity and social courage?*

Growing Beyond Old Patterns

Paul reminds us that maturity means growing beyond old ways of thinking. Some relational patterns that once protected us may now limit deeper intimacy.

Reflection Questions

- *What old friendship patterns am I still carrying?*
- *What would a more mature, Christlike way of relating look like?*
- *What friendship skill do I want to intentionally practice in this season?*

The beautiful hope is this: **growth is possible.**

God can renew our minds, reshape our habits, and even form new brain pathways.

Friendship is a **skill we can grow in and refine.**

CHALLENGE

This week, spend 10 minutes reflecting on your earliest friendship memories:

- *feeling left out*
- *being deeply known*
- *conflict in your home*
- *how trust was built*

Ask:

How are these early experiences still shaping my friendships today?

What kind of friend is Jesus forming me to become now?

