



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

KNOWN

BY: DICK AND RUTH FOTH

Thank you for taking the time to read our book KNOWN, and for choosing to use it in a small group study!

KNOWN | LEADER GUIDELINES

GOAL

We believe that God has designed us for friendship. As the speed of an Internet age blurs lines and thins out relationships, friendship centered in Jesus gives us a place to belong.

COLLABORATIVE CHANGES

You have our permission, indeed encouragement, to make any changes you wish to adapt these studies to your particular setting. Feel free to change the questions, suggestions, et al.

OUR ONLY REQUEST

If you make changes, please send us a copy at fothandfriends@gmail.com. In that way other groups can have the benefit of your additional work and insights.

THE FOLLOWING ARE A COUPLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WE HAVE FOUND TO BE OF HELP WHEN LEADING A SMALL GROUP:

- Leaders model what they wish group members to do (i.e. talk/share first, especially in the GOING DEEPER segment)
- When people share matters of a personal nature, accept their comments, but stay away from trying to give counsel.

KNOWN | CHAPTER SUMMARIES

FIRST THINGS

Recognize What's True About Life

Chapter 1: *The Great Alone*

In a day of fractured families, and casual social media connections, lasting relationships are often hard to build. Alone is where we naturally find ourselves. "It is not good for man to be alone" is the Scriptural catalyst for relationship and the premise for this book. Overcoming aloneness in a Vietnamese prisoner of war camp illustrates how humans go to extraordinary means to overcome aloneness.

Chapter 2: *The Grand Design*

Though *alone* is where emotional gravity takes us, we are designed for something better. Man is built for relationship. We have both the capacity and need to be together with God and each other. That we are hardwired for those connections was a point made with brutal clarity on 9/11. Workers from the upper stories of those Trade Center towers were calling on God and placing cell phone calls to their loved ones, when they knew they were not going to be rescued.

Chapter 3: *What's a Friend?*

"Friend" is a word with a range of levels, from nodding acquaintance to soul-mates for life. But in our need for friendships, we too often create expectations that cannot be met. We can begin to expect from another human being what only God can provide. That said, strong relationships have been shown scientifically to be the essential ingredient for long-term physical health and authentic happiness.

Chapter 4: *The Case for Conversation*

In a day of intense communication without real conversation, that art needs to be revisited. Historically, the family dinner table has been the safe place for unending conversation. Since that table has vanished in many quarters, how do we learn to converse?

Conversation is a huge factor in learning empathy. Empathy, emotional intelligence, is one of the most practical needs in today's world. The give-and-take of conversation makes for mutuality. Scripture describes such mutual engagement with two words, *one another*.

STORYTELLERS

Story is the Soil from Which Friendship Grows.

Chapter 5: *God the Storyteller*

Nobody does story like God. And, His story is a template for our own. God, telling, His story says "Come know me!"

Of all the stories in Scripture, none captures the heart of the Father, like that of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15). It details a brash young man wanting to do his own thing at his father's expense, literally. After ending up in a far country desolate and destitute, he heads for home and into the arms of a Gracious Father.

The desire for that kind of acceptance is built into all of us. And, story is woven into the fabric of humanity.

Chapter 6: *Man the Storyteller*

Stories inspire civilizations, passes truth from generation to generation, and connects us to each other. They are how we humans share our lives with others. Personal stories express an individual's uniqueness. It is one place in your life you

don't have to compete. No one's story is better than another's. They are just tales of our journeys. Dick and Ruth share parts of their own stories in this chapter.

Chapter 7: *Your Starting Place*

Each of our stories has a beginning found in first memories. *Who* you are is connected to *where* you come from. Your history is about places, people, and events. It is the seedbed for relationship.

Chapter 8: *How to Read a Walking Book*

You can have two libraries. One is the obvious second-person library where you check out books. The other is the first-person library where, in order to learn the story, you must ask questions of someone. That library is interactive and more engaging. With the help of a few non-threatening questions, you can enter some else's world. And that can be a very different education.

Chapter 9: *A Journal and a Velcro Ribbon*

Personal history comes in two forms: a diary comprised of facts, and a journal that is the interpretation of those facts. Both volumes are important for understanding yourself and understanding others. As we tell and re-tell our stories, we often blend the two. But, however we do it, storytelling invites connection. Paul's conversion and his re-telling of that life-changing event illustrate this point.

AFFIRMERS

Hearing Your Story, I Learn How to Love You.

Chapter 10: *Speaking to God*

When I pray for you, it does not set your value. It acknowledges your value. In effect I am saying, "I think you are so valuable that I would like to bring your

name and your need to the Creator of the Universe.” Jesus shows the redemptive power of prayer when He says to Peter, “Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you!”

Chapter 11: *Speaking to You*

A verbal exchange in a small group workshop becomes a life-changer, when a young woman affirms another woman discouraged by a first-year work critique. Affirming words fuel a positive view of self. Jesus says to Peter, a natural but unstable leader, “I am going to call you The Rock”. It took some time, but that’s what Peter became.

Chapter 12: *Fighting Fair*

Any relationship has conflict. We have differences in ideas, behaviors, patterns, and a multitude of other things. Our varied histories insure that we are not alike. Conflict is neutral; how we deal with it is the key. Among others, Dr. David Augsburger brings some great ideas to the table.

Chapter 13: *Doing Good*

Some will say, “Words are cheap. Put your money where your mouth is.” Like words, a unique action at an appropriate time can change a person’s trajectory. When Peter, in his enthusiasm to protect Jesus, slices off an assailant’s ear, Jesus heals it. Peter already has issues. Attempted murder need not be added to the list.

Chapter 14: *Reaching Wide*

Most of us spend 40 to 80 hours a week working at something to sustain us. We are giving our lives to that work. When we are genuinely interested and ask about the details of people’s jobs and careers, we show true interest in them. When Peter failed Jesus and himself miserably, he went back to commercial

fishing. Jesus comes to Peter's workplace and, one more time, shows Peter who both of them are.

COVENANTERS

In a throw-away culture, staying the course stands out

Chapter 15: *The Pledge*

In a culture dependent on contracts, covenant may need to be defined. This chapter explores the nature of covenant and its implications for friendship. There are informal covenants (let's have coffee every Wednesday morning) and formal covenants (let's get married and make each other coffee every morning). Covenants are essential to relationship.

Chapter 16: *On the Clock*

In a day of a thousand distractions, how do we use our time to grow friendship? Friendships develop by pursuit and over time. *Laissez faire* and relationship don't belong in the same sentence. Ideas like "intentional" and "face-to-face" are covenantal themes. Time invested equals believable. And, believable builds friendship. Time is the seedbed for "knowing."

Chapter 17: *Truth Telling*

For friendship to work we must tell each other the truth at three levels: What I think, what I know, and what I feel. Not necessarily in that order. In the Gethsemane conversation between Jesus and His Father we see these three elements in play. Illustrations from Dick and Ruth's marriage and corporate experiences are used here.

Chapter 18: *The Long Haul*

Tenacity is the basis for most achievement and the key to longevity of relationship. It is the sibling of pursuit. In a time when so often people are used and things are loved, the willingness to “stick with it” is light in a dark place. This premise is illustrated in the powerful Old Testament story of Ruth and Naomi.

Chapter 19: *The Chase*

What do a 21st century woman in her nineties and two Old Testament warriors, Jonathan and David, have in common? An undying pursuit of relationships. It comes today in many forms of communication---face-to-face conversations, phone calls, e-mails and texts. But, what about the fading art of writing a letter?

DREAMERS

Dreams fuel hope.

Chapter 20: *Trust Big and Dream Long*

The essence of relationship is trust. No relationship—friendship, family, business, governments, military---works without it. When I trust you with my tomorrow, that's the ultimate.

Chapter 21: *A Dream over Dinner*

No theme is more central to the Kingdom story or your story than who gets invited to the table. At Jesus's last dinner before the Cross, He tells his apprentices what they are designed for, what makes life work, and actually commands them to love each other. In a phrase, it is an invitation to come and dine, then to lay down their lives for others. It is His dream for them.

Chapter 22: *When All is Said and Done*

The telling of our stories is the entry point for every relationship we will ever have. As we tell them, we remember our friends. On Golgotha, Jesus remembers

His Father's place, His mother, Mary and friend, John. And he is a "friend of a sinner" one more time, as He takes the thief on the adjacent cross home to His Father's house.

What an outrageous friend!

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SESSION ONE WHAT REALLY MATTERS

“The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved.”
Mother Teresa

READING FOR THIS SESSION:

- Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-46)
 - The Great Alone
 - The Grand Design
 - What's A Friend?
 - The Case for Conversation

WATCH VIDEO AT [known.fm](https://www.known.fm)

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Getting Started:
 - Icebreaker: Tell us one thing about you that is unique or funny that most of us would have no way of knowing.
- Gaining Insight:
 - Have a person in the group read Genesis 2:18 aloud.
 - Have another person read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 aloud.
 - Group Questions:
 - What could make a person feel most alone?

- What can we do to help us engage with other people?
- Going Deeper:
 - Which of Celeste Headlee's ideas for having a conversation in Chapter 4 resonated with you and why? (examples: be present, don't pontificate, use open ended questions, go with the flow, etc. p. 44)
- Growing Stronger:
 - Prayer: "Lord help me know what being Your friend really means in my life and to learn from You how to be a better friend to others."
 - Ideas for next steps: Which things listed in the "One Another Experience" (p. 45) stand out as something to work on this week?

FOR NEXT TIME:

- Read Chapters 5 – 9 (pp. 49-100)

SESSION TWO STORY: THE HEART OF FRIENDSHIP

*“Jesus was not a theologian. He was God who told stories.”
Madeline L’Engle*

READING FOR THIS SESSION:

- Chapters 5– 9 (pp. 49-100)
 - God, the Storyteller
 - Man, the Storyteller
 - Your Starting Place
 - How to Read a Walking Book
 - A Journal and a Velcro Ribbon

WATCH VIDEO AT known.fm

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Getting Started:
 - Icebreaker: Where did you live between the ages of 6 and 12 and who was in your household?
- Gaining Insight:
 - Read aloud the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32; Known, pp. 51-52)
 - What about this story appeals to you and why?
- Going Deeper:
 - Who do you identify with in this story?
 - When did hearing someone’s life story impact your life?
 - If you could ask that person another question today about their life, what would you ask?

- Growing Stronger:
 - Prayer: “Lord, help me to show genuine concern by asking the kind of questions that nudge life stories out of others.”
 - Ideas for next steps: This week be intentional about being a better questioner and a better listener.

FOR NEXT TIME:

- Read chapters 10 – 14 (pp. 103 – 143).

SESSION THREE AFFIRMATION ENRICHES LIFE

*“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

READING FOR THIS SESSION:

- Chapters 10-14 (pp. 103-143)
 - Speaking to God
 - Speaking to You
 - Fighting Fair
 - Doing Good
 - Reaching Wide

WATCH VIDEO AT known.fm

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Getting Started:
 - Icebreaker: If money was not an issue, and you wished to give a gift to a friend, what would it be and to whom would you give it?
- Gaining Insight:
 - Read aloud Jesus' words to Peter (Luke 22:31-32)
 - Why is Jesus' apparent rebuke to Peter an affirmation?
- Going Deeper:
 - Reflect on a time when a person affirmed you in a way that changed your view of yourself.
 - Describe a point in your life when you knew others were praying for you. How did that affect you?

- What is your most natural way of encouraging a friend?
- Growing Stronger:
 - Prayer: "Lord, help me be aware of the people in my life who might need some encouraging words from me."
 - Ideas for next steps: Encourage someone with a visit, a phone call, or a note this coming week.

FOR NEXT TIME:

- Read Chapters 15 - 19 (pp. 147 – 180)

SESSION FOUR COVENANT: SENDING DOWN ROOTS

“God didn't make a contract with us; God made a covenant with us, and God wants our relationships with one another to reflect that covenant.”

Henri J.M. Nouwen

READING FOR THIS SESSION:

- Chapters 15 – 19 (pp. 147 – 180)
 - The Pledge
 - On the Clock
 - Truth Telling
 - The Long Haul
 - The Chase

WATCH VIDEO AT [known.fm](https://www.known.fm)

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Getting Started:
 - Icebreaker: Describe an activity you had as a child that might have required a pledge (example: Scouts or a church or neighborhood club).
- Gaining Insight:
 - Read aloud I Samuel 18:1-5 and Ruth 1:16.
 - Talk about the kind of agreements/covenants friends can have with friends
- Going Deeper:

- How do you make time to be with friends?
- Describe the benefits found in a relationship where you can be absolutely candid.
- Describe a time when someone's persistence and pursuit in friendship made all the difference.
- Growing Stronger:
 - Prayer: "Lord, thank you for the new covenant you have made with us, sealed by your blood, that sets us free and gives us a place to belong. Help me keep my promises to others."
 - Ideas for next steps: Reevaluate your schedule and your priorities in light of God's covenant to you and your commitment to others.

FOR NEXT TIME:

- Read Chapters 20 - 21 (pp. 183 – 200)

SESSION FIVE DREAMING: A UNIQUE ACCOUNTABILITY

“Trust . . . tilts us forward encouraging hope and dreams . . . One of the best things about friendship is the joy of cheering on another person’s dreams.”
Known, p. 186-7

READING FOR THIS SESSION:

- Chapters 20-21 (pp. 183 – 200)
 - Trust Big and Dream Long
 - A Dream over Dinner

WATCH VIDEO AT known.fm

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Getting Started:
 - Icebreaker: What would your dream vacation be?
- Gaining Insight:
 - Read aloud Hebrews 11: 1 and Philippians 1:9-11
 - Discuss the connection between trust, hope, and dreams.
(Hebrews 11)
 - Reflect on the prayer/dream Paul had for his friends in Philippi.
(Philippians 1)
- Going Deeper:
 - Talk about a person who believed with you for a dream you had.
 - Tell about someone you dreamed for?
- Growing Stronger:

- Prayer: “Lord send me anywhere, only go with me; give me any burden, only sustain me; sever any tie but the tie that binds me to your service and to your great heart.” (Prayer by David Livingston)
- Ideas for next steps: Take a specific time to dream and pray about your future and write down your thoughts.

FOR NEXT TIME:

- Read Chapter 22 (pp. 201-204)

SESSION SIX FRIENDSHIP IS SACRIFICE

*“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”
John 15:12*

*“Your distinguishing mark will not be that you love the world. . . Your distinguishing mark is that you sacrifice for each other.”
Known, p. 196*

READING FOR THIS SESSION:

- Chapter 22 (pp. 201-204)
 - When All is Said and Done

WATCH VIDEO AT known.fm

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Getting Started
 - Icebreaker: What have you enjoyed most about our 6 sessions together?
- Gaining Insight
 - Let's read John 15:9-15 aloud.
 - What's the context of this passage?
 - Who was in the room? Where were they?
 - Why were they there? When was it?
- Going Deeper:

- What stands out to you about this moment with Jesus and His disciples?
- Why do you think Jesus would focus so much of his reconciling work on the one idea of friendship?
- Describe a positive “milestone” moment in your life.
- Describe someone in your history that represents “sacrifice” for you.
- Growing Stronger:
 - Prayer: “Lord, thank you for leading the way to your Father’s house by Your sacrifice for us. Help our sacrifices to move others that same direction.”