



Building Friendships that Fit

HOLLY FURTICK

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Building
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DEDICATION

To Emily, my big sister,
my true day one.

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INTRODUCTION

I was fourteen years old in the summer of 1994. I had the Jennifer Aniston haircut, and my Southern Baptist youth group was fresh off our choir tour. The start of school was just around the corner and I was so nervous. I prayed over and over again, “God, please just give me some friends.”

If you were not a teenager in the mid-nineties, you may not know that this was when most schools were making the transition from junior high (seventh through ninth grades) to middle school (sixth through eighth grades). And I was caught in the middle. The public magnet school that I had attended for seventh and eighth grade was moving ninth grade to high school. My district school was shifting ninth grade the following year. I was stuck. I would have to attend Southwood Middle School in Miami, Florida, for one year, and I did not know a soul who went there.

“God, please just give me some friends.” Every day I prayed.

That first day of school came, and I got lost trying to find my first class. I felt scared as I wondered who I would sit next to in biology and who I would eat lunch with. I felt so alone.

It’s funny that no matter how much time passes, no matter how grown-up my life becomes, I still feel a lot like that fourteen-year-old girl. I wonder if I fit in; I wonder if I belong. Do people like being around me? Am I a good friend? Is it my fault that friendship fizzled out? Maybe I was too pushy. Maybe I didn’t text enough. Maybe I talk about myself too much. Maybe I talk too much in general.

I was so caught off guard when I realized that maintaining relationships is harder, not easier, the older I get. Have you ever felt

this way? Life fills up quickly. Add a job, a husband, and a few kids into the mix and there can be little time left for friends.

We live in a world where people are connected more than ever. In fact, I took a break from typing this and looked up the friends that God gave me my ninth-grade year . (Looking back, it turned out to be my favorite grade.) Lisa, Erin, and Dana, who I ate lunch with every day. Autumn, Brandon, and Sean, who I walked to and from school with every day. With the push of a button in a magic universe called Facebook, I was able to see what they have been up to for the past twenty-five years.

How is it possible that in a world where connection is so easy, loneliness is at an all-time high?

God created us for relationships. Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, you are not meant to live your life feeling alone. You were created to experience fulfilling, meaningful relationships.

But these relationships take work. Friendships are not found; they are formed. They must be built.

Over the next few weeks, we will learn how to “Build Friendships that Fit.” Each week I’ll share a lesson that I have learned along the way in some of my relationships, and then we will look within ourselves. We will examine our past and current relationships. We will look at scripture and see what it has to say. We will even learn a few lessons from some of my favorite women in the Bible.

This is a short study (only six weeks). So make a commitment to doing your homework, answering every question (no skipping, no answering in your head), and attending every group meeting. My goal is that at the end of this study, your relationship with God and with others will be strengthened.

Are you ready? Let’s get started!

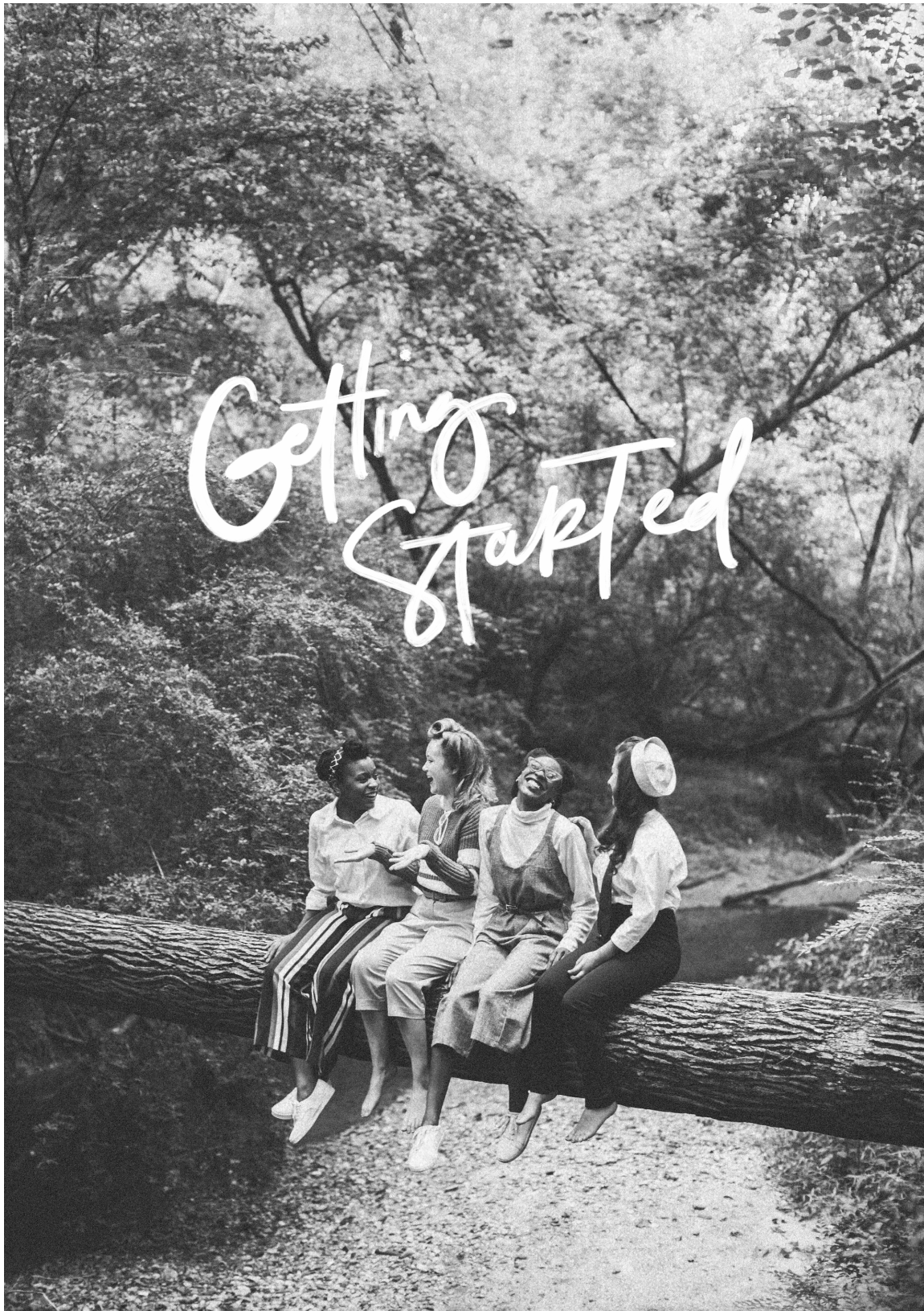
Holly Furtick

MY GROUP

Use this space to write down the names of the ladies in your group and something to help you remember them by.



NOTES:
INTRODUCTION



GETTING STARTED

Read

When I was a kid, every year my mom gave me the same talk on the first day of school. “Holly,” she would say, “remember, you become like the people you hang around. If you hang around the wrong kids, eventually you will end up making wrong choices.”

My mother was right. The people we choose to surround ourselves with can deeply impact us. And this truth is not just for teenagers at a keg party. It is for all of us at every stage. Single, married, mothers, employees, students—we all must have vibrant, fulfilling relationships in order to



thrive (or in some cases survive) in our current season of life.

I can look back at every stage in my life and identify the people who pushed me through and the people who held me back. Some are still around—others are not.

Fulfilling friendships don't just magically fall into your lap. They are built. Brick by brick, conversation by conversation, confrontation by confrontation, crisis by crisis. They take time. In order to build friendships that fit in our current season of life, we must start by doing some deep digging.

So before we dive into the meat of this study, I think it's important to assess where you are in your relationships right now and what has brought you to this place. The following questions are a sort of personal diagnostic—a way to get you thinking about your relationships so that when we get deeper into the study, your mind is already thinking in that direction.

Be prepared to share some of your answers in your next group meeting, and I'll meet you there with our first video teaching.

Respond

Take a look back at the different seasons of your life so far. List a few friends from each of the following seasons.

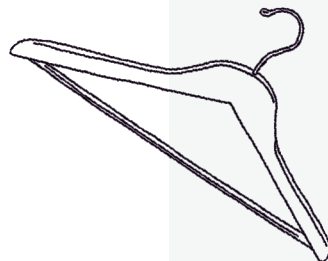
CHILDHOOD

Select one or two of those friends to describe in detail. How did they influence you? Is the relationship still in existence? Why or why not?

TEENS

EARLY ADULTHOOD

NOW




Respond

Who was a friend who influenced you in a negative way? How?

 Who was a friend who impacted you in a positive way? How?

Would you consider yourself an introvert (energized by time alone) or an extrovert (energized by time with people)? Give an example to support your answer.

 What hurdles in your life today are preventing you from investing in your current relationships?

Write a prayer to God about what you would like for Him to do in your life through this study over the next few weeks.

READ COLOSSIANS 3:1-16