

WEEK 1: YOU WERE DESIGNED FOR CONNECTION

Small Group Leader Guide

Read Before Group: Chapters 1-2

Chapter 1: The First “Not Good”

Chapter 2: You Were Designed for Connection

WEEKLY FOCUS

Before sin, shame, failure, or brokenness ever entered the story, God identified something that was “not good”: Adam was alone.

Our need for people is not evidence of weakness. It is part of how God designed us. But simply being around people does not mean we are experiencing community. **Proximity is not the same as connection.** We can attend, serve, work, worship, and live around people while still remaining unknown.

Foundation for this week: We were designed for connection, but connection has to be intentionally built.

BEFORE THE GROUP

1. Read Chapters 1-2.

2. Complete the personal Reflection sections at the end of both chapters. These are for personal preparation. Participants do not need to arrive prepared to share every answer.

3. Review the Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 Discussion Guide sections in the back of the book. Come ready to talk honestly about what stood out.

LEADER PREPARATION

Your job is not to teach Chapters 1 and 2 again. Everyone has already read them. Your job is to **create the kind of environment the book is describing.**

This first week matters because people are deciding whether this group will be a place where they can move beyond surface-level conversation.

Set the tone early: We are not here simply to discuss a book. We are here to practice community.

“You don’t have to finish every question. The goal isn’t completion. It’s connection. When something important surfaces, slow down and listen.”

CONNECT | 10 MINUTES

Start relationally. Use the opening question already provided in the Chapter 1 Discussion Guide:

“When you hear the word community, what comes to mind? What experiences, good or bad, have shaped the way you think about relationships and belonging?”

Don't rush this. This question can reveal why some people embrace community while others approach it cautiously.

REFLECT TOGETHER | 10-15 MINUTES

Before moving into the formal discussion questions, ask: **“What stayed with you from Chapters 1 and 2?”**

Then ask: **“Was there anything in your personal reflection that challenged you or made you think differently about the way you're living?”**

Don't require people to disclose their written answers. Let them decide how much they are ready to share.

DISCUSS | 25-30 MINUTES

Move into the **existing Discussion Guide in the book**.

Chapter 1 explores Adam's need for relationship, independence, being known versus merely being around people, and areas of connection or isolation. Chapter 2 moves from simply needing people to **building a life where real connection can happen**, including vulnerability, Acts 2 community, and allowing people to see what we are carrying.

The leader does not need to ask every question. Follow the conversation.

GO DEEPER | LEADER ONLY

These are not additional curriculum questions. They are tools for moments when something important surfaces:

“Tell me more about that.”

“What do you think made you respond that way?”

“Does anyone else relate to that?”

“What makes that difficult?”

“What would being known actually look like for you?”

“What might one step toward connection look like?”

And sometimes, don't ask anything. **Let silence work.** If someone shares something vulnerable, don't immediately move to the next question.

READ TOGETHER

Genesis 2:18

Acts 2:42-47

Chapter 1 establishes that aloneness was identified as “not good” before the Fall. Chapter 2 shows the early church sharing life through teaching, fellowship, meals, prayer, generosity, gathering, and care for one another.

Leader emphasis: God’s design wasn’t merely that we would believe together. It was that we would live connected.

LIVE IT TOGETHER

This week’s practice: TAKE ONE STEP BEYOND THE SURFACE.

Before next week’s gathering, reach out to one person intentionally **and** allow yourself to be known in one real area of your life.

It doesn’t have to be your deepest struggle. Just take one step beyond: **“I’m good.”**

PRAY TOGETHER | 10 MINUTES

Put people in groups of two or three. Have each person share **one real thing** they would like prayer for this week. Then pray for one another.

Encourage them to remember what the other person shared and check in sometime during the week. This begins a rhythm we will build on throughout the journey.

BEFORE WEEK 2

Read Chapter 3: When Hiding Entered the Story.

Complete the personal Reflection section.

Review the Chapter 3 Discussion Guide.

Come prepared to explore a harder question: **If we were designed to be known, why do we hide?**

DESIGNED FOR COMMUNITY

You Were Never Meant to Do This Alone