

The Art of Spiritual Friendship

2026-2027 COURSE CALENDAR

Weekly Gatherings: Follow your cohort schedule in LearnDash

OUR ALL-CONSUMING MISSION

Multiply transformed disciples by advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of God.

How to Use This Calendar

This calendar is a student-facing overview. LearnDash remains the official location for the exact weekly videos, readings, case studies, reflection questions, practices, resources, deadlines, and any updates.

Weekly Rhythm

- Complete the assigned LearnDash videos and readings before the weekly gathering.
- Complete the weekly reflection and practice, along with any assigned case-study preparation.
- Practice the week's spiritual-friendship skill in real relationships while protecting privacy and confidentiality.
- Participate in the E4:12 Discord community for prayer, encouragement, questions, and interaction without sharing identifying details about people you are helping.
- Come prepared for the live gathering. Class time emphasizes discussion, case analysis, modeling, role-play, practice, prayer, feedback, and accountability.
- Meet with your spiritual coach at least monthly and complete the beginning- and end-of-course assessments.

Current Reading Framework

Use the reading assignments posted in LearnDash. Current core materials include Scripture; Rick Thomas's *How to Change, Before You Help Them*, *Helping Someone Change*, and *48 Case Studies*; and selected E4:12 Spiritual Friendship curriculum used to supplement specific weeks.

Key Milestones

Timing	Milestone
Beginning of course	Complete the beginning Leadership Formation Self-Assessment and begin identifying a spiritual coach.
By end of Week 3	Spiritual coach established.
Monthly	Meet with your spiritual coach to process growth, application, relationships, and one concrete development goal.
Week 9	Complete Section 1 and reflect on your own patterns of biblical change before focusing on helping others.
Week 21	Integrate the posture and practices of a wise spiritual friend before entering the applied helping phase.
Week 32	Complete final self- and coach assessments, course synthesis, continuing growth plan, and commissioning.

SECTION 1: How to Change | Weeks 1-9

Week	Dates	Theme	Focus / Milestone
1	Aug. 28-Sept. 3	Resist Dullness	Wake up to spiritual dullness; cultivate honest self-awareness and a willingness to change.
2	Sept. 4-10	Making Life Hard on Yourself	Recognize self-defeating patterns, take responsibility, and connect choices with consequences.
3	Sept. 11-17	How to Change	Repentance as a way of life; put off sinful patterns, renew the mind, and put on Christlike obedience.
4	Sept. 18-24	How Do I Know I'm Changed?	Look for genuine fruit and new patterns without demanding perfection or settling for stagnation.
5	Sept. 25-Oct. 1	Two Essentials for Change	Clarify the essential dynamics of biblical change and pursue obedience in dependence on God.
6	Oct. 2-8	Five Things to Know	Build a clear, Christ-centered framework for understanding lasting change.
7	Oct. 9-15	Eight Sequential Steps	Learn an ordered process that moves from recognizing a struggle toward concrete, accountable change.
8	Oct. 16-22	Will I Ever Be Free?	Persevere when sin or struggle recurs; hold onto gospel hope when change feels slow.
9	Oct. 23-29	What Is Christian Maturity?	Christlikeness as the goal; assess growth honestly and prepare to help others from a life being changed by grace.

SECTION 2: Before You Help Them | Weeks 10-21

Week	Dates	Theme	Focus / Milestone
10	Oct. 30-Nov. 5	How to Help Them Change	Shift from personal change to helping others wisely without becoming their savior or fixer.
11	Nov. 6-12	You Can't Change Anyone	Only God changes hearts; learn faithful influence without control, coercion, or false responsibility.
12	Nov. 13-19	Why Bother If God Does It?	Hold dependence and responsibility together: pray, love, speak, serve, and act faithfully while trusting God for fruit.
BREAK	Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Break	No class.
13	Nov. 27-Dec. 3	The Ministry of Presence	Show up, pursue, listen, and build trust; learn why care and connection matter before correction.
14	Dec. 4-10	At Peace With the Unchanged	Remain faithful when others do not change; resist anxiety, control, resentment, and over-responsibility.
15	Dec. 11-17	Understanding People Is Work	Slow down, ask thoughtful questions, and seek to understand the whole person before speaking.
BREAK	Dec. 24 & 31	Christmas & New Year Break	No class.
16	Jan. 1-7	Understanding Their Story	Gather information with wisdom and care: life history, relationships, body, circumstances, habits, and spiritual life.
17	Jan. 8-14	You Start Changing First	Examine your own heart, motives, reactions, and blind spots before trying to correct another person.
18	Jan. 15-21	How to Love the Unwilling	Love patiently when someone resists; combine compassion, courage, patience, and wise boundaries.
19	Jan. 22-28	Forcing Change Backfires	Recognize pressure and control; invite personal responsibility and voluntary, faith-filled obedience.
20	Jan. 29-Feb. 4	When We Push Others Away	Identify relational patterns that close hearts; pursue humility, gentleness, safety, and loving candor.
21	Feb. 5-11	Becoming a Wise Spiritual Friend	Integrate presence, listening, discernment, truth, patience, prayer, limits, and dependence on the Spirit.

SECTION 3: Helping Someone Change | Weeks 22-32

Week	Dates	Theme	Focus / Milestone
22	Feb. 12-18	Ten Things to Know	Assess readiness to help and cultivate the character, humility, prayer, biblical grounding, and service of a trustworthy friend.
23	Feb. 19-25	Stop Caring Too Much	Distinguish concern from responsibility; resist over-functioning and the temptation to become a mini-Messiah.
24	Feb. 26-Mar. 4	First Things First	Examine your own heart before conflict or correction; address your part before focusing on the other person.
25	Mar. 5-11	He Won't Help Himself	Help someone who resists responsibility without nagging, rescuing, shaming, or controlling.
26	Mar. 12-18	Helping a Stubborn Couple	Care wisely amid mutual resistance; use purposeful flexibility while calling each person to honest responsibility.
27	Mar. 19-25	It's Not Going Anywhere	Recognize stalled care; reassess, triage, reset goals, seek help, or end a helping relationship wisely.
28	Mar. 26-Apr. 1	When Is Enough, Enough?	Know when to step back; practice healthy boundaries, stewardship, and entrusting people to God.
29	Apr. 2-8	Church Discipline and Restoration	Matthew 18, gentle restoration, escalating care, and redemptive church involvement when sin remains unrepentant.
30	Apr. 9-15	Deep Discouragement and Depression	Offer whole-person care in persistent darkness: listen carefully, understand broadly, bring hope, and involve appropriate help.
31	Apr. 16-22	Words That Give Grace	Use words that build rather than cut; attend to listening, tone, humor, correction, encouragement, and the heart behind speech.
32	Apr. 23-29	The Church as a Community of Care	Soul care belongs in the local church; practice wise referral without abandonment, synthesize the pathway, and prepare to continue caring.

Spiritual Friendship Formation & Practice Outcomes

The goal is not merely to finish 32 weeks of content. By the end of the pathway, students should show growing faithfulness in the same areas evaluated in the Spiritual Friendship self- and coach assessments.

Formation Area	Growing Faithfulness
Prayerful Dependence	Pray consistently for people and depend on God to bring lasting change rather than trying to change them.
Intentional and Safe Relationships	Build genuine, Christ-centered relationships where people can be known, heard, loved, and encouraged toward spiritual growth.
Listening and Understanding	Listen carefully, ask thoughtful questions, and seek to understand a person's story, suffering, circumstances, relationships, and heart before speaking.
Whole-Person Discernment	Understand body, soul, circumstances, and relationships without reducing a person to a label or single cause.
Using Scripture Wisely	Use Scripture faithfully and graciously to help people see Christ, interpret life biblically, and respond in faith, repentance, obedience, and hope.
Speaking Truth and Walking Patiently	Encourage, admonish, confront, and bring hope with courage, gentleness, timing, and grace while walking patiently with people.
Boundaries and Wise Referral	Know the limits of your role and involve pastors or other qualified help when needs exceed your wisdom or competence.
Church-Centered Spiritual Friendship	Help people remain connected to the life and care of the local church and contribute to a culture of mutual soul care.
Equipping Others	Model and help others grow in listening well, understanding biblically, speaking truth in love, caring patiently, and knowing their limits.

Week 32: Capstone and Commissioning

- Reflect on the most important truths and practices God has used to shape you during the 32-week pathway.
- Complete the end-of-course Leadership Formation Self-Assessment and review the coach assessment after both are complete.
- Identify one continuing spiritual-friendship growth priority and one person you can intentionally walk alongside in the next 30 days.
- Name the boundaries, church relationships, and accountability that will help you care faithfully without trying to carry what belongs to God or others.
- Pray together and be commissioned to continue building a church culture where believers know, love, encourage, correct, restore, and support one another in Christ.

CLOSING CHARGE

By the grace of God, become a safe and wise spiritual friend.

By the Word of Christ, speak the truth in love.

By the Spirit of God, walk patiently with people.

Go, therefore, and help build churches where believers care for one another toward Christ.