

SERMON 3: Connecting Intentionally with Others

Series: *New Year, New You, New Do*

Dave Geldart | January 18, 2026, | Tru Community Church

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Welcome & Connect Cards, LIFE Groups, Women's Min 1/25 4pm, Membership Class 1/25, Giving

2. [1] INTRODUCTION: LEGO ENTERPRISE

- a. When I was a kid, we didn't have streaming services.
 - i. We didn't have on-demand anything.
 - ii. We had a TV with rabbit-ear antennas. – looked like coat hangers sticking out the top of your tv set.
- b. We were a “eat dinner together at the table” type of family.
- c. **But once a week, my family would spread out one of those red-and-white plastic checkered tablecloths on the living room floor in front of the TV, and we eat our dinners watching *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.**
- d. If the antenna was positioned just right, the picture would come in clearly.
 - i. If it wasn't, you'd adjust it, hold it, or sometimes just accept the static.
- e. But something about that show captured me.
 - i. The adventure. The sense of mission.
 - ii. The idea of a crew—very different people, with different gifts, backgrounds, and personalities—working together toward something bigger than themselves.
- f. **Around that same time, I was captured by something else: LEGOs.**
 - i. But I wasn't into just any LEGO.
 - ii. I didn't want city LEGO.
 - iii. I didn't want castle LEGO.
 - iv. I wanted **space LEGOs**.
 - 1. Spaceships. Space stations. Explorers.
 - 2. Anything that went beyond Earth.
- g. **And as a kid, I always dreamed of one thing I could never quite have: *Star Trek LEGO*.**
 - i. Because for decades, LEGO made Star Wars sets—but let's be very clear about something this morning: **Star Wars and Star Trek are not the same thing.**
 - 1. Not even close.
 - ii. And for most of my life, those two loves of lego and star trek never came together.
 - iii. **Until this year.**
- h. For the first time ever, LEGO acquired the rights to make Star Trek sets.
 - i. And I'll admit—it felt like a long-delayed childhood dream finally came true.

- i. So over Christmas, my mother-in-law surprised me with a huge gift, one that I'd wanted far more than is appropriate for an adult: the LEGO Enterprise from TNG.
 - i. The one with captain Picard I'd watched for so many years sitting cross-legged on the living room floor.
- j. And over the past couple of weeks, I've been building it—slowly, intentionally—and I've loved every minute of it. Finished early this morning!
- k. **What has struck me most isn't just how many pieces there are, but how creatively they fit together.**
 - i. This is not your old school brick on brick build! It's complex and deceptively creative.
 - ii. Every piece has a purpose. **Every connection matters.** And none of these pieces were created to exist by themselves.
- l. **(hold up a single LEGO piece)**
 - i. This piece, by itself, isn't broken
 - ii. It's not defective.
 - iii. It's not useless.
 - iv. It's just incomplete.
 - v. It only makes sense --- only finds its purpose -- when it's connected to others.

m. (gesture toward the Enterprise)

- i. **But when the pieces are connected—when they're placed where they belong—something remarkable emerges.**
 - 1. **Something far greater than any individual piece on its own.**
- ii. As I've been building this set, I've found myself thinking: *this is actually a picture of how God designed his church.*
- iii. We were not created to exist in isolation
 - 1. We were created to be connected—intentionally, relationally, purposefully—not only to Him, but to one another!
- iv. And when those connections are missing, the whole doesn't necessarily collapse... but it does suffer.

3. REORIENTING TO THE SERIES

- a. That's why this conversation matters so much as we continue our series, **New Year, New You, New Do.**
- b. At the beginning of this year, we said we didn't want this to be another resolution-driven moment fueled by mere willpower and guilt.
 - i. Instead, we wanted to anchor ourselves in a deeper truth: **God is the one who brings renewal—but intention is how we cooperate with His grace.**

- c. In week one, we talked about *living intentionally*—how God makes all things new, and how practices like a Word of the Year help us pay attention and step into to what He’s already doing.
- d. Last week, we talked about *connecting intentionally with God*—moving beyond knowing about Him to actually relating to Him, listening to Him, and experiencing His presence.
- e. Today, we turn to something just as essential:
 - i. **[2] connecting intentionally with others.**
 - ii. Because spiritual growth was never meant to happen alone.

4. THE PROBLEM WE FEEL (BUT DON’T ALWAYS NAME)

- a. Here’s the tension many of us live with:
- b. We live in one of the most connected times in history, and yet loneliness is everywhere.
- c. We can follow hundreds of people, interact with dozens of conversations, and still feel unseen and unknown.
- d. Many of us want meaningful relationships—but we’re tired.
 - i. We’re cautious. We’ve been hurt.
 - ii. Or we’ve grown so used to keeping things surface-level that we can’t practically imagine anything more.
- e. And when it comes to church, it’s easy to slip into a pattern where faith becomes something we consume rather than something we share.
 - i. We attend, listen, learn.
 - ii. **But we remain disconnected.**
- f. And slowly—often invisibly—the life God intends to form in us begins to stall.
 - i. That’s not because God has failed
 - ii. It’s because we were never meant to grow alone.

5. DESIGNED FOR CONNECTION

- a. One of the things I’ve learned building this LEGO set is that every piece assumes connection. None of these pieces were designed to float on their own.
 - i. That WOULD be cool though
- b. **They were designed with the expectation that they would belong to something larger.**
 - i. **And that assumption is built into the Christian faith as well.**
- c. From the very beginning, God’s plan has never been to save isolated individuals and leave them on their own. His plan has always been to form a people.
 - i. Saved not only from judgement, but from our disconnection and isolation.
- d. **(remove one visible LEGO piece deliberately)**
- e. What’s interesting is that when you remove one piece like this, the whole thing doesn’t immediately fall apart.

- i. It still looks mostly complete → still recognizable, still standing.
- ii. But it's no longer whole.
- f. And over time, if more pieces disconnect, the structure weakens—not because the design was flawed, but because the pieces weren't where they were meant to be.
- g. That's a picture of what happens when we treat church as something we attend rather than a family we belong to. → Not what happens to us, as much as to the church
- h. Which is why the earliest picture we have of the church matters so much:

6. THE BIBLICAL VISION: A CONNECTED PEOPLE

- a. Luke gives us one of the clearest pictures of what the early church looked like in Acts 2.
 - i. This is not an idealized fantasy.
 - ii. This is not a program description.
 - iii. This is an actual snapshot of a Spirit-formed community learning how to live out their faith together.

b. [3] Listen to Acts 2:42–47 (NIV) as Luke, the author, describes the early church:

- i. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
- c. Notice what Luke emphasizes here: before there is explosive growth, there is **devotion**—to teaching, to prayer, and especially to *fellowship*.
 - i. Before the church multiplies outward, it is deeply connected inward.
 - ii. The gospel spreads through a people who share life, not just belief.
- d. **This is important for us to hear, because it challenges a very common assumption: that spiritual growth is primarily an individual pursuit.**
 - i. Scripture paints a different picture.
 - ii. Growth happens in community.
 - 1. Formation happens in relationship.
 - 2. Maturity happens as we walk together.
- e. **The New Testament assumes this kind of shared life.**
 - i. In fact, many of the commands we’re given simply cannot be obeyed alone.

- ii. We are told to love one another, encourage one another, bear one another's burdens, forgive one another, confess to one another, spur one another on toward love and good deeds.
- iii. **Those are not private disciplines. They require proximity.** They require presence. They require intentional connection beyond mere attendance on Sunday ams.

f. [4] Paul puts it this way in Romans 12:4–5 (NIV):

- i. “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

g. Paul says we are many members, but one body. That means no one is unnecessary—and no one is sufficient on their own.

- i. In the same way, this LEGO set doesn't work if most of the pieces insists on being standalone. The design assumes connection.

ii. (*Hold up a piece again.*)

- iii. This piece isn't wrong. It's just not finished until it's connected.

7. [5] THE PROBLEM: WHEN ATTENDANCE REPLACES CONNECTION

a. And yet, if we're honest, this is where many of us get stuck.

b. In much of Western Christianity, we've inherited a model of church that emphasizes attendance more than connection.

- i. We gather, we sing, we listen, and then we leave.

- ii. These Sunday gatherings are important—I want to be very clear about that.

- 1. But they were never meant to be the *only* place where formation happens.

c. The danger is that we begin to confuse attendance with connection

- i. We can be well-informed but under-formed.

- ii. We can know the language of faith without experiencing the depth of it.

- iii. We can be surrounded by people and still feel unknown.

d. This isn't because people don't care.

- i. Often it's because we've never been taught how to move from crowd to community, from gathering to shared life.

e. [6] Ephesians 4 gives us a helpful lens here. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11–13 (NIV):

- i. “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature.”

f. Notice the flow: leaders equip the people; the people do the ministry; the body is built up.

- i. **Growth is not something done *to* us by professionals.**
- ii. **It's something God does *among* us as we serve, love, and walk w/ one another.**
- g. This is why connecting intentionally with others is not an optional add-on to faith.
 - i. It is a central pathway through which God shapes us into his people.

8. WHAT BIBLICAL COMMUNITY IS — AND WHAT IT IS NOT

- a. When we talk about connecting intentionally with others, it's important to clarify what we mean by *biblical community*, because many of us carry assumptions that make community feel intimidating or unrealistic.
- b. [7] First, let's talk about what biblical community ***is not***:
 - i. [8] Biblical community is not instant intimacy.
 - 1. It does not mean walking into a group of strangers and immediately sharing your deepest struggles.
 - 2. Trust grows over time, and Scripture assumes that kind of patience.
 - ii. [9] Biblical community is not uniformity.
 - 1. We are not all the same age, personality, preferences, background, or life stage—and we don't need to be.
 - 2. Unity in Christ does not erase diversity; it sanctifies it!
 - iii. [10] And biblical community is not perfection.
 - 1. You do not join because you have it together.
 - a. You join because you don't.
 - 2. **Community is not the reward for spiritual maturity;**
 - a. **it is one of the primary tools God uses to produce it.**
 - 3. One of the things I've learned building this set is that sometimes you don't connect pieces perfectly the first time.
 - a. You get down the line and realize something's not right.
 - b. You have to adjust. You have to deconstruct and rebuild.
 - 4. Community works the same way.
 - a. It's not about perfect alignment. It's about staying connected long enough for growth to happen.
- c. [11] Now, let's talk about what biblical community ***is***.
 - i. [12] Biblical community is intentional proximity to other believers.
 - 1. It is choosing to place your life into rhythms where others can know you and where you can know them.
 - 2. Doing life together
 - ii. [13] Biblical community is shared practice.

1. It is people praying together, opening Scripture together, eating together, serving together, and showing up consistently.

iii. [14] Biblical community is mutual care.

1. It is not a one-way relationship where some people always give and others always receive.
2. Over time, we learn to do both.
3. We show up for one another through thick and thin. Joys and sorrows.

d. Paul captures this beautifully in **Galatians 6:2 (NIV):**

- i. **“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”**

e. Notice that phrase: *each other’s*.

- i. This is not something pastors can do on behalf of everyone else.
- ii. This is the calling of the whole church.

9. [15] WHY GOD USES RELATIONSHIPS TO FORM US

- a. One of the reasons community feels challenging is because **relationships have a way of revealing us.**
- b. When you are around others long enough, **your strengths show—and so do your weaknesses and blind spots.**
 - i. **But that is not a design flaw. That is the design!**
- c. God uses relationships to:
 - i. Encourage us when we are weary
 - ii. Speak truth to us when we are stuck
 - iii. Carry us when we are hurting
 - iv. Call us forward when we are afraid
 - v. And redirect us when we’re wandering off
- d. There are core aspects of Christlike character that simply cannot be developed in isolation.
 - i. Patience, forgiveness, humility, gentleness, and love all require intimate connection with other people.
 1. You cannot learn to forgive if you never get close enough for others to hurt you.
 2. You cannot practice humility if no one ever challenges you.
 3. You cannot grow in love without risk.
 - ii. And you cannot do ANY of these things unless you get close enough to others for these to play out.
 1. Most can’t happen in large gatherings like this
 2. They require a smaller, more intimate scale of community

e. [16] Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (NIV) puts it this way:

- i. “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

- ii. This is not romantic language. It is practical wisdom.

- 1. God knows our limitations, and He meets them through shared life.

10.[17] FROM CONNECTION TO MISSION: HOW COMMUNITY CREATES RIPPLE EFFECTS

- a. One of the reasons community matters so much is because **it is the environment where God not only heals us, but sends us** to others.

- i. Healthy connection does not turn us inward; it actually prepares us to live outward-facing lives.

- b. What fascinates me about LEGO is that **small pieces create massive results** when they’re connected.

- i. A single piece doesn’t look like much—but when it’s joined with others, it contributes to something far bigger than itself.

c. [18] That’s a picture of Our 2026 WOTY: RIPPLE

- i. **Most spiritual ripples don’t start with big moments.** They start with small connections—one conversation, one group, one relationship, one faithful step.

- ii. When we connect intentionally, God uses those connections to create ripples that extend far beyond what we can see.

d. Jesus models this pattern clearly in the Gospels.

- i. He pours deeply into life together with a small group of disciples, and through them the gospel ripples outward to the ends of the earth.

- 1. Depth precedes breadth.

- 2. Connection fuels multiplication.

e. This is why we talk so much about life groups and relational discipleship here.

- i. It’s not because we want to add more meetings to your calendar

- ii. It’s because we believe this is how the gospel moves—through ordinary people, living faithfully, together.

11.[19] TESTIMONY MOMENT: COMMUNITY IN REAL LIFE

- a. Before we talk about next steps, I want you to hear from someone in our church about what it’s looked like to connect intentionally with others—not perfectly, but faithfully.

b. Juan Garcia

- i. **Why did you decide to jump into a LIFE Group?**

- 1. What was it like? What struggles did you face?

ii. Why did you decide to step into personal discipleship? What's it been like?

12.[20] PRACTICAL PATHWAYS: SMALL STEPS, REAL CONNECTION

- a. Connecting intentionally with others does not mean doing everything at once. It means taking **one faithful step at a time.**
 - i. [21] For some, that step might be joining a LIFE Group—placing your life in a smaller circle where Scripture, prayer, and shared rhythms of genuine connection are part of the week.
 - 1. **We currently have 2 groups: Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening.**
 - 2. Each has their own flavor, but founded on the 4 core aspects of biblical community we saw practiced in Acts 2: Learning Biblical Truth, Intercession, Fellowship, and Extending Life to Others.
 - 3. Our vision is to plant many more of these groups so everyone in our area can have relational access to the Gospel message and Gospel community
 - 4. Talking with someone this week about getting our 3rd LG launched.
 - ii. [22] For others, it might be stepping into a personal discipleship relationship—meeting regularly with one or a few others to listen, learn, and grow together.
 - 1. **We already have a number of these discipling relationships happening**
 - a. And more on the horizon
 - 2. If you're interested in discipling others or being discipled and don't know how to take that 1st step, let me know and I'll help you get connected.
 - iii. [23] For others, it might be a recovery group, a men's or women's gathering,
 - 1. If you're interested in any of these let me know and I'll point you in the right direction.
 - iv. [24] And for some, it might start even smaller— simply choosing intentional friendships where faith is part of the conversation.
 - 1. Could look like inviting someone to coffee or lunch,
 - a. maybe someone here at church you don't know well,
 - 2. or opening your home,
 - 3. or choosing to be more present with your neighbors.
 - v. There is no single right pathway. Invitation is not to compare, but to respond.
- b. [25] Hebrews 10:24–25 (NIV) encourages us:
 - i. “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
- c. Notice that phrase: **let us consider how.**
 - i. Biblical Community doesn't happen accidentally.

- 1. It requires thoughtfulness, intention
 - ii. It requires choosing to move toward one another rather than drifting apart.
- d. And that brings us back to the heart of this series.
 - i. **God is already at work, renewing and forming us!**
 - ii. Our role is not to manufacture transformation, but to cooperate with what He is already doing.
- e. **For some of us, the greatest step of faith this year may not be starting a new spiritual discipline or learning something new ...**
 - i. It may be letting ourselves be known. Or asking for help.
 - ii. It may be committing to show up consistently, even when it's uncomfortable.
 - iii. That can be scary.
 - 1. Many of us have been hurt in relationships.
 - 2. Some of us have been disappointed by church in the past.
 - 3. Others of us simply don't know where to start.
 - 4. If that's you: **you are not behind, and you are not disqualified.**
 - iv. God is patient. Growth takes time.
 - 1. And connection is something God forms gently, not forcefully.
 - v. And the saying holds true, we're wounded in relationship, and so we must also be healed in relationship.

13. INVITATION: ONE FAITHFUL STEP

- a. So I want to invite you to consider one simple question today:
 - i. **What might be one intentional step God is inviting me to take toward deeper connection this year?**
 - ii. Not ten steps. Not someone else's step. Just one next right step...
- b. **The question isn't, "Am I ready??", but "Am I willing?"**
- c. Small steps. Faithful connections. God-sized ripples.

14. PRAY

15. [26] COMMUNION

- a. It's appropriate we celebrate our communion not only with God but with one another
- b. What Jesus did on the cross made a way for reconnection between us and God, but also put us together in connection with one another.
- c. As you come and take the bread and cup, keep your eyes open, "apprehend the body". You are united with Christ AND WITH THESE PEOPLE, and with all who place their trust in Him.

NEW YEAR.

NEW YOU.

NEW DO.



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A CONNECTED PEOPLE

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Acts 2:42-47

A CONNECTED PEOPLE

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

Romans 12:4-5

ATTENDANCE VS. CONNECTION



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“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature.”

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Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

FROM CONNECTION TO MISSION



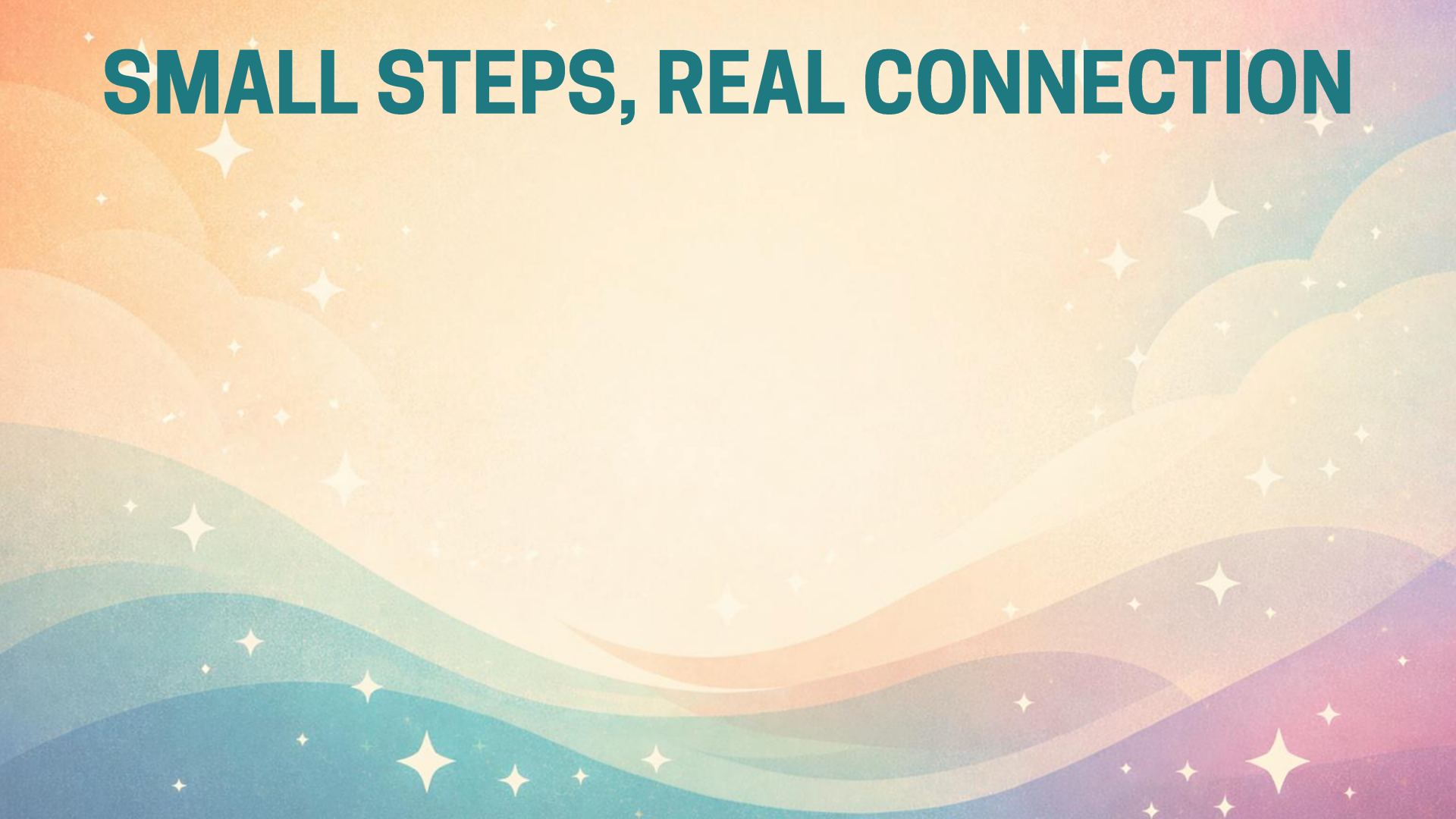
FROM CONNECTION TO MISSION

Tru's 2026 WOTY: **RIPPLE**

TESTIMONY

Juan Garcia

SMALL STEPS, REAL CONNECTION



SMALL STEPS, REAL CONNECTION

Join a LIFE Group.

SMALL STEPS, REAL CONNECTION

Join a LIFE Group.

Step into personal discipleship.

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Join another group: recovery, men's, women's...

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COMMUNION

