



The Gift of Intergenerational Gospel Friendships

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Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up. — 1 Thessalonians 5:11

In 7th grade, my youngest daughter switched to a different middle school and had to navigate being a brand-new student. Right before the start of the school year, she used her hard-earned money to buy a brand-new pair of nice shoes. She was excited to wear them and took great care to keep them clean and crease-free. At the end of her first week, however, she came home and declared she wasn't going to ever wear those shoes to school again. Apparently, some kids were making fun of her and saying her shoes were fake. My heart ached for her. She was holding back tears and decided instead of facing the mean kids and their comments again, she would simply stop wearing the shoes. The shoes were very real, and so were her feelings. As her mom, I tried to encourage her to be brave, to ignore what others say, and to stand firm on what she knows to be true. I reminded her that true worth and value come not from whether her clothing is on point or whether the kids at school approve of her.

Instead, who she is flows out from whose she is, as Isaiah 43:1 says, "I have called you by name, you are mine." She belongs to Jesus and He finds her utterly lovely. While I wholeheartedly believed what I said to my daughter, my voice at that moment was not persuasive enough. It was important that my daughter received this truth, so I reached out to Karen, an older woman from church who knows her well and delights in being her friend. Karen intentionally pursues a friendship with my daughter by checking in at church, via text, over ice cream or lunch, and by cheering her on at sporting events. What makes their friendship special is Karen's willingness to ask thoughtful questions and listen with a desire to really know her. When Karen received my message, she knew my daughter needed to hear the gospel truth and sent her the following text: "Your true worth, as you know, is in Christ and not found in what's on the outside of your feet, but inside of your heart. Just know I am praying for you. I hope you wear those shoes to school and send me a picture of your feet."

As my daughter's older gospel friend, Karen modeled what 1 Thessalonians 5:11 instructs us to do with one another: she comforted my daughter by building her up and by reminding her to put her trust and confidence in Christ. She encouraged her that she belongs to Him and that her worth is rooted in who Jesus is. This was a discipleship moment in my daughter's life; a wiser woman lived out the Titus 2:3 mandate by teaching her what is good and encouraging her to think biblically about her circumstances. Their friendship has grown and deepened from that experience. This is the beauty of intergenerational gospel friendships—they foster a sense of connection between generations, encourage growth in holiness, and create space for women to affirm the truths different generations of women need to hear. They allow both older and younger women to speak gospel hope into each other's lives in a life-giving way. My daughter heard and received what Karen shared with her and has since reminded me to set my hope in Christ and to remember what He has done.

Let's Chat!

- When you look around your church, is there an older woman you would like to get to know? Is there a younger woman who could be encouraged by your relationship with Christ?
- If you could share one truth about who God is with a woman in your life, what would it be?
- When was the last time you received gospel encouragement from a friend? What did she say?

Take-Away Truth:

When we invest in cultivating intergenerational gospel friendships with women in our churches, we build deep community and encourage each other to speak gospel truths to our hearts.

Find more conversation starters: <https://women.pcacdm.org/made-for-more>

