



GUARDING YOUR INNER CIRCLE

A Guided Workbook

Discernment in Relationships

"Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."

Proverbs 13:20

Name: _____

Date Started: _____



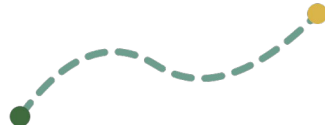
How to Use This Workbook

This workbook walks through five movements: naming how influence actually works in your life, grounding discernment in Scripture, distinguishing wise discernment from paranoia, auditing your current inner circle honestly, and inviting God into how you choose companionship going forward.

A few suggestions before you begin:

- ☐ Approach this with honesty, not guilt. Naming an unhealthy influence isn't a verdict on anyone's worth — it's stewardship of your own life.
- ☐ Remember the goal is discernment, not isolation. This workbook is not an invitation to distrust everyone close to you.
- ☐ Be specific with names and situations where you can. Vague reflection produces vague change.
- ☐ Revisit this workbook periodically — your inner circle shifts over seasons, and so should your attention to it.

| *"Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character."* — **1 Corinthians 15:33**



Section 1: How Influence Actually Works

| *"Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."* — **Proverbs 13:20**

Influence is rarely loud or obvious while it's happening. It shows up in what starts to feel normal, in emotional patterns absorbed without noticing, and in a slow drift toward whoever you spend the most unguarded time with. This section is about naming that influence honestly.

Who are the handful of people whose opinions and moods actually move you day to day?

What has started to feel 'normal' to say, joke about, or tolerate because of who you're regularly around?

Where have you noticed your own habits, ambitions, or faith drifting toward the average of the people closest to you — for better or worse?



Section 2: What Scripture Says About Companionship

| *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."* — **Proverbs 27:17**

Scripture treats companionship as one of the most reliable predictors of a person's trajectory — not as a minor detail, but as a direct, repeated warning and encouragement.

1 Corinthians 15:33 warns that bad company corrupts good character, framing it as something that can happen without you realizing it. Where might you be currently 'misled' about a relationship's actual effect on you?

Proverbs 27:17 describes good influence as active friction — iron on iron — not passive comfort. Which relationships in your life actually sharpen you, even when it's uncomfortable?

Proverbs 13:20 uses the word 'walk' — sustained proximity, not a single conversation. Whose company do you find yourself walking with most consistently right now?



Section 3: Discernment, Not Paranoia

| *"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."* — **Romans 12:18**

Guarding your circle isn't about treating people as threats or building an insulated bubble of easy affirmation. It's about being honest that proximity shapes people, and being intentional about how much access you give to whom.

Where might you be tempted to swing toward isolation or suspicion rather than genuine discernment?

Is there a relationship you've kept at arm's length out of fear rather than wisdom? What would it look like to reconsider that honestly?

What's the difference, in your own words, between caring about someone and giving them unrestricted access to shape your daily life?



Section 4: Auditing Your Inner Circle

| *"Two are better than one... if either of them falls down, one can help the other up."* — **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**

This section turns reflection into an honest, practical audit. Be specific — vague impressions rarely lead to real change.

List the 3-5 people with the most access to your time, attention, and decisions. For each, note whether the relationship generally sharpens you or dulls you.

Is there a relationship where you need to adjust how much weight or access it carries in your life — without necessarily ending it?

Is there a relationship that sharpens you, that you've been under-investing in? What would re-investing look like?



Section 5: Drawing Closer to God Through Companionship

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault." — James 1:5

Part of discernment in relationships is actively seeking companionship that draws you toward God, not just toward comfort or convenience — and asking for wisdom about who that should be.

Do you have at least one relationship with explicit permission to speak honestly into your life, including your walk with God? If not, who might that become?

Do your closest relationships make prayer, honesty, and faith easier or harder to practice?

Write a short prayer asking God for discernment about your inner circle — who to draw closer, who to hold with more distance, and the wisdom to tell the difference.



A Closing Word

Guarding your inner circle isn't a cold, calculating exercise — it's stewardship over one of the most influential forces in your life. You don't have to distrust everyone or wall yourself off to take this seriously.

| *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." — **Proverbs 27:17***

The people you walk closely with today are quietly shaping who you'll be tomorrow. Choose that company as thoughtfully as you'd choose anything else that matters this much — and be the kind of companion, sharpening rather than dulling, that you're seeking in return.