

Module 1
Section 4

DEVELOPING TRUST

Trust is essential to have strong and healthy relationships.

IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL:

Discover why trust is needed in every relationship.

Identify characteristics needed to develop trust.

Recognize when you or others are not being trustworthy.

DEVELOPING TRUST

What is trust?

We know trust is very important for strong relationships with people. But what does trust really mean? A writer named Charles Feltman came up with a good definition. He says, "Trust is choosing to make something important to you vulnerable to the actions of someone else." This means that trust is when you let someone else have control over something that is important to you. Distrust is when you don't feel safe sharing something important with someone.

Brené Brown is a famous researcher and author who has studied trust. She looked at all the information and came up with an acronym called BRAVING. When we trust someone, we are being brave and connecting with them. Let's look at the parts of trust...

B.R.A.V.I.N.G.

The letter **B** stands for **Boundaries**. A boundary is like a dividing line that marks the limits of an area. I trust you if you know and respect your own boundaries, and if you understand and respect my boundaries too.

Trust can't exist without boundaries. We have to know our own limits, tell them clearly, and respect other people's boundaries, too.

The next letter in BRAVING is **R** which stands for **Reliability**. I can only trust you if you do what you say you're going to do, not just once, but over and over again. Reliability means being consistent and keeping your promises. It's like a scale that always gives the correct weight when you step on it.

In our work and personal lives, reliability means knowing our limits and not taking on too much. We need to make sure we can follow through on our commitments. For example, if we say we'll call someone to get together, we need to actually do it. We might feel like we're being nice or friendly by saying things like, "I'll call you", but if we don't intend to or follow through, then we're not being honest. That's makes us unreliable and not trust-worthy.

Accountability is also very important. I can only trust you if, when you make a mistake, you are willing to admit it, apologize, and make things right. I can only trust you if when I make a mistake, I am allowed to admit it, apologize, and make things right. No accountability? No trust.

V stands for the **Vault**. A vault is where people put things that are important to them. It keeps those things safe by not letting other people have access to it. What I tell you, you will keep secret. What you tell me, I will keep secret. If a good friend comes up to you and says, "Wow, did you hear about (fill in a name)?" They have just told you something that was not theirs to tell. Even though they're giving you the juicy details by gossiping, now your trust for them is completely gone.

Does that make sense? So, the Vault is not just about keeping my secrets, it's also about showing me that you understand the importance of keeping things private for other people, too.

Here's the tricky thing about the Vault. Sometimes, we share things that are not ours to share as a way to connect with a friend. Our closeness is built on talking badly about other people. Do you know what that's called? Common enemy friendship. That's not real friendship. The closeness we have is built on hating the same people, and that's fake. That's not real trust. So, the Vault means you respect my story, but you also respect other people's stories.

The letter **I** is for **Integrity**. I cannot trust you and have a trusting relationship with you if you do not act with integrity and encourage me to do the same. So, what is integrity?

Some people describe integrity as not being phony and by acting the same way in private as you do when you know someone is watching. Brené Brown came up with her own three-part definition of integrity. She describes it this way - "It's choosing courage over comfort; choosing what's right over what's fun, fast, or easy; and practicing your values, not just professing your values."

N is the next letter in BRAVING and it stands for **Non-judgment** (or not judging). Non-judgment means not making assumptions, criticizing, or shaming others. Trust is built when people feel accepted and respected, no matter their weaknesses or mistakes.

I can have a hard time and ask for help without you judging me. And you can have a hard time and ask for help without me judging you, even though it's difficult because we're better at helping than asking for help.

We might think that we have trusting relationships with people who trust us because we're always there to help them. But, if you can't ask for help and they can't help you back, that's not a trusting relationship. Many people feel good about themselves for being the ones who help others. But true trust doesn't exist unless help goes both ways and there's no judgment.

The last one is **G** for **Generosity**. Generosity means being kind and giving others the benefit of the doubt. Trust grows when people believe others have their best interests at heart and are willing to offer support and understanding. Our relationship is only trusting if you can assume the best about what I say, mean, and do, and then talk to me about it.

So, if I make a mistake, say something wrong, or forget something, you will assume something generous. You may think that maybe I was having a bad day, and you will talk to me about it - instead of assuming I was purposefully being hurtful or neglectful.

Why do we need to understand trust?

How many of you have ever had trouble trusting someone in a work or personal relationship? It should be everyone, right? So, when you tell someone, "I don't trust you," they might say, "What do you mean? I love you and I'm always there for you. Why don't you trust me?"

How can we talk about trust if we can't break it down? Understanding trust helps us express our struggles. We can say, "You're not reliable with me. You say you'll do something, but you don't." Or maybe the problem is not judging others. But we can break it down and talk about it. We can ask for what we need. Instead of using the big word "trust", we can say, "Here's what's not

" working. We have a problem with boundaries."

Something interesting is that when we experience heartbreak, disappointment, or failure, we not only lose trust in others but also in ourselves. When something difficult happens, we often think, "I can't trust myself. I was so stupid. I was so naive."

Trusting Ourselves

The BRAVING acronym also applies to self-trust. When you go through a tough failure, you might ask yourself, "Did I respect my own boundaries? Was I reliable? Can I count on myself? Did I hold myself accountable? Did I protect my stories? Did I stay true to myself? Was I too hard on myself? Did I give myself the benefit of the doubt? Was I kind to myself?"

If building relationships with others is about trust, building self-trust is about self-love. We need to respect ourselves. If you can't trust yourself, you can't expect others to trust you. We need to start with self-trust.

If you struggle with trust, first look at how you treat yourself. We can't ask others to give us something we don't believe we deserve. You will know you deserve it when you trust yourself more than anyone else.

Become trust-worthy. Be brave and build trust with yourself and others.

B

Boundaries

Know the dividing line that marks your limit; what's okay and not okay.

R

Reliability

Consistently do what you say you will do.

A

Accountability

Admit your mistake and make it right.
Allow others to do the same for you.

V

The Vault

Keep people's confidences private (safe).

I

Integrity

Choose courage over what is easy or fast .
Practice you values, not just profess them.

N

Non-judgment

Don't make assumptions, criticize, or shame others.

G

Generosity

Give others "the benefit of the doubt".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Think about a time when you had to set boundaries with someone.

How did it make you feel?

Did it help build trust in your relationship? Why or why not?

3

Have you ever made a mistake and taken responsibility for it?

How did it affect your relationship with the person involved?

What did you learn from that experience?

5

Think about a time when someone broke your trust.

How did it make you feel?

What did you learn from that experience?

2

Describe a situation where someone showed reliability.

How did their actions impact your trust in them?

How can you practice reliability in your own life?

4

Reflect on a situation where you had trouble trusting yourself.

How did it affect your actions and decisions?

What steps can you take to build trust with yourself?

6

Consider a time when you found it difficult to trust someone.

What were the reasons behind your lack of trust?

TRUST BUILDING ACTIVITIES

1 **Common Ground**

Get into small groups and talk about what you have in common. Think of unusual things, as well as the obvious ones, such as eye color.

You have 15 minutes to come up with as many common facts as they can. The group with the most things in common wins the game.

2 **Trust Fall**

The "truster" starts in a rigid standing position with arms crossed over the chest. They can stand on the ground or on a raised platform.

The trust team or partner(s) stand behind them with their arms out to catch them. Some teams interlace their hands to create a "bed" for them to fall on. If a person is significantly larger in size, then it's important to verify that they can physically support the other person's body weight.

For everyone's safety, clearly communicate which way they will fall. Do not allow the "truster" to fall forward or sideways. Set up pillows or other buffers to prevent any injuries.

Optionally, the "truster" can close their eyes and count to three. As they let go and fall backward, their team or partner catches them and safely places their feet on the ground.

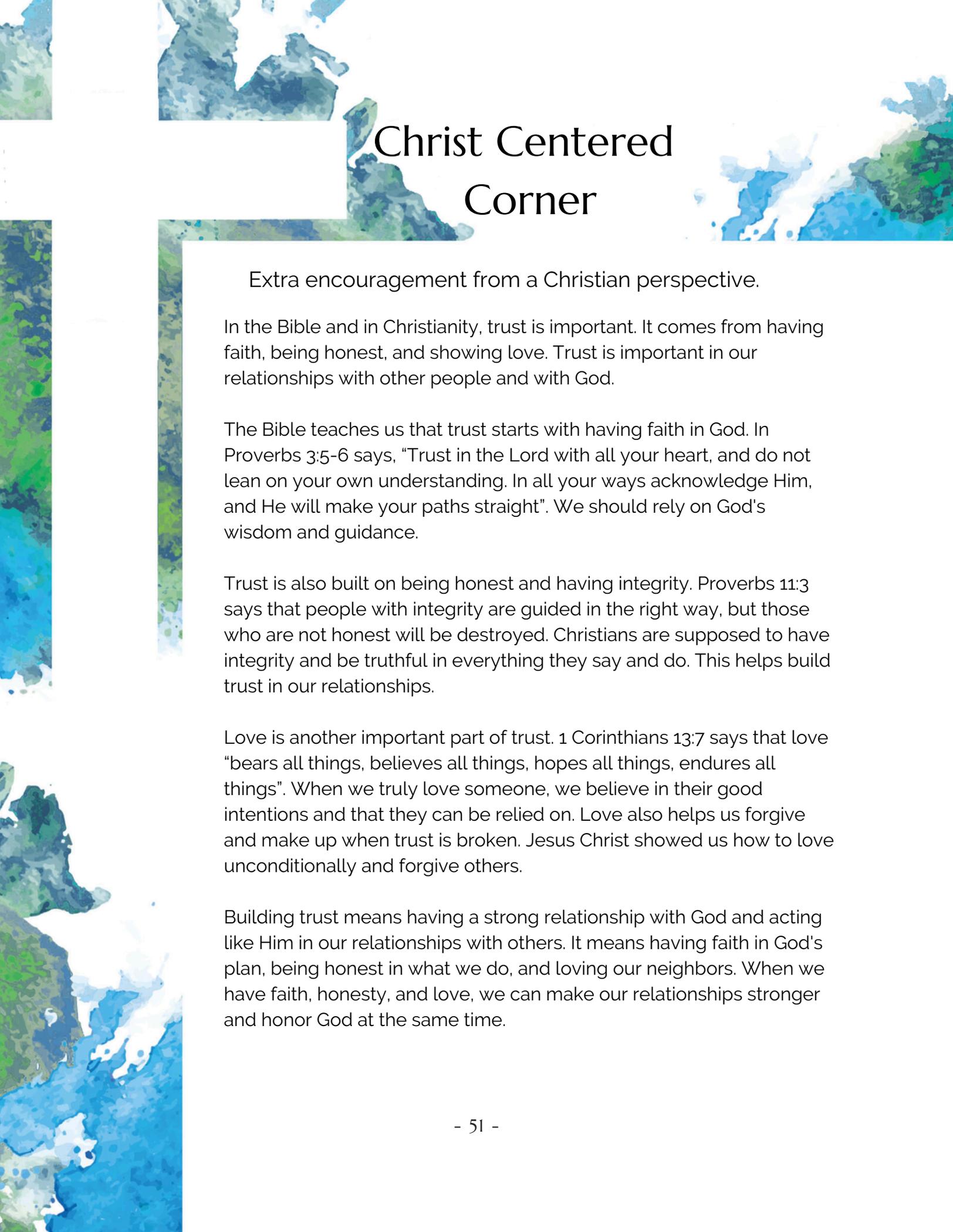
3 **Minefield**

To play minefield, use a large, open space and lay obstacles on the ground using cones, cups and other objects. Form teams of two, giving a blindfold to one team member per team.

The blindfolded member walks through the obstacle course while their partner provides verbal instructions to navigate it safely. If the blindfolded member touches an obstacle, have them start over.

RESOURCES

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Christ Centered Corner

Extra encouragement from a Christian perspective.

In the Bible and in Christianity, trust is important. It comes from having faith, being honest, and showing love. Trust is important in our relationships with other people and with God.

The Bible teaches us that trust starts with having faith in God. In Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight". We should rely on God's wisdom and guidance.

Trust is also built on being honest and having integrity. Proverbs 11:3 says that people with integrity are guided in the right way, but those who are not honest will be destroyed. Christians are supposed to have integrity and be truthful in everything they say and do. This helps build trust in our relationships.

Love is another important part of trust. 1 Corinthians 13:7 says that love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things". When we truly love someone, we believe in their good intentions and that they can be relied on. Love also helps us forgive and make up when trust is broken. Jesus Christ showed us how to love unconditionally and forgive others.

Building trust means having a strong relationship with God and acting like Him in our relationships with others. It means having faith in God's plan, being honest in what we do, and loving our neighbors. When we have faith, honesty, and love, we can make our relationships stronger and honor God at the same time.