

### Lesson 3: TRUST

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How many of you love roller coasters?

Here's the thing about roller coasters: they're giant pieces of metal and wood that hurl you through the air super fast and spin and twist and loop. If you were to describe your favorite roller coaster to someone in the 1800s they'd think you're crazy for wanting to get on it!

What makes you comfortable getting on a roller coaster? Why do you trust it? Because of what you know about it. You know that a bunch of other people just rode it and were totally fine. You know that there are safety measures in place. You know that someone way smarter than you designed it. You know that they run tests every morning to make sure it works. You know that the person operating it was trained.

Over the past few weeks, we've been talking about what makes a great relationship. Last week, we talked about how you get to know someone. This week, as you may have guessed, we're talking about trust.

We place our trust in a lot of things – like rollercoasters. We trust that the chair we sit in will hold us up, that the outlet we plug our charger in will have power to charge our phone, that the bus driver will show up on time, and the list goes on and on and on.

But, what does trust look like in our relationships? Remember: God wants us to have great relationships and trust plays a major part in every relationship.

What exactly is trust? It's a word we throw around a lot and we kind of know what it is, but let's get on the same page: When you trust someone, you feel safe and secure; trust is kind of like the opposite of worry—because when you trust someone, you don't worry that much about them.

Trust is all about what you believe someone will do or say – it's your guess about them. When you want to figure out if you can trust someone, you guess what they are going to do—so if you trust them, you are guessing that they will do what you want; and, if you do not trust them, then you are guessing that they will not do what you want.

**Big Idea: Trust is your best guess about what someone will do based on what you know is true.**

*In this section before reviewing the three tests of trust: This is a good place to use the RAM and move the KNOW and TRUST sliders. Start with know and trust midway. Then when the friend kept the secret move the know up a little and trust also up.*

*RESET the levels. And then if the friend did NOT keep the secret, the know goes up but the trust goes down.*

*Then when they apologized, you can move the know up but allow some time to prove it out before the trust moves up more (you could ask if anyone remembers the 3T's from last week). Trust takes time to build because it should be based on what you know (which takes time to prove out).*

If your friend promises to keep a secret you told them, would you trust your friend? Most likely, yes! You *know* that your friend cares about you so you would guess that because they care for you, they would keep your secret.

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But, what if you find out that your friend who said they would keep the secret, told someone else? Would you ever tell them a secret again? What would you guess your friend would do next time?

What if they apologize and *promise* to keep your secret next time; would you **TRUST** their promise? Even if you wanted to believe the best in them, you would still worry that they wouldn't keep your secret the next time. You lost trust.

It is important to watch someone's words *and* actions to see how trustworthy they really are. There are two simple tests of trust.

The first is the test of big deal, little deal. You must ask, "How big of a deal is it?"

Some mistakes are NOT a big deal, and you might just need to get over it.

There are other mistakes that *ARE* a big deal. When something is a big deal, you keep thinking about it.

Little deals are quickly forgotten – you can move on from it pretty fast.

Sometimes, when something that is a little deal keeps happening over and over again, it can become a big deal; this is the second test - frequency test. The more often someone does something, the more likely they will do it again.

The less often someone does something, the less likely they will do it again.

Think through these things and decide if they are a big deal or a little deal:

Your friends forget to save you a seat at the lunch table. Big deal or little deal?

Someone you just met asks for your gamer tag. Big deal or little deal?

Your mom is ten minutes late to pick you up from practice. Big deal or little deal?

Your mom is ten minutes late to pick you up from practice for the fifth time this week. Big deal or little deal?

People have been using this big deal, little deal test and of little deals growing into big deals over time for centuries. We see these in a story about a guy named Paul, an early follower of Jesus who travelled all over the known world sharing the good news of Jesus, and his friend, Barnabas.

Paul and Barnabas had worked together for years, travelling all over the place and starting churches. After about two years, they returned home to rest and recover. They later decided to go back on the road and visit the churches they had started. For this trip, Barnabas suggested to Paul that his cousin, Mark, tag along (Acts 15:36-41). Mark had started the first trip with Paul and Barnabas, but bailed on them shortly after they started (Acts 13:13).

For Barnabas, this wasn't a little deal – he was willing to look past it and invite John Mark on this trip. However, this was a big deal to Paul. Paul had completely lost trust in Mark and did not want him joining the team.

Barnabas had a high trust in Mark, while Paul's trust was low.

*Somewhere around here is another good time to use the RAM—they both seemed to have same know levels of Mark—but where was Paul's trust? Where was Barnabas's trust? Move levels to answer questions. Trust is both EARNED and GIVEN—we need to guard our hearts but also be willing to forgive and put our faith in someone again. Then go back to the two tests as a way to discern trustworthiness.*

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Remember, trust is our guess of what someone will do based on what we know about them. What do you think Paul was guessing Mark would do if they invited him to join them on this journey? He may have said, “Mark will just bail on us again. He doesn’t have what it takes. You saw what he did last time”.

Barnabas kept in mind that this only happened once! It wasn’t a frequent thing. Mark didn’t have a history of quitting things and abandoning people.

They both had some good points, but what did Paul and Barnabas decide to do?

Paul and Barnabas couldn’t agree, so they decided to split up and take two different trips — Paul asked a man named Silas to go with him while Barnabas took Mark with him. Both trips were very successful, and Mark did not quit this time.

A few years later, Paul wrote a letter and in it said, “Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11). Something had changed for Paul. Paul went from refusing to work with Mark to believing Mark would be very helpful to him in his work.

Now that Paul trusted Mark, when Paul thought of Mark, what did he guess Mark would do when he came and visited Paul? Stay for a day then change his mind and head back home? Probably not. Paul likely truly believed that Mark would show up and provide support and help to Paul.

Maybe you, like Paul, have made a big deal out of something that only happened once and was not a big deal, so you stopped trusting someone even though they actually were trustworthy.

And maybe, like Paul, you lost trust in someone, but they later earned it back.

When you feel like you can’t trust someone, what should you do? It is good to talk with a trusted person – your mom, dad, coach, youth pastor, or a small group leader. It may be that you are really seeing signs to worry about. Or, you could be making a big deal out of a little deal (just like Paul).

### **Small Group Questions**

1. Who are some people in your life that you trust? Why do you trust them?
2. If you are just getting to know a new friend, how do you figure out whether or not you can trust them?
3. What are some ways that you are trustworthy in your relationships?
4. Have you ever had someone break your trust? What happened? Did they make it better or not? How?
5. What are some examples of little deals when it comes to broken trust?
6. What are some examples of big deals when it comes to broken trust?
7. If someone breaks your trust, says they're sorry, but keeps doing the thing that broke the trust, what should you do?
8. Is it easier to build trust in a new relationship or to rebuild trust after it is broken? Why?
9. How do you know you can trust God?

### **Prayer**

Dear God,

Thank you for loving us and being so good to us. We know that we can TRUST you to guide our lives, and always make big deals out of our many blessings. Help us to think the best in others, and to grow in our wisdom. Give us eyes to see others as you see them. Amen.

### **Optional Trust Activity**

Divide the group into pairs and designate one teammate as the guide to be trusted and the other as the walker. Set up an obstacle course. You can use things like tables, chairs, toys, cones, or anything else you have on hand.

Without stepping on or bumping into anything or anyone, the walker must move backward through the course. This is only possible with the help of the guide. The walkers must trust that their partner will guide them safely throughout the course. If a walker turns around while on the course, steps on something, or bumps into anything, the pair has to start over. When a team makes it through the obstacle course successfully, they can switch places and navigate the course again.

This activity becomes age-appropriate for younger children if you create an area that requires walking forward to step over, climb under, move around, and go through obstacles. Have the walker close their eyes, or use blindfolds, so that the buddy can guide them through the course.