



RELATIONSHIP MATTERS

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Five Pillars for Christians: Relationship Foundations for a Flourishing Life

Every relationship needs a solid foundation to flourish. When we live these 5 principals out, we build a healthy foundation that will easily carry the weight of our relationships.

- **Trust**
- Communication
- Authenticity
- Honesty
- Honour

Watch the video lesson on Trust in the online course and then complete the daily exercises. Plan to spend about 15 minutes each day. You may wish to print this workbook in order to easily refer to the key points and best practices and to complete the exercises.

The following exercises will give you what you need to break through your trust barriers and start building flourishing relationships!

LESSON 1: TRUST

Broken trust is the single most damaging thing to every relationship. In fact, a relationship cannot be healthy without trust. And yet, most people have trust issues. The only way to build trust back is understanding what broke it and going through the process that builds it in the first place.

What is Broken Trust

- Hard time trusting others
- Hard time trusting yourself
- You can't trust others if you don't trust yourself. Start here...we start by investing and building trust equity.

What Builds Trust?

Building Trust Equity... How do you do that?

- Making intentional deposits into the trust bank.
- Knowing what investment is needed
- Knowing where and when to invest
- Making more deposits than withdrawals

Three Areas that Build Trust Equity

When you intentionally communicate with another in these ways, you are building the trust bank with that person.

Transparency | Intimacy (→ In-to-me-you-see)

- Being Open (every hidden thing erodes trust)
- Being real with who are and where you're at
- Being ok with who you are not
- Being gracious with who other are

Loyalty | Makes you trustworthy

- It is an act of kindness
- It is seen by others making you trustworthy
- It is part of your identity
- It produces favor giving you a good reputation

“NEVER LET LOYALTY AND KINDNESS LEAVE YOU! TIE THEM AROUND YOUR NECK AS A REMINDER. WRITE THEM DEEP WITHIN YOUR HEART. THEN YOU WILL FIND FAVOR WITH BOTH GOD AND PEOPLE, AND YOU WILL EARN A GOOD REPUTATION.” PROVERBS 3:3-4 NLT

Fulfilling Promises | Broken promises cause broken trust

- Say what you mean & mean what you say
- Broken promises compromise your integrity
- Unfulfilled promises undermine your word
- Fulfilling a promise makes a deposit

What investment is needed?

How can you know what will help build trust with another person? Similar to the “5 Love Languages” (Chapman, G. D. (2010). *The five love languages*), there is no simple answer to this question that will fit every person and every situation.

That’s where you need to communicate with the person you are in relationship with and simply ask them “how can I build trust with you”?

That’s going to feel strange if you haven’t been living this way. You need to be able to signal to the person that you are looking to relate to them in a different way than they may be expecting. For example, you may want to initiate the conversation by saying “my relationship with you is really important and I’d like to build trust with you. What are some ways I could do that with you?”

Recognize that you are going to hear stuff that may make you uncomfortable and that may mean that your instinct is to want to defend yourself. Don’t Do It! Even if you may think you are already doing it however by listening and allowing the other person to express what builds trust for them, you are in fact building trust in the process. Your goal is to simply hear them and acknowledge that you understand their perspective.

Ask questions, be curious.

TIP: If you hear things that you think you are already doing, realize that if they are saying it then it is very important to them. Doing even more of this is valuable and will help you to be effective at building trust.

The more specific they are, the more likely you are to be able to meet their needs.

TIP: Ask them, what does that look when it is happening well? – get examples.

If you start to feel defensive, try to become aware of what is coming up for you – someone telling you what they need is not an accusation that you aren’t doing it. Our insecurity creates defensiveness in us but by being curious you are making it about them and not about you.

Knowing where and when to invest:

Now you know the what, it's important to know where and when to invest to accelerate trust-building.

Doing things that you know is important to them: Maybe your partner tells you "I like it when you take the garbage out without being asked." The more often you do this, the more trust you will build. It may not be your favourite task, and probably as a result you typically procrastinate it. Try setting a reminder and instead of feeling uninspired, remind yourself that you are investing in the relationship trust bank!

Connecting with someone with loving intention: For example, your partner is upset about something. This offers you an important opportunity to build trust. Where to focus will be determined by what's bothering them, but the fact that you took the time to connect vs. disconnect from them builds trust that you will be there when they need you most.

Being honest: Trust is also reinforced when you have made a mistake. Own it.

TIP: Often what we think will be important to someone else is not what actually is most important to them. Have you ever received a gift that you didn't want? How did you feel? You will want to invest where you know it is most important for them, otherwise you think you are doing a lot and investing a lot but if it isn't in their love language it doesn't matter.

Making more deposits than withdrawals

This may seem fairly obvious, but it is worth the reminder. As with a bank account you need more deposits than withdrawals to stay in a positive state. Often, we don't think about "paying your relationship first" as a principal similar to saving, but it does work the same way. Just like with a savings account, when you take that positive trust and invest it in your partner's trust bank it will grow over time. The miracle of compounding interest comes into play!

RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGE: BUILD MORE TRUST

For the next week, set aside 15-30 minutes each day to complete the daily activities. You may prefer to do this first thing in the morning to help you become more aware and intentional about your communication throughout the day. Or, try it in the evening as a way to reflect upon your day and set your intentions for how you can make more trust deposits the following day.

Day 1 – Look inside your heart

Make a list of things you have not been transparent about.

- Is there something you need forgiveness for?
- Is there a relationship where trust has been damaged?

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Take a few minutes to consider the ways you have broken your own trust. Where have you disappointed yourself.

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Has your trust been broken by someone else? Write those things down as well.

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Reflection: What has come up for you? When we recall painful experiences, it can bring back feelings of hurt and shame. Ask God to help you process the pain of disappointment and receive His forgiveness and His grace for both yourself and others.

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**“Let go of every wound that has pierced us and the sin we so easily fall into. Then we will be able to run life’s marathon race with passion and determination, for the path has been already marked out before us.”
Hebrews 12:1**

Daily declarations will help you to shift your inner belief systems to align to a healthier and happier version of you. Use declarations to help you to reframe your thinking.

Here are some helpful declarations that we call “I AM” Statements:

I AM an Overcomer - I AM Forgiven - I AM Forgiving - I AM Trustworthy

Day 2 – Share what is in your heart

Choose a trusted confidant and share the list you made yesterday; confession is cleansing for your soul.

I know this may feel a little scary however many times we don't see change in our lives because we are afraid to take that first step. Confession allows each of us to get it out of our head so our heart can be open.

Here's some tips on choosing the "right" person.

- ✓ someone who has demonstrated trustworthiness in your life and has a proven track record of keeping confidences
- ✓ someone who believes the best of you in every circumstance.

I recommend that it may be easier for you to start with a pastor, a close friend or a trained counsellor or professional coach. (NOTE: if you are needing help, you can reach out to Mark directly for private coaching and/or request an accountability partner within our private Relationship Matters community) www.markgordon.ca is the place to start.

Reflection: How did it go? What did you do? What came up for you as you shared your confession?

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"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." James 5:16

Add to your declarations these I AM Statements:

I AM Transparent - I AM Honest - I Am Confident - I AM Responsible

Day 3 – Dig deep into Loyalty

Ask yourself what loyalty looks like for you. If you are struggling to find answers, you can start by making a list of loyal qualities you see in others.

The first place to start when building loyalty is with loyalty to God and to yourself. List loyal qualities that reflect the character of Jesus

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Where have you been disloyal to yourself?

Disloyalty to self may look like:

- Allowing others to treat you poorly or unfairly
- Not caring for your mental, spiritual and physical health
- Holding limiting beliefs about your value and worthiness

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Are there steps that you can take today to display greater loyalty to yourself? Once you have built loyalty and trust in yourself, then it is also useful to start to consider how to display loyalty to those that you are building trust relationship.

Now make a list of your closest relationships, do they reflect these loyalty qualities. Have you reflected those qualities of loyalty to them? Write down the qualities of loyalty you want to reflect to others

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“Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation.” Proverbs 3:3-4

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” Galatians 5:22-23

Add to your Declarations any word that come to mind, as well as these I AM Statements:

I AM Loyal – I Am Kind - I AM Committed

Day 4 – Repent of your sins and change your ways.

Fulfill your promises. Today ask yourself if there are any unfulfilled promises you have made to others.

Unfulfilled Promise	What can I do to fulfill? (Create a plan)	By When?

If it is possible to fulfill them immediately, go ahead and do it. You may need to put a plan in place – if so, you may also want to confirm with the person involved if they are willing to accept your plan. If it is impossible to fulfill, repent to the person and ask to be released from the commitment made.

**“When you make a promise to God, don’t delay in following through.”
Ecclesiastes 5:4**

“The LORD’s promises are pure, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times over.” Psalms 12:6

Add to your Declarations any word that comes to mind, as well as these I AM Statements:

I AM a Promise Keeper – I Am Dependable - I AM a Person Who Follows Through

Day 5 – Forgiveness

If there is anyone standing out to you that has offended you, choose to forgive them. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you draft a letter of forgiveness and love to them.

Ask the Holy Spirit if it is wise to send the letter. If you can't do so safely or they have passed, read the letter out loud to yourself and then rip it up and discard as a declaration that you are letting go.

“Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32

Add to your Declarations any word that comes to mind, as well as these I AM Statements:

I AM Tenderhearted – I Am Merciful - I AM Forgiving – I AM Free - I AM Loving

Day 6 – Make Forgiveness part of your nature

Make Forgiveness part of your nature, do it quicker each time an offense comes your way.

Ask for forgiveness quickly so others can build trust with you, knowing you are aware of misconduct.

Visualize yourself forgiven. Visualize yourself forgiving others.

**“And forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.”
Matthew 6:12**

“Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” John 20:22-23

Add to your Declarations any word that comes to mind, as well as these I AM Statements:

I AM Faithful – I Am Hopeful - I AM Responsible – I AM Trustworthy

Day 7 – Day of Rest and reflection on the Goodness of God

Becoming fully aware of where you have had your trust broken and broken trust with others is not easy to come to terms with. You have done important work this week and regardless of any specific outcomes, feel proud of the effort and progress you are making.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

When the Holy Spirit reveals the timing, and you feel safe to do so, you may want to then share with the person you were not transparent with so you can start building trust. Be sure to share with 'I' language and take responsibility. Be transparent and willing to show how you are ready to change.