

CHURCH IN A BROKEN WORLD

STUDY GUIDE

MESSAGE.

In a world full of skeptics, healthy leaders don't hide behind image, they live in the light. Being a leader means being a "steward" who realizes that their family and church belong to God, not them. It is important to remember that God never calls us to be impressive; He calls us to be faithful.

True faith isn't about being a celebrity; it's about being humble and real. Pride destroys trust, but humility builds it. Because of what Jesus did for us, the Gospel destroys comparison and frees us from pretending. We don't have to act perfect or hide our mistakes anymore.

Trust grows when we stop keeping secrets and start acting with love. We should lean into accountability because healthy correction flows from relational love, not ego. When we stop hiding, our marriages and churches get stronger.

The Gospel creates trustworthy people. #bccBIGidea

PRAYER.

Father,

Your love and grace give me life. I don't have to pretend to be something I'm not. I can live in the light and in total truth, both good and bad. Forgive me when I fail but thank you for standing me back up again on the foundation Jesus laid.

Amen.

ENGAGE.

Understanding the Truth

- In verses 1-2, Paul calls leaders "stewards." What is the difference between an owner and a steward, and what does Paul say is the most important trait for a steward to have?
- Looking at verses 7-8, Paul asks, "What do you have that you did not receive?" If everything we have is a gift from God, why do we still struggle with bragging and pride?
- In verses 14-15, Paul distinguishes between a "guardian" and a "father." What does a spiritual "father" provide that a mere teacher or boss does not?

Connecting the Truth

- Healthy leaders don't hide behind image. How does Paul's honesty about being "scum of the earth" (v. 13) prove he was living in the light rather than protecting his reputation?
- If the Gospel destroys comparison, how does Paul's list of hardships (hunger, thirst, being mocked) challenge the Corinthians' idea that being a Christian means being a "celebrity"?
- Paul sent Timothy to remind the people of his ways. How does this show that healthy correction flows from relational love rather than just someone trying to be the boss?

Living it Out

- God never calls us to be impressive; He calls us to be faithful. In what area of your life (home, work, or church) are you trying too hard to look good instead of just being honest and faithful?
- Hiddenness is the enemy of trust. Is there a part of your life you are keeping "in the dark"? How would bringing it "into the light" with a trusted friend help you grow?
- Since the Gospel creates trustworthy people, what is one practical way you can show your family or friends this week that you want more for them than from them?

For these cities. For all people.

DAY ONE: The "Everything is Borrowed" Challenge

The Big Idea: We are stewards, not owners.

- **Read:** 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
- **The Talk:** Ask your kids, "If a neighbor lets us borrow their brand-new car, do we own it? No. But how should we treat it?" Paul says we are "stewards." That's a big word for someone who takes care of things that belong to someone else. Our lives, our talents, and even our families belong to God. **God never calls us to be impressive; He calls us to be faithful.** This means He cares more about us taking good care of what He gave us than He does about us being famous or "the best".
- **Activity:** Go around the room and point to three things (a toy, a pet, a bed). For each one, say: *"This belongs to God, and I will be faithful to take care of it."*
- **Prayer:** "God, thank You for trusting me with these gifts. Help me be a good steward today."

DAY TWO: Living in the Light

The Big Idea: Healthy leaders don't hide; they tell the truth.

- **Read:** 1 Corinthians 4:5
- **The Talk:** Have you ever broken something and tried to hide the pieces? How do you feel when you're hiding something like that? Does it feel scary or heavy to keep a secret? Why do we try to hide things that we've done wrong? (Is it maybe because we don't want to get in trouble, but also because we're embarrassed and we don't want to admit we did something wrong?) **Healthy leaders don't hide behind image, they live in the light.** When we try to look perfect on the outside but have "hidden" mistakes on the inside, trust dies. But the Gospel tells us that Jesus already knows our sins and loves us anyway! That means we don't have to pretend. We can be honest because **the Gospel creates trustworthy people.**
- **Activity:** Turn off all the lights in the room. Try to find a small object you hid earlier. Then, turn the lights on. Discuss how much easier it is to see, fix things, and walk together when "hiddenness dies" and we live in the light.
- **Prayer:** "Lord, help our family be a place where it is safe to tell the truth. Help us to stop pretending and start being real."

DAY THREE: More FOR You Than FROM You

The Big Idea: Love drives out pride.

- **Read:** 1 Corinthians 4:7 & 4:14-15
- **The Talk:** In Paul's time, people liked to brag about how "spiritual" or "smart" they were. But Paul told them that **pride destroys trust, but humility builds it.** He told them he didn't want to just be a bossy teacher; he wanted to be like a father who loves them. In this family, we want to be people who want more *for* each other than *from* each other. That means we don't compare ourselves to see who is "better". Instead, we use our strengths to help each other.
- **Activity:** Have each family member finish this sentence for the person sitting next to them: *"One thing I want FOR you this week is..."* (Example: I want you to feel brave at your soccer game, or I want you to feel happy at school).
- **Prayer:** "Jesus, thank You for loving us so much that You gave us everything. Help us to love each other without bragging or comparing."