



## **PART 1: The Mess Under the Carpet**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Our pasts tend to follow us around. That's why a lot of people avoid church. They feel judged, alienated, or slighted because of some mess in their pasts. Some people even feel like their pasts disqualify them from having a relationship with God. That's ironic because the man who wrote most of the New Testament had quite a messy past. He was the most unlikely candidate for following Jesus, yet he became one of Jesus' most famous followers. If there's hope for him, there's hope for all of us.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is one of your favorite memories from the past?
2. If you could change anything in your past, what would you change? Why?
3. Did you grow up in a church where people didn't feel like they could talk about their problems? If so, how did it influence your view of God?
4. Why is it difficult to trust God to redeem the messes from your past that you've tried to sweep under the carpet?
5. Talk about something from your past that has made you feel disqualified from a relationship with God.
6. What is one thing you can do this week to begin to deal with a mess in your past? What can this group do to help you?

### **MOVING FORWARD**

When we allow God to deal with what we've swept under the carpet, he redeems it as a display of his grace and a gift of comfort and encouragement to others. Acknowledging your past is good. Dealing with your past is better. Leveraging your past is best.

To take a next step, visit [MyBadChurchExperience.org](http://MyBadChurchExperience.org)

### **CHANGING YOUR MIND**

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**