

HOW TO USE THIS GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT (10 MINS)

- Pick one or more of the warm-up questions and have all the group members give a response to the question(s).
- Make sure everybody gets a chance to speak. Don't let talkative people dominate the conversation, but graciously welcome everybody to participate.

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TRUTH (15-20 MIN)

- Read the scriptures and paragraphs in this section to clearly communicate... what the Bible says about the week's topic.
- **"DISCUSS" sections:** These sections get people discussing the practical implications of the truth being discussed. Have one or two people give an answer, but don't spend too much time on these questions.

GRACE (5 MINS)

- Read the grace scripture and section which shows how the passage points to Jesus Christ and God's grace.
- This section is really important, because it shows that life change begins with the grace of God and not our own efforts.

CHANGE (10-15 MINS)

- Have everyone give an answer to each of the change questions.
- Take a good amount of time here. Really encourage people to think through how they can practically put truth into action.

PRAYER (10-15 MINS)

- Read through the prayer focus points and have one or two people in the group pray.
- Make sure not to rush through prayer. The things we want God to change in our lives will often happen through prayer.



WEEK 2

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



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CONNECT

- ▶ Has anyone offered to cover a large cost for you? How did it make you feel toward that person?
- ▶ What's something going on in the world today that makes you really angry?

TRUTH

Read 1 John 2:1-6

John writes this passage in a loving tone, but dealing with a serious issue—sin. His purpose in writing is to keep us from missing the mark by sinning. However, God doesn't simply want us to just stop sinning because we feel guilty, he wants to redirect our desires.

YOU WILL HATE SIN...

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

Sin makes us guilty. It also makes God angry. We may ask how a loving God can be angry, but God's anger isn't arbitrary or unhinged. It's his just reaction to our sin. The amazing thing is that Jesus steps in as our advocate – to help us in our guilty state – and even better, as our propitiation – to redirect God's anger from us to himself. When we see what sin does to us and did to Jesus, we'll hate it just like God hates it.

DISCUSS

- ▶ Why do you think people get uncomfortable talking about sin?

...IF YOU LOVE GOD.

Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:4-6)

The eighteenth-century pastor, Thomas Chalmers, wrote a book called *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*. This describes how God leads us away from sin – not by guilt or pressuring us, but by replacing our love of sin with a far greater love for Jesus. We go after the things we love, and if we love sin, we'll sin. When we come to love Jesus, however, we'll want him more than whatever sin gives us.

Obedience is faithfulness to the one who loves us.

DISCUSS

- ▶ Why do you think we fail to live out an appropriate response to God's love?

GRACE

Not only did Jesus walk in moral perfection and intimacy with the Father, but he also walked up a hill with a cross on his back. Jesus lived the life we couldn't live, and died the death we deserved to die. Because of the price he paid we can live for eternity, not under the wrath of God, but in a loving relationship with him. And we can resist sin for something greater – Jesus.

CHANGE

- ▶ Verse one of 1 John 2 shows us that we ought to have a balanced approach to sin – not too harsh and not too lenient. Do you find yourself falling into the harsh or lenient ditches?
- ▶ Is there anything from your past you struggle to forgive yourself for?
- ▶ What are ways you can start cultivating your love for God?

Pray that each other would desire God rather than sin.



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