

# HOW TO USE THIS GROUP GUIDE

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## 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 4**

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



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# CONNECT

- ▶ What is something you believed was true when you were a child but found out later wasn't true?
- ▶ What kind of things do you look for to determine if a person is trustworthy?
- ▶ Tell of a time you were scammed.

# TRUTH

*I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.  
(1 John 2:26)*

John's letter to the churches is all about explaining what a faith of substance looks like. In the second half of chapter two, John targets the people who are trying to sell a warped, deceptive message. The deception is both subtle and dangerous. It's not just a thing of the past, either. You and I face a similar deception in our cultural moment. John's words will show us our best defense against deception.

## THE DECEPTION

*Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:22)*

In this verse, John exposes the aim of the deception – to get us to believe that Jesus is not the Christ. To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to believe that he is God, that he dealt with our sin on the cross, and that he is the only way to true life. Some views might say that Jesus was a good man, a good teacher, or a good moral example. This doesn't cut it. We know if a message is deceptive based on what it says about Jesus.

## DISCUSS

- ▶ Why do you think some people find it tempting to believe that Jesus is less than the Christ?



## OUR BEST DEFENSE

*But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge... (1 John 2:20)*

If we think that our best defense against deception is how many theology books we've read or how long we've been a Christian, we're mistaken. When John speaks about the "anointing," he's talking about the Holy Spirit. Jesus called the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of truth, [who will] guide you into all the truth..." (John 16:13). By guiding us into all the truth, the Holy Spirit also sensitizes us to deceptive claims about Jesus.

## DISCUSS

- ▶ Why do you think it's important that the Spirit is our best defense against deception rather than how well-studied we are?

## OUR PART TO PLAY

*Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. (1 John 2:24)*

The word “abide” means to stay or remain. So John tells us to let the gospel message remain in us. This is why it’s so important to regularly get into environments that remind you of the gospel – places like worship gatherings, personal Bible study, and groups. The more often we’re reminded of the truth, the quicker we’ll be able to recognize deception.

# GRACE

## THE REWARD

*And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life. (1 John 2:25)*

It may be unpopular to believe that Jesus is the Christ. It may even feel like a battle to push back against deceptions coming at you from all angles. But the reward of eternal life is well worth it. When we hold to a faith of substance, we share in a humanity that is healed, redeemed, restored, and filled with new power.

# CHANGE

- ▶ On a scale from 1-10 (1 being not at all and 10 being very well), how would you say you've been doing at letting the gospel "abide" in you?
- ▶ What messages are people or culture telling you about Jesus that you need to recognize as deceptions and reject?
- ▶ Do you rely on the Holy Spirit to point out deceptions to you? How can you rely on him more?

Pray for a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit to be able to reject deception when it comes.



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