

# 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 9**

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



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# CONNECT

- ▶ When's a time you bought the cheaper version of something only to be let down?
- ▶ Describe a time when a friend confronted you about something to help you. How did it help you?
- ▶ What are some teachings from 1 John that have impacted you?

# TRUTH

*Read 1 John 5:13-21*

John chooses to end his entire letter by telling the readers to keep themselves from idols. While it seems out of place for the letter, John has a very specific purpose for it. An idol is a counterfeit – anything that falsely claims to give you what God can. John is telling us not to exchange Christ for counterfeits, and in this final passage he gives us four reasons why.

# BECAUSE COUNTERFEITS CAN'T BE YOUR FATHER

*And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*

*(1 John 5:14-15)*

We know that our Heavenly Father hears us when we pray. However, when we put our trust in a counterfeit, it has no will. It doesn't hear us and doesn't have any will for our lives so it's just something that changes with the wind. However, God cares for us and wills the best for our lives and will always answer our prayers according to what he knows is best, rather than just what we want.

# DISCUSS

- ▶ Why do you think people opt to trust counterfeits rather than God as their Father?



# BECAUSE COUNTERFEITS CAN'T BE YOUR FAMILY

*If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death.*

*(1 John 5:16)*

When we choose counterfeits we just surround ourselves with yes men who tell us to keep on living in our sin. We're really choosing independence which just leads to us being put in the chains of sin. As Christians though, we are given a spiritual family that will pray for us and help us fight the sinful desires we have.

# DISCUSS

- ▶ Why does independence often seem easier than living as part of a spiritual family?

# BECAUSE COUNTERFEITS CAN'T BE YOUR SECURITY

*We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. (1 John 5:18)*

The serpent that tempted Adam and Eve in the garden is still the same enemy that tries to cause us to sin today. He tries to get us to put our trust in things that aren't God so that they become our world. Thankfully, Christ protects us from being robbed by the enemy. We must look to Jesus for our protection because he's the only one who can actually protect us from the enemy.

# DISCUSS

- ▶ What are some good things in society that the enemy has made into something wrong?

# GRACE

## BECAUSE COUNTERFEITS CAN'T BE YOUR LIFE

*And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.  
(1 John 5:20)*

Jesus is the only real source of life and satisfaction. As humans, we thirst for satisfaction and fulfillment. The world offers a lot of different counterfeits, but Jesus is the real source and he offers that life to us through his death and resurrection. Jesus took the pain of the cross in...

...your place so that you could  
experience the abundant life he  
came to bring.

# CHANGE

- ▶ What are you often tempted to trust as your source of fulfillment and security other than God?
- ▶ Do you have someone who has an open invitation to pray and confront you if they see you sinning? Who could you talk to to be that person?
- ▶ In what ways is your heavenly Father more trustworthy than idols?

Pray that none of you would exchange Christ for a counterfeit.



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