

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.

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.

DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN (2 MINS)

- This final portion aims to get people reading the Bible for themselves and thinking about engaging others with the gospel.



SEASON 3
WHAT WAS GOD THINKING?

ROMANS

GROUP GUIDE
WEEK 2

CONNECT

*BREAK THE ICE AND
GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What's something valuable or sentimental that you had to sell or give up (whether to move, downsize, or something like that)?
- Are you a goal setter? Why or why not?
- Do you enjoy discussing difficult Bible chapters like the ones we've been looking at in Romans? Why or why not?

TRUTH

*UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS
THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

Of all the words that people use to describe Jesus, "offensive" isn't usually one of them. Yet in Romans 9, we're told that God has made Jesus "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." Unbelieving Jews in Paul's day were stumbling over this rock of offense by not believing in the gospel, but we mustn't think they're the only ones who will be faced with the "offensive" nature of Jesus. What we'll also see is that God's willingness to offend us is really, really good news.

Offensive How?

READ: Romans 9:30–33, Isaiah 28:16, 8:14–15

DISCUSS: Describe a time in your own life when someone was willing to offend you out of love for you.

The message Jesus preached was offensive because he said he alone was the way to righteousness. We know from earlier chapters that righteousness is a big deal. It's a right standing with God, a place in God's family, and becoming an heir of his promises. Most of Paul's Jewish contemporaries thought that all the benefits of righteousness were attained through obedience to the law. But Jesus alone is the way, the truth, and the life, and he will either be the cornerstone of your life, or you'll get offended and trip over him.

Symptoms of Self-Righteousness

READ: Romans 10:1-3, John 11:47-48

DISCUSS: What did the Pharisees fear would happen if people made Jesus the cornerstone of their faith?

As a contemporary reader, it's quite easy to see how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament law and prophecies. We might wonder why Jews in Paul's day were so hesitant to accept him. You see, the memory of exile—The most catastrophic event in their history—was still very much felt among the Jews in Paul's day. Their "zeal" for law obedience was in large part because they didn't want a repeat of the exile. When Jesus challenges our own plans for securing

ourselves, it can expose fear and anxiousness inside of us. But that's exactly why righteousness comes through faith. We need to trust Jesus in the face of what we fear.

GRACE

SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

The End of Self-Righteousness

READ: Romans 10:4, Genesis 3:4–5

DISCUSS: What do you think Adam and Eve were hoping to get by becoming “like God”?

By making the gospel offensive, and asking faith of us, God exposes the “Adam and Eve-ness” inside all of us. At the very root of unrighteousness is a drive to seize control away from God and be our own god – to secure blessing, security, and prosperity for ourselves rather than trusting God. In Jesus Christ, however, God has invited us to let him be God, to trust him, and to avoid the destruction that self-righteousness inevitably brings. Righteousness is on offer—God’s abundant blessings—and when we

believe in God's righteousness
through Christ, we have a security and
a promise that will never fail us.

CHANGE

*APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR
THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- Establishing one's own righteousness is, in other words, attempting to secure God's blessings on your own terms. What means do you tend to try and do that with?
- Do you feel like you've given Jesus permission to change plans in your life if he wants? Why or why not?
- When God wants to change your plans, what makes it difficult to trust him? How does this passage address those concerns?

PRAYER

RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Sanctification is a lifelong process of God healing our drive to seize control away from him. Pray for the Spirit's continued strengthening to reject that desire, and to trust God to be God.
- Pray for a revelation of God's far superior righteousness.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're engaging with the gospel?



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