

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.

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. God has made Jesus offensive to expose and confront something in all of us.

Offensive How?

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

DISCUSS: What do you learn from the passages in Isaiah about why Jesus might be a stumbling stone for first-century Jews?

When Jesus preached about God's purpose of salvation for the world, he did something very unexpected. He said that he was the new temple. For an Israelite, this would've been shocking, because the temple was central to Israel's identity and the way they experienced God's presence going all the way back to the days of Moses. Jesus became the new meeting place for God and his people. If they were going to embrace Jesus in this new age of God's story of salvation, it would require them to let go of their

allegiance to the brick-and-mortar temple.

Offensive to Who?

READ: Romans 10:1-3

DISCUSS: How would you define the “righteousness of God” based on what you know?

Let's recall what “righteousness” means. Righteousness is a right standing with God. Righteousness means a place in his family as one of his children. Righteousness means you're a recipient of the promises he made to Abraham. Rather than receiving God's righteousness by faith alone, those who rejected Jesus sought to “establish their own” righteousness. In other words, they believed that they could secure God's promises on their own terms, without Jesus.

Offensive Why?

READ: Genesis 3:4–5

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

We might wonder why God made Jesus offensive. Wouldn't it be less messy to spell it out that a man would come who would become the new temple? Perhaps. But God wanted to do something more profound. When God made Jesus the centerpiece of his plan for salvation, he exposed 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, God goes to the very root of the problem and invites us to be

healed.

GRACE

SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

READ: Genesis 3:4-5

The plan was always Jesus. He fulfilled the law and now offers righteousness to everyone who believes in him. It cost him his life. When we are confronted by the offensive exclusivity of Jesus, we can always remember that the "offensive" One suffered far more than offense; he suffered death. Not only was he offended, but he was killed so that all who believe in him can be made righteous.

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.

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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