

Facilitator:

1. Open with prayer.
2. Welcome any newcomers.
3. Try to keep your discussion to an hour at the most.

Facilitator: Encourage your members to **BRING THEIR BIBLES** and use them during Connect Group.

CONNECT Group study questions for Aug 5, 2018

Title: “Spiritual Deception”

Read Romans 10:1.

1. Everywhere Paul went in the world, Jews opposed, hated, and violently tried to murder him. What must Paul believe about the gospel that he is able to say that one of his greatest desires is that Jews might be saved?

Facilitator: Romans 10:1 is a powerful expression of the gospel. By the writing of Romans 10, Paul had spent almost two decades being hated by Jews, chased out of towns by Jews, violently attacked by Jews, and, at least once, left for dead by Jews. And yet Paul saw the Jews (and the gentiles - Rm 1:14-15) through God’s eyes. Paul understood that just as God had been to him, he was to be for other people. When Paul was God’s enemy, God loved him and saved him. Paul wanted to be an instrument of God’s grace for other people, so he went into town after town, where he knew they would try to kill him, so that people who didn’t know about God’s love would have the chance to hear and be saved.

Read Romans 10:2-3.

2. If, as Paul argues, no amount of believing the wrong thing will do anyone any good, then that means our neighbors, friends, family, and coworkers who don’t believe in Jesus are lost and condemned. Whom has God put on your heart to love in the way Paul loved the Jews? Share with the group the last time you got to share the gospel with this person. If you have never shared the gospel with this person, why not? Brainstorm some ways you can begin to share the knowledge of Christ with this person.

Facilitator: Encourage each person to share the people they are praying for, and give ample time for people to share their stories of sharing the gospel. If no one in the group has a recent story of telling someone about Christ and the gospel, take a moment to discuss why that is. Once your group is ready to move on, brainstorm some specific ways your group can share the gospel with the people in their lives. Make sure to leave time at the end of your group to pray for these people by name.

Read Romans 10:4-7.

3. Throughout the book of Romans, Paul identifies two major problems with the thinking of religious Jews (all religious people, really): 1) they think that by doing religious things, God will be happy with them, and 2) they think that by being morally good people, God will overlook their sins. How does the gospel correct our thinking on both those issues?

Facilitator: The gospel reminds us that we were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were enemies of God and helpless against his wrath. But he loved us so much that God became

a human being in the person of Christ and then let us murder him, so that we might escape his judgment. He took the punishment for our sins in his own body, so that we might live. If we think doing some religious stuff or doing a few good deeds is going to make God happy with us, we don't really understand our sin. This is why salvation must be by faith. When we place our trust in Christ for salvation, we admit our guilt, and accept that God's punishment of eternal hell for us was just. We also rejoice that the judgment of God didn't fall on us as we deserved. It fell on Christ instead, in our place.

4. In the previous question we examined the truth about our salvation and the lies that are so common in our thinking. With that truth in mind, how can we combat the lies in our lives? How can we help each other in this area? What impact does the truth have on how we live out the gospel in our daily lives?

Facilitator: If the grace of God saved us while we were sinners, how much more should our relationship with God be characterized by grace now that we are Christians? We now have boldness to approach God, and 1 John 1:9 tells us that he cleanses us from our sins when we ask. We must take this truth and correct the lies about our works that dominate our thinking. We need the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts to reveal these lies to us. We also need other Christians whom God can use to speak into our lives and help correct our thinking. The Scripture and other Christians help us live by faith rather than by our good works, by striving to achieve God's favor. Encourage your group to examine the Scripture and find some verses that they can use to encourage themselves and each other in God's grace. We can easily become blind to how our deceptions (external and internal) hold back our commitment and growth.