

Growth Group Leader Guide

This “growth group leader guide” is meant to be just that, a guide. Please feel free as the leader of your group to add questions or comments as you feel necessary to fit your group’s dynamics.

Also, don’t feel pressured to cover every question.

1 John 2:1-2

Read as a group – 1 John 1:1-2:2

Reread 1 John 2:1-2

- What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend’s message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or troubling? Explain.

3 – Main Points of Sunday’s Sermon

- Jesus our Advocate
- Jesus our Propitiation
- Jesus our Message to the Nations

1) Jesus our Advocate

- **When you think about it** – Christians are caught between a rock and a hard place. We cannot reach sinless perfection in this life, yet we are commanded not to sin. Have you ever felt this struggle? – Explain.
 - **John Stott** – It is possible to be either too lenient or too severe toward sin. Too great a lenience almost encourages sin in the Christian by stressing God’s provision for the sinner. An exaggerated severity, on the other hand, either denies the possibility of a Christian sinning or refuses him forgiveness and restoration if he falls. Both extreme positions are contradicted by John.
- How does John (Ch. 1 & 2) strike a perfect balance between the seriousness of sin and the forgiveness offered to Christians?
- **Read 1 John 2:1** - How comforting is it to know that Jesus is our advocate with the father? Read Timothy Keller’s quote and then discuss the assurance and confidence 1 John 2:1 brings to your walk as a Christian.

- **Timothy Keller** – Now let's think about what an advocate does for you. If you are accused of a crime and you go to court, what is your defense attorney to you? There is a sense in which, in court, your defense attorney is you. In court you disappear into your advocate. If you stutter but your lawyer is eloquent, what do you look like in court? Eloquent! If you are ignorant but your lawyer is brilliant, what do you look like in court? Brilliant!
- **Read 1 John 1:9** and explain why it is unusual to see the word "Just" or "Justice" connected to the word "forgiveness." Why do you think John connects them?
- After a Christian puts his faith in Christ how does God's justice become his security of salvation?
- Using the answers from the previous 2 questions, what kind of argument (advocating) do you think Jesus is using with the Father when his people sin?
 - **Leaders Cheat:** *Father, my people have sinned, and the law demands that the wages of sin be death. But I have paid for those sins. See, here is my blood, the token of my death! On the cross I have paid the penalty for these sins completely. Now, if anyone were to exact two payments for the same sin, it would be unjust. And so – I am asking for mercy for them; I'm asking for justice.*

2) Jesus our Propitiation

- "Propitiation" is most notably a biblical and theological word and concept. Therefore, it is not a word we use in day-to-day speech. As a group, come up with a definition of "Propitiation" based off scripture and the 4 times the word is used in the New Testament.
 - Romans 3:23-25
 - Heb. 2:14-18
 - 1 John 4:10
 - 1 John 2:2
- Read the definition of "Propitiation" taken from John Macarthur's systematic theology book "Biblical Doctrine" and discuss why the understanding of propitiation is so important to the Gospel.
 - **Propitiation** – was a sacrifice to "appease" or "satisfy" the wrath of God whose standard had been violated. The significance of propitiation, is that it identifies Christ's work as a wrath bearing

sacrifice. Sin may not merely be overlooked; sin must ever and always be punished, whether in the sinner in hell or in Christ the substitute on the cross. God has not relaxed his justice, for he himself declares that he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished (Ex. 34:7). Every ounce of wrath that the elect sinner deserved - all the wrath of God would have been exercised on the sinner in the eternal torments of hell – was poured out fully on our substitute in those three terrible hours on Calvary. Because of this, there is no longer any wrath left for Christ’s people.

- Where do we see the concept of “Propitiation” in the Old Testament?
 - *Leaders Cheat: Old Testament Sacrifices*
- Why is the concept of “Propitiation” so important to the gospel message we preach?
- Why is the idea of “God’s wrath having to be satisfied,” so offensive to our culture?
- As a group, put into words why you think John connects Jesus being our “Advocate” with Jesus also being our “Propitiator.”

3) Jesus our Message to the Nations

- Read the following verses.
 - 1 John 2:2
 - Acts 1:8
 - Revelations 5:6-10
 - 3 John 5-8
- **Read 3 John 8 again** and discuss how your group can get more involved in missions.
- Spend some time praying for our 3 main Cross Cultural Workers (missionaries).
 - Austin & Heather
 - Chis & Kelly Lollipop
 - Jimmy & Emily