

2026-06-17 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: The Paradox of God's Judgment and Grace

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to speak to each person through His Word and to help you honestly examine your hearts in light of what He reveals.

Icebreaker Question

When was a time you realized someone knew more about you than you thought they did? How did that make you feel?

Sermon Overview

This message explores the book of Amos, focusing on God's judgment against Israel for their injustice and hypocrisy. While the tone may seem heavy, it reveals important truths about God's character: He sees everything we do, He cares deeply about justice and mercy, and even in judgment, He provides a way of redemption through Christ.

Key Scripture References

Amos 8:5-12 - God's judgment on dishonest practices and the coming famine of His Word

Amos 9:1 - The Lord standing at the altar

Revelation 2-3 - "I know your deeds"

Matthew 27:51 - The earthquake at Jesus' crucifixion

Romans 12:1 - Present yourselves as living sacrifices

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

What specific sins was God addressing through Amos? How were the people being dishonest in their religious practices and business dealings?

What does the phrase "I will never forget anything they have done" mean

in context? Is this a threat or something more complex?

What did God mean by sending "a famine of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11)? Have you ever experienced spiritual dryness like this?

Personal Reflection

The sermon mentioned how "I know your deeds" can make us feel different ways depending on our walk with God. How does that phrase make you feel right now? Why?

Are you more of a "Sunday Christian" who cleans up for church but lives differently the rest of the week? What would it look like to be consistent throughout your week?

The pastor asked: "Do we hunger for the Word of God, or do we take it for granted?" Honestly assess your current appetite for Scripture. What's affecting it?

What does it mean to be a "living sacrifice" on God's altar (Romans 12:1)? What in your life needs to "die" for you to fully surrender to God?

Making Connections

How did the sermon connect Amos's prophecies to Jesus' crucifixion? (Consider the earthquake, darkness at noon, mourning for an only son, etc.) What does this tell us about God's long-term plan?

The sermon mentioned that God doesn't miss anything we do—good or bad. How is this both comforting and challenging?

What's the difference between having "faith that God will end the crisis" versus "faith that you have God with you in spite of whatever the crisis may be"?

Key Takeaways

God sees everything - both our successes and failures, our public actions and private moments

Judgment reveals God's character - He cares deeply about justice, mercy, and how we treat others

Even in doom and gloom, there's hope - God warns us because He wants us to repent, not because He enjoys judgment

Jesus covered every sin at the cross - including the ones Amos addressed, before we were even born

We can't take God's Word for granted - there may come a famine of hearing from Him if we continually ignore Him

Being blessed isn't about circumstances - it's about knowing Jesus and having your name in the Book of Life

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Honesty Audit

Examine your life for areas where you're being dishonest (with God, yourself, or others)

This could be in business, relationships, how you present yourself, or spiritual disciplines

Confess these to God and take one concrete step toward integrity

Option 2: Word Hunger

Commit to reading Scripture daily this week with a specific prayer: "God, speak to me. What do You see in me? What would You like to see?"

Journal what God shows you

Share one insight with the group next week

Option 3: Living Sacrifice

Identify one area where you're holding back from full surrender to God

Spend time at your own "altar" (prayer space) asking God what He wants

you to release

Take one step of obedience in that area

Group Action

Plan a time this month to serve together in a way that demonstrates justice and mercy - perhaps at a food bank, homeless ministry, or helping someone in need. Let your faith be visible through action.

Reflection Questions for the Week

Monday: What does God see when He looks at my life right now?

Tuesday: Where am I being dishonest or cutting corners in ways that displease God?

Wednesday: Do I truly hunger for God's Word, or am I spiritually complacent?

Thursday: What am I holding onto that prevents me from fully surrendering to God?

Friday: How can I live more consistently as a child of God throughout my week?

Saturday: What does being "blessed" really mean in my life?

Sunday: Am I prepared to meet the Lord at the altar today?

Closing Prayer Points

Confession: Ask God to reveal areas of dishonesty, hypocrisy, or spiritual complacency

Gratitude: Thank Jesus that He covered every sin at the cross—past, present, and future

Surrender: Pray for courage to become living sacrifices, dying to self-control

Hunger: Ask God to increase your appetite for His Word and His presence

Consistency: Pray for the same devotion throughout the week that you have on Sundays

For Next Week

Come prepared to share:

One way God spoke to you through this message

One step of obedience you took

One area where you're still struggling

Leader Notes

This is heavy material—create a safe space for honest confession without judgment

Be prepared to share your own struggles with consistency and surrender

Don't let the group get stuck in condemnation; always point back to grace

The earthquake/darkness connections may be new to some—help them see God's sovereignty throughout Scripture

Emphasize that God's "I know your deeds" is ultimately good news for those walking with Him