

Small Group Guide: Age of dCeption

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you believed something that turned out not to be true. How did you discover the truth?

Key Scripture References

- Matthew 24:3-8, 24
- Genesis 3:1-6
- Isaiah 14:12-15
- John 8:44
- 1 John 4:1-3
- Galatians 5:16-26

Main Points Summary

1. Deception's Origin and Nature

- Satan has been using deception since the Garden of Eden
- Deception is the ability to make someone depart from the truth of God's Word
- It pleases the senses, involves pride, and works best in isolation

2. Jerusalem as the Epicenter

- All Bible prophecy points to Jerusalem
- Satan doesn't want God's chosen people in Israel
- We support God's chosen people and place, not necessarily political positions

3. Modern Tools of Deception

- Technology (social media, AI, cell phones) can be beneficial but also deceptive
- Immediate reactions and isolation increase vulnerability to deception
- The tools of deception are more sophisticated than ever before

4. Our Response

- Stay anchored in Scripture

- Test everything against God's Word
- Walk in the Spirit, not in fear
- Band together with other believers

Discussion Questions

Understanding Deception (15-20 minutes)

1. **How does the story of Eve's deception in Genesis 3 reveal Satan's tactics?** What made the deception believable to her?
2. **Pastor Jerry defined deception as "the ability to make someone depart from the truth of God's Word."** In what ways do you see this happening in our current culture?
3. **The sermon mentioned that "deception pleases the senses and enraptures the emotions."** Can you think of examples where emotional appeals have been used to lead people away from biblical truth?

Technology and Isolation (15-20 minutes)

4. **Discuss the statement: "If I were Satan, I would have invented a cell phone."** What are the benefits and dangers of technology in our spiritual lives?
5. **The Bereans "searched the scriptures daily" to verify what Paul taught (Acts 17:11).** How can we apply this practice in an age of instant information and social media?
6. **How does isolation make us more vulnerable to deception?** What practical steps can we take to stay connected with other believers?

Men's Responsibility (10-15 minutes)

7. **The sermon emphasized Adam's failure as the spiritual leader.** Men, how does this challenge you in your role? Women, how can you encourage the men in your life in this area?

Discerning the Times (15-20 minutes)

8. **Matthew 24:4 says, "Take heed that no one deceives you."** What are some current events or cultural trends that require us to be especially discerning?
9. **How can we distinguish between legitimate concerns about world events and being controlled by fear or anxiety?**
10. **The sermon stated that all Bible prophecy points to Jerusalem.** How does understanding this help us interpret current Middle East events?

Walking in Truth (15-20 minutes)

11. **Read Galatians 5:16-26.** How does walking in the Spirit protect us from deception? Which fruit of the Spirit do you most need to cultivate right now?
12. **What does it practically look like to "renew our mind" through Scripture in daily life?**

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Deception is Satan's primary tool** and has been since the Garden of Eden
- ✓ **We have the Word of God** in unprecedented access for our generation—there's a reason we live in this time
- ✓ **Technology is neutral**—it can be used for good or evil; we shouldn't fear it but use it wisely
- ✓ **Isolation increases vulnerability** to deception; we need community with other believers

- ✓ **Jerusalem is the epicenter** of all biblical prophecy
- ✓ **We are not appointed to fear** but to power, love, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7)
- ✓ **Nothing can separate us** from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37-39)

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2)

Daily Practice:

- [] Read and meditate on one chapter of Scripture each day, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal truth
- [] Practice the childhood song: Be careful what you see, hear, say, do, where you go, whom you trust, and what you think

Technology Audit:

- [] Evaluate your screen time this week. Is technology serving you or controlling you?
- [] Before reacting to something you see online, pause and ask: "Is this true? Does it align with Scripture?"
- [] Commit to putting away devices during family meals or fellowship times

Community Connection:

- [] Reach out to another believer this week to discuss something you're processing or questioning
- [] Start or join a group that studies Scripture together (like the Bereans)

Men's Leadership:

- [] Men: Initiate a spiritual conversation or prayer time with your family this week
- [] Read one chapter of Proverbs each day (aligned with the day of the month)

Spiritual Discernment:

- [] When you hear news or information that creates strong emotions, write it down and compare it to Scripture before responding
- [] Memorize 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God"

Prayer Focus

Pray for:

- Wisdom and discernment in an age of deception
- Protection from isolation and the ability to stay connected with believers
- Men to step into their role as spiritual leaders
- A renewed hunger for God's Word
- Israel and Jerusalem
- Those who are deceived and don't yet know Christ
- The courage to speak truth in love

For Next Week

Read ahead: 2 Corinthians 6 (upcoming sermon passage)

Reflection question to consider: How has studying about deception changed the way you view current events or your daily choices?

Closing

Closing Song Reflection: "Lord, You Are More Precious Than Silver"

Closing Prayer: Thank God for His Word, His Spirit, and the victory we have in Christ. Ask Him to help each person walk in truth and not be deceived in the days ahead.

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." - Romans 8:37