

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week #1 – Jesus Vs. Religion



GETTING STARTED

Tell about a time you realized something had “gone bad” — food, an appliance, a relationship, or even a plan. How did you know?

THIS WEEK’S THEME

When you hear the word “religion,” what’s the first word or feeling that comes to mind?

In his message, Hans said: “It’s easy to love your religion more than the people for whom the religion was given.” Where do you see that temptation — in churches, culture, or even yourself?

Have you ever felt judged, excluded, or hurt in the name of faith? How did that experience shape you?

Read Mark 2:23-27 & Mark 3:1-5

What do these stories reveal about what matters most to Jesus?

How can good rules or traditions slowly become harmful if we’re not careful? Where have you seen faith practices meant to help people end up hurting people instead?

Read Matthew 5:17 & Matthew 12:6

What does it mean that Jesus came to fulfill rather than abolish the law? How does Jesus reframe where God’s presence is found?

What changes when faith becomes centered on a person (Jesus) instead of a system?

How can we follow Jesus in ways that might challenge or even upset “bad religion”?

TAKING IT HOME

*This week, where might Jesus be inviting you to choose compassion over comfort?
Who in your life might need grace more than advice?*

PRAY

Jesus, thank you for loving people more than systems and compassion more than appearances. Heal the places where faith has been used to hurt, and shape our hearts to look like yours — full of grace, truth, and love. Teach us to follow you faithfully, even when it challenges religion that has gone bad. Amen.