

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read Esther 8-10 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, Esther 8-10 November 16, 2014

Title: Triggers

The other day my grandson Logan crossed a neighbor's yard to our house—and was he ever angry! On the way over he stepped in a mess left by the neighbor's dog. Kicking off the brand new, but befouled, soccer shoes that he was proud to wear only a few minutes earlier, he walked the few feet from the yard to the door in his socks. He was clearly offended by the experience and disgusted by the smell. I laughed, and that didn't help a bit, nor did my suggestion that he not beat a path across the neighbor's grass. It was a moment of giving and taking offense.

Question: Who or what offended you today? Whom did you offend today? How did that happen?

Question: Take a little time to examine and discuss the setup and trigger of the offenses named in the previous question. Do they compare to Haman's setup and trigger to trap the king in the annihilation of the Jews of Persia? If so, how?

Question: It's interesting to note that the Greek for offense—skandalon—is where we get our word scandal. If you think of an offense as a trap ready to snap shut, what logical steps can you take to avoid being caught in the "scandal" of sin? What can you do to be sure you don't knowingly set a trap for someone else?

Question: We learned that Jesus Himself was an offense, a stumbling block, to the pharisees and the good news of the gospel is a stumbling block that offends many people (Romans 11:7-9; John 6: 59-61; Matthew 15:1-3, 12). Yet Paul repeatedly in his letters to churches urges believers to not become stumbling blocks nor stumble (Galatians 5:11-15; Romans 14:13; Romans 14:21-22). What is the difference? Is it possible to avoid giving or taking offense?

Question: What is the source of disunity and the giving and taking of offense among believers and in the church? What do you suppose is the cure?

Facilitator: Guide the group to 1 Corinthians 13:5 and 1 John 2:10.

Meditation: Read 1 Corinthians 13:5 and consider: Is taking offense and keeping track of it a sin? If it is, doesn't it need to be confessed and repented of? Isn't holding onto sin and refusing to repent of it like keeping dog poop on the shoe and hoping no one will notice the stink?