

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 11/17/2019

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Acts 28:16-31 (NIV)*

¹⁶ When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

¹⁷ Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. ¹⁸ They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. ¹⁹ The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. ²⁰ For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

²¹ They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. ²² But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect."

²³ They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. ²⁴ Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. ²⁵ They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement:

"The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

²⁶ "Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."

²⁷ For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."

²⁸ "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" ^[29]

³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. ³¹ He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

• ...

O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

Know (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)

v.16-31

O: What background can you recall that leads up to this passage (both Acts as a whole, as well as the couple chapters prior to the passage)?

O: Why do you think Paul took the initiative to call the meeting with the Jewish leaders in Rome (v.17-20)? What does this say about Paul's mission (both what it was, as well as his approach, and his long-standing faithfulness to that mission)? (Do)

O: **V.31** is a great summary verse; what does this ending reveal about the book of Acts' central concern? (Do)

I: What does this passage (as well as the broader context in Acts) tell us about the mission of God? (Know/Do)

A: Paul had every excuse to be limited by his situation, yet his focus on God and God's kingdom mission seems to have grown and stay strong in the midst of hardship and opposition. How about you; how are you staying focused on God's mission (vs. the distractions of the world, competing missions, etc.)? (BE)

A: "There are many possible explanations for the book's seemingly unfinished nature. But perhaps it is deliberate. Perhaps it is an unfinished story that leaves the reader facing this question: "What are you going to do about this?" How would you answer that?" (from N.T.Wright's discussion guide) (Do)

-How WILL you respond this week? What one question do you want us to ask of you next week in regard to this?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray together, and really focus in on how God is calling each of us individually (and corporately) to Do Mission with Him.
- **Respond:** Spend this week responding to God's word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week's companion devotional guide.
- **Read:** Next week's sermon (9/15/19) will (likely) focus on 1st Thessalonians ch.2. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, as well as journey through this week's companion devotional guide.

An explanation on how Riverside structures these discussion guides*:

Riverside defines a disciple of Jesus as a **“Know, Be, Do”** person. And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do” framework in our discussion guides.

Riverside leadership regularly asks questions around these areas:

- “What do we need to **know** about God?”
- “Who do we need to **be**?”
- “What do we need to **do**?”

Here is what we mean by “Know, Be, Do” (based on Colossians 1:9-10, see below)

Know – *“to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives..., growing in the knowledge of God”* Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally, intimately, and deeply. This is also about knowing the scriptures, knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit, even knowing yourself.

Be – *“so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way”* Becoming more like Jesus (sanctification). This is about our character and our heart and our motivations, our passions and convictions change the more we get to Know Jesus (and others).

Do – *“bearing fruit in every good work, ...”* Knowing Jesus and Becoming like Jesus practically will change our actions. As we grow in these areas we will naturally DO the things that Jesus did while in the flesh on earth (living and loving like Jesus). Some broad categories around DO are evangelism and justice and service.

Notice *“bearing fruit in every good work”* then yields more *“growing in the knowledge of God.”* In other words, while “Know, Be, Do” are three distinct words, they are deeply interconnected.

As a side note, the next chapter states: *“⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (Col. 2:6-8)* To aid in this process Riverside also has a **daily devotional guide available each week**.

Colossians 1:9-10, NIV

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...

* As discussed in Riverside’s HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily upon the following resources: Thomas, Mack. *The Complete Bible Discussion Guide: Old Testament and New Testament*, Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study, Zondervan