

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 8/9/2020

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Hebrews 12:4-13 (NIV)*

⁴ In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵ And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
⁶ because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! ¹⁰ They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

¹² Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ¹³ “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- In what areas of your life would you say you most often have a need for encouragement and endurance?

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

***Another way to ask: “Choose one verse or phrase from the passage that stands out to you. This could be something you’re intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, puzzles you, resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further.” Now share it with the group.*

KNOW : What does the text say about God?

- From what you see in this passage, what does the author of Hebrews want us most to understand about discipline?
Follow-Up: From what you see in this chapter and elsewhere in Scripture, what can you reasonably expect in life if you do not obey the command in verse 7?
- How do you feel about God described in this passage? (while our feelings shouldn’t drive our lives, the reality is how we view God is CRITICAL, ... hence the question)

BE : What does it say about us?

- According to verses 4–11, how is discipline from God evidence that we are his beloved children?
Note from N.T. Wright: The truth of verse 11 is offered so that we can cling to it when things are difficult. There is much sorrow in an ordinary human life; sorrow which was, of course, shared by the Man of Sorrows as he identified completely with us, a point Hebrews has already made forcefully (5:7–10). Again and again, when we find ourselves thwarted or disappointed, opposed or vilified, or even subject to physical abuse and violence, we may in faith be able to hear the gentle and wise voice of the Father, urging us to follow him more closely, to trust him more fully, to love him more deeply.
Potential question from N.T. Wright’s Reflection: How have you seen this to be true in your own life or the lives of others?
- Per v. 11, What does a harvest of righteousness and peace look like? (Note: This verse points back to Isaiah 32:17)

DO : What does it call us to do?

- Well... no way around this question. How is your struggle against sin (v.4) going?
Follow-Up: What is God calling you to do with that struggle (in light of this passage & the Holy Spirit living in us)?
- What does it look like for you/us (in reality, not theoretically) to:
 - remember God’s encouraging words (v.5)?
 - not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart (v.5)
 - endure hardship (v.7)
 - strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. (v.12)
 - make level paths for your feet,” (v.13)
- In the context of Proverbs 4:20-27, what does Hebrews 12:12-13 mean?
What can this look like in our lives (in actuality, not just theoretically)

TOGETHER : What is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?

- HOW CAN WE, TOGETHER... “Press on. Run the race, laying aside every encumbrance that can trip us up. Keep our eyes on Jesus. Follow His example and endure discipline so we may grow more like Him every day”?
- 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 God’s goodness as a Father that disciplines us for our good.
- 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 (8/16/20) will focus on Hebrews 12:14-29. 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, which develops in us **“TOGETHER”**.

And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do, Together” framework in our discussion guides.

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: *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 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, along with the following group studies specific to Hebrews: Tom Wright (978-0-281-06379-6), Kay Arthur (978-0-7369-2306-4), Wiersbe (978-0781445665), MacArthur (978-0-7180-3515-0).