

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 9/13/2020

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Revelation 1:1-3 (NIV)*

¹ The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

General Question Bank

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)
Know (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)
Together (What is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- What previous impressions have you had about the book of Revelation in regard to (a) its content, (b) its level of difficulty, and (c) its importance?
- On a scale of 1–10 (1 = representing “very little understanding” and 10 = “complete and full understanding”), how would you rate your current understanding of the book of Revelation

V.1-3 BIG IDEA: Our vision of Jesus tends to be too small. Revelation’s purpose is not to give us a puzzle to figure out about the end times, but to help us clarify and enlarge our vision of Jesus and what obedience looks like.

O: 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, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further.” Now share it with the group*

O: Look closely at verse 1. Who is this book written to? See also v.4

Why was it written (v.1, to show...)

How was it made known (v.1, by sending...)

Another way to ask: Verses 1–3 provide a six-part chain of revelation for the book of Revelation, beginning with God and ending with the one who hears and keeps what is written. Can you identify the four links of the chain in between? Why do you think John begins the book with this chain of revelation?

Another way to ask: According to 1:1-3, why did God give this revelation? Also, what responses does He want its hearers to make?

I: Notice in verse 1 that some things “must” soon take place. Why do you think John says they must take place? What does this suggest about his view of God? Recalling that Revelation is written to suffering Christians, how would the word “must” encourage them?

I: What does it mean that this book serves as a “testimony” or “witness” (v. 2)? (**Know**)

I: What promises are stated or implied (vv. 1, 3, 7)

A: Notice the promised blessing in verse 3. What can you/we do to “keep” or “take heed to” or “take to heart” the full message of Revelation? (**Be/Do**)

A: How can we ensure that our study of Revelation is not merely theoretical & intellectual, but is instead truly practical & relevant? What can we do to help keep the process alive & interesting & impacting (vs. just theoretical)? (**Together**)

-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:** As we begin our journey through Revelation, pray that we would be open to the Holy Spirit’s formation in us through the Word of God and the visions we will see about Jesus and His Kingdom and the world we live in.
- **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 (9/20/20) will focus on revelation 1:4-10. 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. We believe the process for this transformation happens in community, hence the **“Together”** part of the Riverside mission as well.

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**?”
- **“Together**, what is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?

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, along with the following group studies on Revelation: Wright (978-0830821990), MacArthur (978-0718035198), Navigators (978-0891092735), Lucado (978-0310086666), Witmer (978-1433543203), Stott (978-0830821792), Wiersbe (978-1434702319), Hathcoat (978-1511401296), Smith (978-1645070726), Hewitt (978-1501855443), Stevens (978-0830830213), Arthur (978-0736908061).