

# Group Discussion Guide for Week of 9/20/2020

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Revelation 1:4-8 (NIV)*

<sup>4</sup> John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits<sup>4a</sup> before his throne, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, <sup>6</sup> and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

<sup>7</sup> “Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”

So shall it be! Amen.

<sup>8</sup> “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

## 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?)

## v.4-8

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: What are all the ways that God is described in this text?

I: Imagine that you are a member of one of the seven churches in Asia Revelation was written to.  
What would you find comforting about the various descriptions of the Lord in this passage?  
What would you find disturbing?

I: The book of Revelation calls for faithfulness in the midst of persecution that may lead even to death (see Rev. 2:13).  
In light of that, how would the threefold description of Jesus in the first part of verse 5 encourage these believers?

I: The Jews were used to calling God “him who was, and who is, and who will be.” John changed this to  
“him who is, and who was, and who is to come” (1:4) What might be his point(s) in doing this? (Consider 3:11; 22:7)

A: In what ways has a knowledge of Christ’s coming encouraged you in the midst of suffering?

A: How is it personally important to you that Jesus . . .  
is “the faithful witness” (1:5)?  
is “the firstborn from the dead” (1:5)?  
is “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (1:5)?  
“loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” (1:5)?

A: What does it imply about you/us that Jesus “has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father” (1:6)?

## Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray together, and really focus in on that we are meeting with God, He’s in the room, and He wants us to KNOW 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 (9/27/20) will focus on Revelation 1:9-20. 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: *<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. <sup>8</sup> 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,...*

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\* 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).