

# Group Discussion Guide for Week of 11/29/2020

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Revelation 4:1-2 (NIV)*

*'After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."' At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.*

## 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)

- “Think of a memorable worship experience you’ve enjoyed in your life. Was it something for which you prepared or an experience that caught you off guard? What aspects of it can you remember—the participants, setting, and activities? Why was this time so special to you?” (from Max Lucado)

## V.1-2

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: Who specifically is speaking to John in v.1 (hint: also see 1:10-16)?

I: What is meant by the invitation given to John (v. 1)?

I: N.T.Wright says that ““Heaven” and “earth” are not separated by a great gulf in the Bible as they are in much popular imagination. Heaven, God’s sphere of reality, is right here, close beside us, intersecting with our ordinary reality.”

How might this understanding shape the way we think about the “door in heaven” that John sees?

I: Thrones, especially God’s throne, are mentioned over 40 times in Revelation. Why do you think they appear so often? What do they have to do with the book’s message?

A: John’s “encounter” here in v.1 leads him in the second verse to “at once [be] in the Spirit.” What does that mean? Would you describe your active interactions with Jesus these days as “in the Spirit”? Why/Why not?

A: This opening is the start of an amazing vision in ch.4&5 that is meant to reorient our lives/vision/understanding around God’s throne. Spend some time together really praying that Jesus would open our eyes up this advent season to His working and His activity and His glory and Splendor. This has been a hard 9-months, the vision we get in ch.4&5 can help reorient us in ways that are powerful (and so needed in a time like this)

-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:

- **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 (12/6/20) will focus on Revelation 4:3-6 (what’s AROUND and FROM the throne). 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,...*

---

\* 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).