

Group Discussion Guide for Week of **2/21/2021**

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Revelation 12 (NIV)*

12 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. **2** She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. **3** Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. **4** Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. **5** She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. **6** The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

7 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. **8** But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. **9** The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. **11** They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. **12** Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. **14** The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach. **15** Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. **16** But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. **17** Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

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 Starter (Ice Breaker)

- Would you say that you see or even experience the accusations and hostility of Satan in the course of everyday life? What does that look like?

Revelation 12

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 at the “first act” of Revelation 12:1-6. What two signs appear in heaven (vv. 1, 3)? What clue does John give us in verse 5 about the identity of the woman’s child? (See also Psalm 2:9)

O: **Observational Note:** *Revelation 12:5 gives a broad-brush overview of Jesus’ victory over Satan, moving immediately from his birth to his resurrection and ascension to God’s heavenly throne.*

I: In the “second act” of 12:7–12, we’re granted another perspective on the conflict between Jesus and Satan, with more details filled in. The loud voice in verse 10 announces God’s victory and Satan’s defeat. How do Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension defeat Satan’s accusations of believers before God?

I: If the war has taken place in heaven, why are the Lamb’s people on earth given credit for the victory instead of Michael or God himself (v. 11)?

- I: Revelation 12:11 describes Christians who “conquer” the devil even though he kills them (compare the same word “conquer” in 13:7)! In what sense do believers conquer Satan? Do they look to the world like conquerors?
- I: How might 12:12 encourage Christians suffering the fierce attacks of Satan? Does the dragon’s anger show that he is winning, or is there something else going on here?
- I: How does the “third act” 12:13–17 emphasize God’s protection and care for his people?
- A: In Sunday’s sermon, Andrew mentioned our humble weapons in spiritual warfare: “*We wield self-sacrifice. We wield our testimonies to God’s faithfulness. We wield a willingness to give up everything. We wield assurance that the battle is already won. And every tact that the enemy takes to try to stand against that drives another nail into his already built and customized coffin.*” What would it look like for you or our community to wield these humble weapons this week?

-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 that we are meeting with God, He’s in the room, and He wants us to KNOW Him. Pray together, spend some time being silent (so we can listen, aka, “*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” *Then pray in response to the content from this letter in Revelation as well as to what the H.S. reveals to us.*
- **Respond:** Spend this week responding to God’s word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week’s devotional guide.
- **Read:** Next week’s sermon (2/28/2021) will focus on Revelation 13. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through it, and meditate on it.

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).