

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 5/2/2021

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Revelation 21:9-27 (NIV)*

⁹One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.¹¹It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.¹²It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.¹³There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls.¹⁶The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long.¹⁷The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick.¹⁸The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.¹⁹The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,²⁰the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

²²I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

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)

- Ila laid out four genres of story: comedy, romance, irony, tragedy—are you drawn to one in particular?

Revelation 19:11-21

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: How are the walls of the city decorated (vv. 18-21)? 10. Why does John go into so much detail describing these walls?

I: The Jerusalem Temple had a single entrance. In verses 12-13 the temple-city has gates on all four sides because people enter from the four corners of the world (Isaiah 60:11; Ezekiel 48:30-34). Reflect on how this might be significant.

I: What is the significance of the 12 names written on the gates (21:12) and the 12 names written on the foundations of the wall (v. 14) of the new Jerusalem?

I: The cubed, golden, dimensions of the New Jerusalem (vs. 15-18) echo the Most Holy Place in Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6:20). The whole city is the Most Holy Place, where God meets with his people. In the past only the high priest could enter and only once a year and only through the shedding of blood. But the dividing curtain was torn in two as Jesus died (Mark 15:38). How might this new City of God be a “super-sized” version of the Most Holy Place?

I: For most of Revelation, “the nations” and their kings have been hostile. They have shared in the idolatry and economic violence of Babylon; they have oppressed and opposed God, his purposes and his people. But the earlier hints of God’s wider redeeming purpose now come fully into play. How will the nations participate in the life of the New Jerusalem (21:24-26)?

A: It is the Spirit that enables the bride to be the bride. It is the Spirit that enables the martyrs to keep up their courage and bear true witness. It is the Spirit who inspires the great shouts and songs of praise. The Spirit goes out from God’s throne and, breathing into and then through the hearts, minds and lives of people of every nation, tribe and tongue, returns in praise to the Father and the Lamb. How is this Spirit empowering you in your life as a follower of Jesus today?

-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 (5/9/2021) will focus on Revelation 22:1-5. 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: *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸See 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).*