

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 6/20/2021

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; [Genesis 50:15-21 \(NIV\)](#)

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?"¹⁶So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died:¹⁷ 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

¹⁸His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?"²⁰You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

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)

- If you could go back and change one thing in your past, would you? And what would it be? How do you imagine that change would impact where you are right now?

Genesis 50:15-21

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: What assumptions are the brothers making about Joseph in verse 15?

O: Why might Joseph weep in this situation (v. 17)? (note that he's wept in his brothers' presence a few times before—42:24; 43:30; 45:2)

I: Joseph chooses to break the "normal" way his family deals with hurt feelings and conflict by forgiving his brothers. How might you have responded if you were in Joseph's position? (Be sure to honestly put yourself in Joseph's shoes).

I: Slowly, reread verses 19–21. Here we see Joseph's response to the enormous losses he experienced in his life. Carefully consider the different aspects of this response noted below. As you think about your own life story, which one speaks the most to you and why?

- "Don't be afraid."
- "Am I in the place of God?"
- "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good."

A: List the life messages you received from each of your parents or caretakers (e.g. Don't be weak. Education is everything. You must achieve to be loved. Don't be sad; things could be worse. Make a lot of money. Don't trust people; they will hurt you.). How do those messages compare with messages that reflect who you are in the new family of Jesus? (e.g. It is good that you exist. You are lovable. You are good enough. You are a joy. You have nothing left to prove. Your needs are a delight. You are allowed to make mistakes.)

A: What might be one specific message from your family of origin that God has revealed to you today that you want to change as part of your "hard work of discipleship"?

-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.

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 *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Updated Edition Workbook*, Pete & Geri Scazzero, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI 2017.