Group Discussion Guide for Week of 7/11/2021

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; Matthew 26:36-44 (NIV)

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."
39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."
40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."
43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

General Question Bank

Observation (what does the text say?) **I**nterpretation (what does it mean?) **A**pplication (what does it mean to me/us?)
Know (what does the text say about God?) **B**e (what does it say about us?) **D**o (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)

- As you were growing up, how did you deal with your disappointments? Give one example.

Matthew 26:36-44

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: It is important for us to remember that Jesus was both fully human and fully God. Spend a few moments focusing on Jesus in verses 36–41. In contrast to how we naturally try to "protect" ourselves from grief and loss (using denial, minimizing, blaming others or God, "over-spiritualizing," making excuses, intellectualizing, becoming hostile, self-medicating, etc.) what were some of the ways Jesus dealt with and moved through his losses?

I: What about Jesus' example of grieving most speaks to you about embracing your own grief and loss?

A: Choose two or three age ranges of your life, and write down your significant losses or disappointments during those years. How did you respond at that time?

3-12

13-18

19-24

25-40

41+

A: What was the experience of reflecting on your personal history like for you? Did it reveal anything new to you? What?

A: One of the central messages of Christianity is that suffering and death bring resurrection and new life. Are there any losses you have not yet embraced where new life is still waiting to be birthed?

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