

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 9/20/2021

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; Acts 4:23-31 (NIV)

²³On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one."

²⁷Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

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)

- Have you ever experienced a worship gathering or prayer meeting where the Holy Spirit showed up in a tangible way? Share your experience with the group.

Acts 4:23-31

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: This prayer in Acts 4 begins with a recitation of part of Psalm 2. Pause to read that Psalm and observe how the early church's prayer stands in the traditions and anticipations of their spiritual ancestors. How does David's perspective in Psalm 2 help the early church understand their own situation?
- O: Look at the things they pray for in vs. 29-30. Do you find any of this surprising given their situation of being plotted and conspired against? It would make sense to focus prayers on stopping the persecution or changing the hearts of these leaders, but what do they center their prayers on instead? What might this say about their faith and prayer life?
- I: What is the significance of the church's unity as they face challenges?
- I: It's clear that our prayers communicate a lot about our view of God. What do our prayers as a home group communicate about how we see God? What about your own prayers—what do they say about how you see God?
- A: Read v. 31. In what ways do you need the power of the Holy Spirit to face the world today? Ask God to fill you with the Spirit as you face challenges to experiencing and communicating the gospel.
- A: Using this prayer as your example, pray about opposition to the gospel message both in your community and throughout the world.

-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.

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 was created in consultation with [Acts, N. T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guides](#); [Acts, Life Change Series](#); [Acts: Seeing the Spirit at Work, John Stott Bible Studies](#), [Book of Acts, Life Lessons with Max Lucado](#).