

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 11/29/2021

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Isaiah 7:1-17 (NIV)*

⁷When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it. ²Now the house of David was told, “Aram has allied itself with Ephraim”; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind. ³Then the Lord said to Isaiah, “Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer’s Field. ⁴Say to him, ‘Be careful, keep calm and don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. ⁵Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah’s son have plotted your ruin, saying, ⁶“Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.” ⁷Yet this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

“It will not take place, it will not happen, ⁸for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. ⁹The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah’s son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.” ¹⁰Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.”

¹³Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. ¹⁵He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, ¹⁶for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. ¹⁷The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria.

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)

- Does the season of Advent hold any particular significance for you personally? Tell the group about it.

Isaiah 7:1-17

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 does God want King Ahaz to respond to the threat of invasion? (see vs. 4, 9, 11)

O: The word translated “virgin” in v. 14 is the Hebrew word *almah*, which means “young woman of marriageable age.” It is an uncommon Hebrew word that is later translated to *parthenos* or “virgin” in Greek translation in the 3rd century BC. There was likely a more immediate fulfillment of this prophetic word (though not likely a virgin birth) followed by complete fulfillment in Jesus. I realize this isn’t a question, but pretty cool, right?

I: How are God’s words to Ahaz relevant to us today? (especially vs. 4, 9, 11, 13)

I: Can you identify with the fears and attitudes of Ahaz? How might you relate?

I: In the time of Ahaz, God was with his people to protect them from enemies (7:7-8; 8:9-10). How is Jesus an even greater fulfillment of the sign-name Immanuel, “God with us”? What is extra significant about the “with-ness” Jesus brings?

A: And what circumstances might you need to “stand firm in your faith” right now?

A: How is Immanuel’s presence with you an encouragement to you?

A: What good news do you take from this story of God remaining present, even to a rebellious and unfaithful king?

-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: *“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 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](#).