

Group Discussion Guide for Week of **3/21/2022**

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Exodus 7:14-8:19 (NIV)*

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the river. Confront him on the bank of the Nile, and take in your hand the staff that was changed into a snake. ¹⁶ Then say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened. ¹⁷ This is what the Lord says: By this you will know that I am the Lord: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.’” ¹⁹ The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs—and they will turn to blood.’ Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone.” ²⁰ Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. ²¹ The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt. ²² But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh’s heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. ²³ Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river. ²⁵ Seven days passed after the Lord struck the Nile.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ² If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs on your whole country. ³ The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kneading troughs. ⁴ The frogs will come up on you and your people and all your officials.’” ⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’” ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. ⁷ But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts; they also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt. ⁸ Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Pray to the Lord to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the Lord.” ⁹ Moses said to Pharaoh, “I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile.” ¹⁰ “Tomorrow,” Pharaoh said. Moses replied, “It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the Lord our God. ¹¹ The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials and your people; they will remain only in the Nile.” ¹² After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the Lord about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. ¹³ And the Lord did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. ¹⁴ They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. ¹⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,’ and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats.” ¹⁷ They did this, and when Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff and struck the dust of the ground, gnats came on people and animals. All the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats. ¹⁸ But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. Since the gnats were on people and animals everywhere, ¹⁹ the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the Lord had said.

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)

- Are you or anyone you know truly afraid of blood (hemophobia), frogs (ranidaphobia), or small insects (entomophobia)? Share a story if you have one. (be considerate if the discussion genuinely triggers people in the group)

Exodus 6

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: As we look at these first few “plagues,” what message is the Lord looking to convey to pharaoh? (7:17; 8:10)

O: Notice that the first mighty act occurs “on the bank of the Nile” (7:15), which is the same place Moses’ own story began, and where he received his name (2:1-10).

O: How does pharaoh respond to these “mighty acts of judgment” (7:4; 8:8; 8:19)

- I: What is one lesson you can take from each of these first three plagues? Note that the Nile is the source of so much life in the region, frogs a sign of fertility in ancient Egypt, and gnats an act of bringing life to the dust.
- I: What do you notice in the text that gives you a glimpse of God's character?
- A: Look at the descriptions of pharaoh's heart (7:13-14; 22; 8:15; 19). What might that look like today? How can we get an accurate reading of the condition of our own hearts?
- A: One of our takeaways this week is the need to keep our hearts soft toward God. One way to both assess and orient our hearts toward God is by lessening our dependence on our flesh through fasting. Consider choosing a day this week to fast together as a group, and for more info on fasting visit our practices page at www.riversidecommunity.org/practices and click on the "fasting resources" tab.

-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 *Echoes of Exodus*, Alastair Roberts and Andrew Wilson, 2018; *Exodus: Life Change Series*, The Navigators, 1989; *Exodus 1-19*, James Reapsome; and *Exodus: Knowing the Bible*, Matthew Newkirk, J. I. Packer.