

Group Discussion Guide for Week of **11/28/2022**

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Lampstand and the Light of Christ*

³¹“Make a lampstand of pure gold. Hammer out its base and shaft, and make its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms of one piece with them. ³²Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. (Exodus 25:31-32)

⁴⁴“So I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. ⁴⁵Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. ⁴⁶They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God. (Exodus 29:44-46)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world...¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-9, 14)

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

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)

- What is the best kind of Christmas lights?

Exodus 25:31-32; 29:44-46; John 1:1-9, 14; Matthew 5:14-16

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/I: Look at the description of the lampstand in Exodus 25:31ff, and the painting of the lampstand in this week’s Advent devotional. The lampstand brings together two of the central symbols in all of Scripture—besides light, what is the other one? How might the two be connected?

O: In Exodus 29:44-46, the Lord promises to dwell among the Israelites—a glorious gift of presence! What barriers existed between the Lord and the people, even with the Lord dwelling among them? (Exodus 40:35; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 18:7)

I: As you read the passage from John 1 (above), in what specific ways do you see Jesus’ coming as a fulfillment of the ministry of the tabernacle? The lampstand specifically? And for all their overlap, what key distinctions are there between Jesus’ presence and the Lord’s presence in the tabernacle?

I/A: Given all these ties between God’s presence and light, consider Matthew 5:14-16. What does it mean for Jesus to declare to his followers, “YOU are the light of the world?” What is the difference between generating and reflecting light?

I: What would it look like for our group and for each one of us to radiate the light of Christ in the coming weeks?

A: This month we have a beautiful Advent devotional book that includes original artwork from several Riversiders. Get your hands on a print copy or check out the daily online devotions as we keep Advent together:

<http://riverside.church//devo>

-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 20-40*, James Reapsome; and *Exodus: Knowing the Bible*, Matthew Newkirk, J. I. Packer.