

# Group Discussion Guide for Week of 2/6/2023

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)*

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither 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. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

## 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)

- How do we use salt and light as metaphors for people today? What is a “salt of the earth” person? Who “shines” or “illuminates”? Do these ideas line up with how Jesus uses the terms?

## Matthew 5:13-16

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: Context of the salt & light passage: “What possible influence could the people described in the Beatitudes exert in this hard, tough world? What lasting good can the poor and the meek do, the mourners and the merciful—those who seek peace and not war? Would they not be overwhelmed by the flood of evil? What can they accomplish—whose only passion is righteousness and whose only weapon is purity of heart? Are not such people too feeble to achieve anything? Jesus does not share this skepticism, as this passage demonstrates. He expects us to have a profound influence on those around us.” (LifeGuide Bible Studies: *Sermon on the Mount*, Stott)

I: Before refrigeration, salt was used to keep meat from rotting (to “prevent putrefaction”). What then does Jesus’ statement “You are the salt of the earth” (v. 13) tell us about society and the church’s role in it?

I: Jesus’ second statement is “You are the light of the world” (v. 14). As salt we prevent decay, the spread of evil. How does the church’s role as light complement its role as salt?

O: How does a passage like Isaiah 42:6-7 help us understand what Jesus is getting at in 5:14-15?

O: What is the result, according to Jesus, of people seeing our good deeds (v. 16)?

I: What examples can you think of where the work of Christians has brought people closer to God?

A: How will your group demonstrate and proclaim the good news of Jesus this week? How will you as individuals do the same?

-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, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. <sup>8</sup>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,...*

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\* 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 *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing*, Jonathan Pennington, 2017; *Sermon on the Mount: LifeGuide Bible Studies*, John Stott; *Matthew for Everyone Bible Study Guide*, N. T. Wright; and *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Sermon on the Mount*, Scot McKnight; *Sermon on the Mount*, Amy-Jill Levine; *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 2020; *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, David Martin Lloyd-Jones, 2011.