

# Group Discussion Guide for Week of 2/13/2023

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Matthew 5:17-20 (NIV)*

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of 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)

- What are some significant things that would be missing in your knowledge of God if you didn't have access to the Old Testament?

## Matthew 5:17-20

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: What is the emphasis of vs. 17-18? What is the emphasis in vs. 19-20?

I: Why might some people have thought that Jesus came to abolish the Law and the Prophets (v. 17)? (Amy's sermon had some great content on this re: the authority with which Jesus taught, see Mark 1:22)

I: The Law and the Prophets contain narrative, history, prophecy, covenants, religious and civil laws, poetry, and wisdom. This passage focuses on "commands," but in what sense do we see Jesus fulfill (live out the fulness of) all these different types of writing?

I: What portions of the Bible have you tended to skip over or neglect? Do you have a clear reason for this? (e.g. ignoring food laws based on Peter's vision in Acts 10)

i: The Pharisees and teachers of the law were zealous about observing the Law. How can our righteousness possibly surpass theirs (v. 20)? (think of letter vs. intent of the Law)

I: Amy emphasized how Jesus will show us how to read the Old Testament well with several specific applications in the next several weeks in the Sermon on the Mount series. Keep this "fulfill, not abolish" paradigm in your mind as we proceed.

A: Notice how N.T. Wright ties our last passage (salt and light) together with this passage:

*Israel was not chosen in order to be God's special people while the rest of the world remained in outer darkness. Jerusalem, a city set on a hill, was to be a beacon of hope for the world. Israel was chosen to be the salt of the earth, so that, through Israel, God could bless all people. Now Jesus was calling Israel to be the light of the world at last.*

*Jesus wasn't intending to abandon the law and the prophets. Israel's whole story—commands, promises and all—was to come true in him. Now that he was here, a way was opening up for Israel and all the world to make God's covenant a reality in their own selves, changing behavior not just by teaching but by a change of heart and mind itself.*

How will you allow Jesus' teaching to change your heart and mind this week? What life rhythms might you implement to allow this to occur?

-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: *<sup>6</sup> 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.