

Group Discussion Guide for Week of 8/20/2023

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; **Psalm 139 (NIV)**

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

¹You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
²You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
³You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
⁴Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.
⁵You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
⁷Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
⁸If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
⁹If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
¹⁰even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
¹²even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

¹³For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
¹⁷How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.
¹⁹If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
²⁰They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
²¹Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
²²I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.
²³Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

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)

- Can you think of a book or movie that you love *except* for one scene, subplot, or chapter?

Psalm 139:19-24

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, if any, teaching have you received over the years on the so called "imprecatory psalms"? Have you ever struggled to reconcile prayers like vs. 19-22 with your picture of who God is?

O: What specific details strike you as particularly important in vs. 19-22? It's harsh language, but what David *doesn't* say is interesting as well.

I: Have you ever fully identified with v. 22? Did you vocalize your hatred like David? Was it helpful?

I: How has God brought good out of wrong others did to you?

A: Read vs. 23-24. What was the last test you know you passed before God? What was the last test you failed? How eager are you to receive God's leading so that you'll pass next time?

-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: *“⁶So 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 *Psalms 1-50: A Christian Union Bible Study* (Christian Union Bible Studies), Tyndale House Publishers.