

## **Group Discussion Guide for Week of 6/23/2024**

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Psalm 44*

- 1 We have heard it with our ears, O God;  
our ancestors have told us  
what you did in their days,  
in days long ago.
- 2 With your hand you drove out the nations  
and planted our ancestors;  
you crushed the peoples  
and made our ancestors flourish.
- 3 It was not by their sword that they won the land,  
nor did their arm bring them victory;  
it was your right hand, your arm,  
and the light of your face, for you loved them.
- 4 You are my King and my God,  
who decrees[c] victories for Jacob.
- 5 Through you we push back our enemies;  
through your name we trample our foes.
- 6 I put no trust in my bow,  
my sword does not bring me victory;
- 7 but you give us victory over our enemies,  
you put our adversaries to shame.
- 8 In God we make our boast all day long,  
and we will praise your name forever.[d]
- 9 But now you have rejected and humbled us;  
you no longer go out with our armies.
- 10 You made us retreat before the enemy,  
and our adversaries have plundered us.
- 11 You gave us up to be devoured like sheep  
and have scattered us among the nations.
- 12 You sold your people for a pittance,  
gaining nothing from their sale.
- 13 You have made us a reproach to our neighbors,  
the scorn and derision of those around us.
- 14 You have made us a byword among the nations;  
the peoples shake their heads at us.
- 15 I live in disgrace all day long,  
and my face is covered with shame
- 16 at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me,  
because of the enemy, who is bent on revenge.
- 17 All this came upon us,  
though we had not forgotten you;  
we had not been false to your covenant.
- 18 Our hearts had not turned back;

our feet had not strayed from your path.  
 19 But you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals;  
 you covered us over with deep darkness.

20 If we had forgotten the name of our God  
 or spread out our hands to a foreign god,  
 21 would not God have discovered it,  
 since he knows the secrets of the heart?  
 22 Yet for your sake we face death all day long;  
 we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

23 Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep?  
 Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.

24 Why do you hide your face  
 and forget our misery and oppression?

25 We are brought down to the dust;  
 our bodies cling to the ground.

26 Rise up and help us;  
 rescue us because of your unfailing love.

#### **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)

Prayer and conversation with God can look lots of different ways, as we'll notice in this psalm. What are some creative or varied ways you've practiced talking with God?

#### Psalm 44

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: There is a significant shift of tone in this Psalm – where do you notice it? How would you describe the change or difference in tones?

I: What is the main complaint you see here from the Psalmist? If you had to sum up their feelings or experiences, how would you describe them?

I: Does this Psalm remind you of any other passages of Scripture? How does it feel familiar?

A: What has lament looked like for you? Is it something you have practiced? What grief or pain might God be inviting you to offer honestly to him (as the Psalmist does here)?

A: What has held you back from "letting it rip" in prayer with God? In other words, why is it often difficult to pray and talk with God with full honesty?

A: Verse 26 comes after the heavy dose of lament. But v. 26 is filled with petition and trust in God's character. Where, in your own lament or grief, do you need to boldly ask God for help?

-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<sup>1</sup>:**

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,...*