

DISCUSSION
GUIDE
BY
QUARTERLY

THE DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE FROM SCRIPTURE UNION

OCT | NOV | DEC | 2011

*Group
Discussion
Guide*

Extra

A SCRIPTURE UNION BIBLE READING PUBLICATION

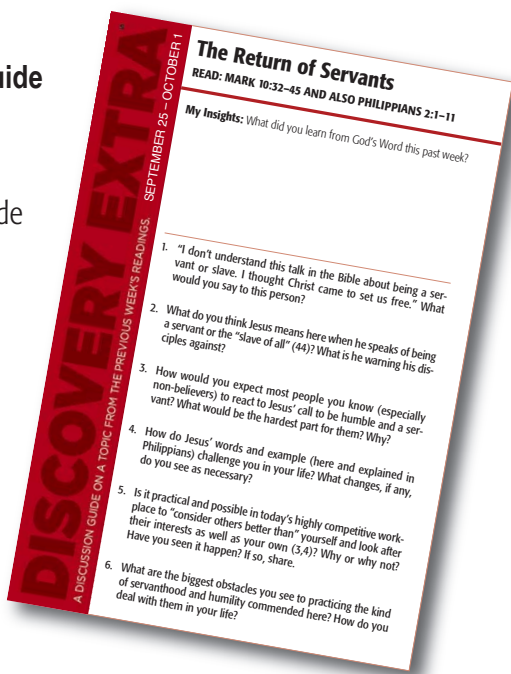
How to Use the *DiscoveryExtra* Discussion Guide

The **DiscoveryExtra** Discussion Guide is a companion to Scripture Union's **Discovery** daily Bible reading guide, published quarterly. The Discussion Guide features a set of questions based on a topic arising from the previous week's readings. It enables a small group or Sunday School class to share personal insights from their readings in God's Word that week and then discuss the topic, using the suggested questions.

Each week's **DiscoveryExtra** discussion page will look like this:

To get the most from your discussion time, just follow these 5 simple steps:

- ▶ **Prepare** to read and discuss God's Word. That may include worship and/or prayer.
- ▶ **Share** insights each has gained from the past week's readings.
- ▶ **Read** the passage chosen for your group's discussion this week.
- ▶ **Discuss** the passage, using the discussion questions as a guide.
- ▶ **Pray** about what you've learned from God's Word. You may use the Prayer Journal on the inside back cover of the **Discovery** daily Bible Reading Guide for personal prayer reminders.



The Return of Servants

READ: MARK 10:32–45 AND ALSO PHILIPPIANS 2:1–11

My Insights: What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "I don't understand this talk in the Bible about being a servant or slave. I thought Christ came to set us free." What would you say to this person?
2. What do you think Jesus means here when he speaks of being a servant or the "slave of all" (44)? What is he warning his disciples against?
3. How would you expect most people you know (especially non-believers) to react to Jesus' call to be humble and a servant? What would be the hardest part for them? Why?
4. How do Jesus' words and example (here and explained in Philippians) challenge you in your life? What changes, if any, do you see as necessary?
5. Is it practical and possible in today's highly competitive workplace to "consider others better than" yourself and look after their interests as well as your own (3,4)? Why or why not? Have you seen it happen? If so, share.
6. What are the biggest obstacles you see to practicing the kind of servanthood and humility commended here? How do you deal with them in your life?

Which “Way” Is Right?

READ: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15

My Insights: What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “I know that for Christians, Jesus is the right way to life with God, but other faiths have other ways, too—ways that are just as right.” How would you respond?
2. What do you think Paul means by “one mediator between God and men” (5)? Does he mean only one or something else?
3. What are some ways that people you live and work with think are legitimate ways to God (other than faith in Jesus)?
4. How comfortable are you with Jesus’ words “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John. 14:6). Explain your answer.
5. Have you ever explained or defended to a non-believer Jesus as the “One” who offers life with God? If so, how did they react?
6. How do you think Christians, individually or as a whole, could more effectively present Jesus as the one way to God? What keeps people you know from accepting that?

“I Can’t Help Worrying”

READ: LUKE 12:22–34

My Insights: What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “I know it’s wrong to worry about having what I need, but I can’t help it. What can I do?” How would you answer this person?
2. What do you think Jesus means by not worrying about our food, health, clothing, etc.?
3. Most believers plan and prepare for the future in some way. What does Jesus’ call not to worry about the future mean for things like insurance and retirement funds?
4. What, if anything, do you tend to worry about? How might this passage help you?
5. What would you say are the dangers of focusing on the things of life Jesus mentions here? Have you experienced any?
6. How can one such as you resist the temptation (and encouragement from others) to “worry” about the things of life? How do you do it?

It's Hard to Keep Your Focus!

READ: 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-26

My Insights: What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "There's so much debate and new scholarship about the Bible today that I feel guilty that I can't keep up with it. Shouldn't a believer try to do that?" What do you think?
2. What would you say is/are the most important thing(s) a believer should try to keep focused on?
3. Paul uses the example of soldiers and athletes who have to keep focused on their missions. What are some of the things that tend to distract you from your "mission" to grow in and share your faith in Jesus?
4. How can you avoid or overcome the distractions you mentioned above? What do you do to try to keep focused?
5. Do you think you generally "correctly handle the word of truth" (15)? What in your life or experience works against that?
6. Do you know anyone who is an exceptionally well "focused" Christian? If so, tell why you say that and how they are able to be that way.

Why Is the Bible So Special?

READ: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10–17

My Insights: What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "The Bible is a book by humans about humans so I don't see why people think it is so much more important than most other great books." How would you answer this person?
2. How would you summarize or describe the characteristics of the Bible given here? What is it said to be "good for"?
3. How did you come to have your current view of the Bible and its role in your life?
4. In what way is the Bible special to you and used in your life? How is that evident? What makes it special and so used?
5. What would you say is the view that most non-believers you know have of the Bible? How is it different from what Paul says here?
6. Do you think most Christians you know share Paul's view of the Bible? Why or why not? If not, what difference would it make if they did?

Living the “Good Life”

READ: TITUS 3:1–15

My Insights: What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “My idea of a ‘good life’ is to enjoy myself while I can, love my family and friends and do some good for the world before I die. That’s what life is all about.” How would you reply?
2. What are the elements of “a good life” that Paul mentions here? What would you add, if anything?
3. How do most people you know define a “good life”? How does this compare with Paul’s and other descriptions of a good life you know of in the Bible?
4. Do you know (or know of) someone who is actually living a “good life”? If so, share.
5. In your opinion, do most Christians you know live what Paul considers a “good life”? If not, why not?
6. How do you go about trying to live a “good life”? What most hinders you? What most helps you?

“Please, Lord, Help Us!”

READ: DANIEL 9:1–19

My Insights: What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “Our church is in a real bad situation right now. We desperately need God’s help. What’s the best way to pray for it?” How would you reply?
2. What are the elements of Daniel’s prayer that you see here? Do any surprise you? If so, explain.
3. We know that Daniel lived a righteous, faithful life, yet his prayer included himself in the confession of his people’s sin. Is this kind of confession appropriate when we pray for our church or country? Explain why or why not.
4. How might Daniel’s pray be a model for your prayers for your church, family or nation? Give a specific example if you can.
5. When you pray asking for God’s help, what characteristics of God’s nature are most important to you? Explain your answer.
6. Have you (or has someone you know) ever prayed such a solemn, desperate prayer? What was it about? How did God respond?

“Don’t Shoot the Messenger”

READ: EZEKIEL 2:1–3:15

My Insights: What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “I’m really discouraged. No one really listens to me when I talk about my faith. I feel like I’ve failed God.” What would you say to this person?
2. How did God expect Ezekiel’s message to be received? How did God prepare Ezekiel for the rough reception he’d receive?
3. If God were to send you to speak to Christians in this country, what do you think the message might be? Explain why. How do you expect it would be received?
4. God described his people then as “rebellious” and “stubborn” (3,4,7). How do you think he would describe the church in our country today? Explain why you say that.
5. Do you believe that God still calls and appoints people to speak his message, especially of the need for repentance, to Christians today? If so, can you give an example?
6. Have you ever had the experience of sharing your faith and meeting scorn or rejection? If so, share. What is the measure of success (11)? Did you consider yourself “successful”? Explain.

How's Your Shepherd?

READ: EZEKIEL 34:1–16 AND ALSO JOHN 10:1–18

My Insights: What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "Pastors are only human. I don't expect any more from them than I do from myself." Do you agree with this attitude? Explain.
2. How would you summarize the fault(s) of the "shepherds" (religious leaders) of Israel and the consequence the people suffered?
3. Who do you recognize as a "shepherd" or shepherds for you? For Christians in this country? From this passage, how would God rate them? Explain.
4. In what ways would you say Christians in this country have suffered from poor shepherding? How is it evident (consequences)? What suggestions for improvement would you make?
5. Where do you see the "shepherds" you know measuring up or falling short of Jesus' self-giving, caring standard as the "Good Shepherd"?
6. How can Christians like you help and encourage your "shepherd(s)" to better fulfill their role? What do you do now in that regard?

The Secret to a “Care-free” Life

READ: PSALM 91

My Insights: What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “I believe in God’s care, but there’s so much danger and uncertainty in the world. Anyone who is aware of things can’t help but be worried much of the time.” Do you agree? Explain.
2. What do you think it means to “dwell in the shadow of the Most High” (1)? How do you do that? What have you experienced as a result?
3. The promises in this psalm are quite exceptional. Do you (can you) take them literally? If not, how do you understand them?
4. Is a “care-free” or “worry free” life really possible? If so, what do you think is the “secret” to it?
5. How do people you know try to manage their worries and fears? How successful are they? What would you tell them if you could?
6. How do you cope with the inevitable fears, dangers and worries of your life? How successful would you say you are?

Can You Really Know God?

READ: PSALM 76 AND ALSO JOHN 14:1–14

My Insights: What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "God is a real mystery to me. I don't really think there is any way to really know him—or much about him." Do you agree? Explain.
2. What are some of the major things you learn about God from this psalm? Are any new, surprising, or disturbing? If so, explain.
3. Where do most people, other than believers like you, get their knowledge (accurate or not) about God? Where do you get yours? What do you know of God?
4. What do you think most people you know would claim to "know" about God? What, if any, would be accurate?
5. Jesus said that if we have seen him, we have seen God, the Father (John 14:9). What are the most significant things you have learned about God from Jesus?
6. How would you explain to someone the difference between knowing God and knowing about God? Why is there a difference and why is it important?

In the Hands of an Angry God

READ: PSALM 79

My Insights: What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "I'm afraid to get God angry with me because if I do, I know I'm in big trouble." What would you say to this person?
2. Why did the psalmist think that God was angry with these people? How was God's anger shown?
3. Do you think God still gets angry with his people today? If not, why not? If so, what provokes God's anger towards us?
4. In this psalm, God's people were suffering acutely from his anger. Do you see any evidence of God's anger toward his people—or people in general—today? If so, explain.
5. Have you ever felt that God was angry with you? If so, share from that experience. How did you handle it?
6. How does one best deal with a feeling of anger from God? How did the psalmist deal with it?

Preparing for Judgment Day

READ: REVELATION 20:7-15 AND ALSO MATTHEW 25:31-46

My Insights: What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "I don't believe in the judgment. God loves everyone and will make a way for them all to 'pass his test' somehow." Do you agree? Explain your answer.
2. How would you describe this judgment scene? Does anything surprise or offend you? If so, share.
3. Do most people you know believe in this kind of judgment? If not, how does their view compare and contrast with this one?
4. The dead are judged according to "what they had done" (12,13). What would you tell someone who is confident that, judged on that basis, they would "pass"?
5. How does this view of judgment set in your mind alongside that of a loving God? What separates "sheep" from "goats"?
6. How do you feel at the prospect of standing before God at the last judgment? What hope do you have to escape the fate described here in Revelation? What hope can you share with someone else?

**There is no Group Study for December 25-31.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

Notes

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