

As we begin 2020 we are provided a chance to evaluate the past and have hope for the future by focusing on what's close to the heart of God.

BIBLE STUDY | TIER 1 DISCIPLESHIP | Isaiah 66:1-2

Jan 5, 2020

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: AT A GLANCE



INFORMAL: (8 minutes)

Take attendance with the LEAD App and ask guests to complete a connection card. Allow for informal conversation with your group but be prepped to transition. REVIEW Memory Verse (Hebrews 4:13). This month we add Hebrews 4:14.



INTRODUCTION: (7 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: If 2020 could be different than 2019 what would you change?
PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire, see, understand, & live the truth.
READ: Isaiah 66:1-2 out loud and then give some background.



DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHAT is Heaven and earth to God? WHAT questions does God ask?
WHO does the Lord look on with favor?



INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (4 min)

WHAT is God communicating to His people in His description of Heaven & earth?
WHAT does it mean to be contrite in Spirit & to tremble at God's Word? WHAT would be the opposite of these?
WHY would God refuse the worship of someone who does all the right things on the outside but does them because they are trying to earn God's favor or they feel like they are doing God some kind of favor? WHY would God accept those who are contrite and tremble at His Word?



GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (4 min)

WHEN you are faced with your own personal brokenness/difficulty do you tend to try harder to fix it or do you first seek God and acknowledge your need for Him? WHY?
Is there anything you want to be different in 2020 compared to 2019 in your spiritual life?
HOW might humility impact the way you approach this kind of change in your life?



ACTIVITY: (10 min)

EXPLAIN: Use the APTAT handout to walk through 1 or 2 common struggles/areas of brokenness in your students lives listed on the handout. Students have done this a few times already (one at Fall Retreat and one on Refuel recently...see Christmas Tree Decorations).



COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study & the activity... How can we pray/encourage you this week? How can we hold you accountable this week?
PRAY: Spend time praying for each other. ENCOURAGE them to follow up with each other.

January's Memory Verse

Hebrews 4:14

Provided Supplies

APTAT
Handout

Sermon Connection

Today's Discussion is not specifically tied to Owen's Message.



Emmaus Connection

When a connection is being made to our discussion we will outline that here.

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: EXPANDED

INFORMAL: (8 minutes)

Take ATTENDANCE with the LEAD App.

Ask GUESTS to complete a CONNECTION card. Find ways to learn about the guest.

Allow for informal CONVERSATION but be prepped to TRANSITION to allow time for Bible discussion & community. REVIEW this month's Memory Verse (Hebrews 4:13).

INTRODUCTION: (7 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: If 2020 could be different than 2019 what would you want to change?

- *Their answers do not necessarily need to be spiritual in nature. Try to get everyone involved in answering the question.*

EXPLAIN: We will use the DIG Method as always to study Scripture. Today is about learning how to study the Bible. **(Note to Encourager...Today's primary goal of the discussion is designed to help students learn how to study the Bible. With that being said, before you jump into the provided questions for each section try to get some input from the students as to the kinds of questions to ask. The DIG Method is simply the process of asking the right kind of questions. If it helps go ahead and explain the DIG Method.)**

- *The Dig Method is a series of questions one can ask about the Scriptures to arrive at a proper understanding and response without the aid of devotions or the insights of others. Devos/study notes are not bad but it is important that Jesus followers learn how to be self feeders with the Word of God. DIG stands for Discover, Investigate, Go.*
- *Remember, in **Discover** we observe facts and info only. We **Investigate** by working through the meaning of these facts. In **Go** we think specifically how to respond to the Lord and His Word. This is a very different approach for many when reading the Bible. It will take time to understand and utilize.*

PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire, see, understand, and live the truth.

- *We never want to approach God's Word like we approach books we read for school/learning. We are not merely acquiring information. We are encountering words that are alive and change people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's position ourselves in humility and ask God for His help and to transform us!)*

READ: Isaiah 66:1-2 out loud then give some background.

Isaiah 66:1-2 *Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? 2 All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

BACKGROUND: God is the powerful Creator of all things who loves His good creation. He longs for His people to humble themselves by acknowledging their neediness and brokenness, as well as, looks to His Word as their source of help and hope as it points them back to Him. Unfortunately, the people of God began to forget who God was. Instead of being a personal God that loves them He became some distant deity who they thought would be impressed with their external service/religion, & their temple. God is not impressed with our completed "to-do lists" of religious/heartless duties. He wants our affection and true worship.

DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHAT is Heaven and earth to God?

- *Heaven is His throne and earth is His foot stool.*

WHAT questions does God ask??

- *1) What is the house that you would build for me? 2) What is the place of my rest?*

WHO does the Lord look on with favor?

- *The one who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (4 min)

WHAT is God communicating to His people in His description of Heaven and earth? Does God need a house to dwell in or a place to rest?

- *God is reminding His people of His nature. He is a powerful creator. He is bigger than we can comprehend. He does not have any needs. He is sufficient in Himself. There is nothing we can do to help God or impress Him.*

WHAT does it mean to be contrite in Spirit & to tremble at God's Word? WHAT would be the opposite of these?

- *To be "contrite in spirit" is to be broken/remorseful over sin. To "tremble at God's Word" is to approach it with reverence. It is to feel the weight/significance that God has spoken and with what He has spoken. It is to understand your great need to know its truth and be changed by it.*
- *The opposite of "contrite in spirit" is to be blind to the significance of our sin. It is to think you are not that sinful, especially when compared to other certain people. The opposite of "trembling at God's Word" is to ignore it and think little of its importance.*

WHY would God refuse the worship of someone who does all the right things on the outside but does them because they are trying to earn God's love or they feel like they are doing God some kind of favor, or even worse, does them not for God but for people to see? WHY would God accept those who are contrite and tremble at His Word?

- *God sees our hearts/motives for everything we do. God is the creator of the universe. What could we do that would impress Him or help Him. This is hard to hear but God doesn't need us. The exact opposite is true. We NEED Him. The underlying factor in our hearts as to whether God refuses or accepts us or the things we do in His name is the battle between humility and pride. God rejects those who are impressed with themselves. God is near those who feel their desperate need for God and who celebrate in God's goodness and grace.*

GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (4 min)

WHEN you are faced with your own personal brokenness/difficulty do you tend to try harder to fix it or do you first seek God and acknowledge your need for Him? WHY?

- *The difference between the two is humility and pride.*

Is there anything you want to be different in 2020 compared to 2019 in your spiritual life?

- *There probably will be a variety of responses. (Pray and Read the Bible more, Be more obedient to parents, Share my faith with my friends, resist that "certain" temptation, etc.).*

HOW might humility impact the way you approach this kind of change in your life?

- *The temptation for many of us is when we see an issue of brokenness or disobedience in our lives we often try to fix it ourselves or try harder to overcome the struggle. This is pride at work in us. Humility first THANKS God for helping us see our inadequacies but secondly asks God for help to change us because we realize there is not enough will power/desire within us to make a lasting change. Thirdly, humility looks to God's Word for the help that He has already provided us.*

ACTIVITY: (10 min)

EXPLAIN: Use the APTAT handout (found at the end of this Discussion Guide) to walk through 1 or 2 common struggles/areas of brokenness in your students lives listed on the handout. Students have done this a few times already (one at Fall Retreat and one on Refuel recently).

COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study or other spiritual struggles... How can we **pray** for you? How can we **encourage** you this week? How can we hold you **accountable** this week?

- *Please use the above questions & **refrain** from stating, "Does anyone have any prayer requests?" This is too general & doesn't ask the student directly about spiritual issues. Until your group develops greater community invite students to connect with you individually.*

PRAY: Spend time in prayer as a group.

- *This will depend upon the life of your small group and the willingness of the individuals. A big win would be that everyone gets prayed for and every person prays. However, if your group isn't there yet take small baby steps throughout the year.*

ENCOURAGE: Pray for each other & check in with each other for encouragement & accountability.

- *As the adult encourager set the tone and be the lead prayer warrior this week. Give them an example to follow by checking in with your small group via text, GroupMe, or whatever means your small group has adopted for regular communication.*

POST SMALL GROUP STUDENT CONNECTION

CONNECT: With your small group or the students as individuals this week by...

- *Create a jpg (picture) through YouVersion App for the verse Isaiah 66:1-2 and share it with your small group.*
- *Follow up with students about the kinds of things they want God to help spiritually in 2020. Send them prayers via text. Encourage them in these God honoring/grace filled efforts.*

Using the Word of God & Prayer For Trusting God in Your Needs/Longings/Brokenness

The Acronym **A.P.T.A.T.** is helpful when fighting to trust God in our time of need. It helps us use the Word of God/Prayer to put your faith in action in regards to any number of the struggles/doubts that you may face.

Admit you can do nothing without God. **John 15:5** "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Pray for help. **Psalms 50:15** "call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

Acronym I.O.U.S. is helpful when knowing how/what to pray.

- **Incline** my heart to you, not to prideful gain or any false motive. (Psalm 119:36)
- **Open** my eyes to behold wonderful things in your Word. (Psalm 119:18)
- **Unite** my heart to fear your name. (Psalm 86:11)
- **Satisfy** me with your steadfast love. (Psalm 90:14)

I trust in a specific promise. **Proverbs 3:5-6** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Act and walk in obedience. God is giving you grace to do this.

Philippians 2:12-13 "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

I thank God for his provision & goodness. **Psalms 106:1** "Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Scripture Promises & Character Traits of God for our Needs

Loneliness

Psalms 139:7-10 "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me."

Confused / Making Hard Decisions

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Feeling Worthless / Unlovable

Psalms 139:13-18 "13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!"

Anxiety/Fear

Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you: do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Depression / Broken Hearted / Sad

Psalms 34:18 "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Loving Difficult People

Luke 6:27-29 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold"

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners (enemies), Christ died for us."

Temptation / Struggling With Sin / Rebellion / Peer Pressure

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 "12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

1 Peter 5:8-9 "8 Be alert & of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

Hebrews 4:14-16 "14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Making Sense of Trials & Difficulty

James 1:2-4 "2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Loving Difficult People

Luke 6:27-29 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold"

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners (enemies), Christ died for us."

Feeling Abandoned By God / Hopelessness

Lamentations 3:21-24 "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: 22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'"

Dealing With Loss of Any Kind / FOMO / Lack of Contentment

Psalms 73:25-26 "25 The Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Stressed Out

1 Peter 5:6-7 "6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Struggling to Be Obedient to God in Certain Ways

Mark 8:34-38 "34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.'

Spiritual Desires for the Things of God Seem Very Weak

Matthew 11:28-29 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

In Need of Forgiveness / I Have Sinned Too Much To Be Forgiven

1 John 1:9:12-1-2 "9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

Romans 5:20 "But where sin increased, grace increased all the more"