

# GROUPS

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## GENESIS GROUPS TARGET

The goal of your time together is to grow in your relationship with Jesus and to help others do the same. To disciple people well, there are three areas in which this guide is designed to help you engage with each other and with Scripture. Those areas are the **head**, the **heart**, and the **hands**.

### HEAD

God has created us to be intellectual beings, but this doesn't mean that we have to study the scriptures at an academic level to understand them. But we must process them with our minds if we want them to take root in our hearts.

### HEART

After we have sought to engage the scriptures with our minds, the truth of God's word begins to take root in our hearts. This is where real internal change begins to take place. We believe that scripture is alive and active (Hebrews 4:12) through the work of the Holy Spirit, and it is his work that changes us into a greater representation of Jesus.

### HANDS

This is where our faith begins to take action. It is the overflow of our hearts that prompts the action of our hands. As we let the truth of God do its work on our hearts the natural overflow is for it to be displayed in action. From our worship to our serving to how we engage with others, it is all an overflow of what is in our hearts.

#### **Leader note:**

*Remember, this is a guide, not a recipe. This is meant to help you guide your conversation with your group, but it does not have to be precisely followed. Trust the Spirit to guide your conversation & follow wherever he may lead it.*

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**Before jumping into Exodus, spend some time catching up as a group. After a little while, discuss anything from the weekend message that stuck out to you.**

## **HEAD**

The book of Exodus is fascinating, and it covers a very important time in Israel's history. As you would expect from its placement in the Scripture, it picks up the story of God's chosen people where Genesis stops. John Goldingay writes, *"...the promises of God made to Abraham found partial fulfillment within Genesis itself, but the book ends with the family of Jacob in the wrong country because of famine..."*<sup>1</sup> This is where Exodus begins.

1. **Without flipping through your Bible, share what you know about the book of Exodus. Try telling the story of Exodus as a group.**
2. **Who are the main characters in the book?**
3. **Where do you see evidence of God's power? Where do you see evidence of God's love for his people?**

## **HEART**

We often think of Exodus as the book where God rescues his people from slavery in Egypt. That's a climactic part of the story to be sure, but flip through the pages of Exodus and you'll notice that less than half of the book focuses on the actions God took to liberate his people. The rest of the story, told in chapters 19-40, is focused on God reestablishing his special relationship with the Israelites, even with their frequent rebellion and failure. **Exodus 19:5-6 says, "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."**

1. **How do you think the Israelites might have felt when they heard these words from God after being liberated?**
2. God made it very clear that he could have picked any other people group on the planet for this special calling. **What does it tell us about God's character that he honored his promise to Abraham regarding his descendants?**
3. God clearly states his intent for his relationship with the Israelites, that they would be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." **What do you think it means to be a kingdom of priests?**

## **HANDS**

Like the ancient Israelites, modern Christians are called to be a kingdom of priests. The Israelites in Exodus were set free from their oppressors to embrace their unique covenantal relationship with God, and we have been set free from slavery to sin by the finished work of Jesus. **1 Peter 2:9-10 says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."**

1. Ancient Israelites were called to live differently than neighboring people groups, and so are we. **How might embracing our identity as a "special possession" or "royal priesthood" of God lead us to live differently in our communities?**
2. **How might others benefit if we live differently than those around us?**

## **CLOSING**

Spend time praying for each other's needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Goldingay, John. *Exodus and Leviticus for Everyone*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.