



# Discussion Guide Explanation

## **Key Element Examples**

**Date of Sermon** 8/18/19

**Speaker** Tony Wolfenbarger

**Message Title** Overcoming Prejudice

**Key Texts** James 2:1-13

**Main Idea** It's not about changing the way you see others but changing the way you see yourselves.

## **Share Time**

Each week you want to focus on getting to know one another, catching up on life, having some fun, and of course eating! This should be very warm, causal, and communal. **Remember the goal is real community with real people.** So be real and invite others to do the same.

*Tips: It is important to consider the needs of your group members. On occasion, a personal need or crisis may warrant moving directly to prayer and encouragement and not leave time for a study. That is okay, God wants us to love one another and show it! But, be intentional about getting to and having ample time for discussion in order to facilitate transparency.*

## **Study/Discussion Time**

After everyone has connected, relaxed and shaken off the formalities of the week, it is time to transition into the study/discussion time. Gather everyone in your group together and begin the study or discussion.

### **Transition**

Know how you will transition to the discussion time. What will you say? Write it out.

- I suggest praying that the Holy Spirit would take control of the discussion, change our hearts, and help us experience the Father and Love of Christ at the very beginning of the discussion time.
- After prayer, this is where you can bring in the bottom line, main idea, or message topic.
- (For example, Say, "Last week at church, the message was that, 'God wants a movement not a monument to represent him.'" Or perhaps, "In our gathering last week, Tony brought up how our unity directly impacts our ability to properly represent Jesus."

**ME – Tell them something about yourself that relates or illustrates the topic.**

The ME part of the discussion is where you can find common ground with your group by sharing how you have faced or are currently facing the issue or similar issue. This does not need to be long. Just a minute or two.

*Tips: This could be something you have had to figure out, a struggle you are in, and insight you've had, a choice you made, a worry you have, an opportunity you are considering, a relationship you are in – family, relatives, work, friends, someone you love, a weakness you have.*

If you do not have a personal example, that is okay, move on to the “WE” part. But it is very important, when possible, to share your personal experience in the area if you have one. Doing so will help others talk about their personal lives more openly.

- Your story does not need to include goory or embarrassing details. It should be the catalyst for group members to find common ground around the topic and their own personal challenges in the areas.
- (For example, “I know in my head people form their opinions about God by watching how I talk and what I do, but I normally have trouble remembering that.”)
- The idea here is that you want people to find commonality with you and the issue. You want the group members thinking, “Me too!”

### *WE – Help group members realize we all have this issue in common.*

At this point, broaden the discussion to everyone in the group to find common ground around the topic, issue, or dilemma. This is where you want them to see the issue is relevant to them!

**Ask the group**, “Do you ever deal with this personally?” Or, “How does this show up in your life?” Or “Have you ever made the same mistake?”

You can also bring in individual situations of life here. How do children, students, parents, mothers, fathers, grandparents, employees, church members encounter the situation?

*Tips: Everyone loves to talk about others, but we really want them to talk about **themselves**. Someone might say, “The Catholics \_\_\_\_\_!” or, “My aunt Sally \_\_\_\_\_.” or bring up some other group that is an example of wrongdoing. We want to look in the mirror and see ourselves.*

*Since our group discussion is designed to promote personal transformation and multiplication, you will constantly need to direct them back to themselves and what is going on in their heart. The goal is personal transformation, not others condemnation.*

### *GOD - What does God say about it?*

This is where you turn to the **Scriptures**. Use the **Bible** verses that were used in the sermon and bring in others that clarify and complement the bottom line or main idea of the text and sermon.

The GOD part answers the question, “What do we need to know?” What does God say? how did Jesus live? How did characters in the Bible deal with it? Listen to Sunday’s message.

**You do not have to have all the answers.** You can talk to your pastors, elders, or group director for help. Just tell your group you are not sure. It is better to leave a question mark about an issue as to give a wrong answer.

### *YOU – What do you need to do? (The Heart, Head, and Hands)*

Now that you have heard what God has to say about it, what should you do about it? The YOU section answers the question, “So what?” Or, “Now What?”

Ask group members questions that deal with their **hearts** first and then their actions.

Sometimes we want to jump straight to what actions need to change, or what information we need to believe, but many times we overlook the heart. **We always need a heart change!** When our heart’s change, our actions will then follow. Asking several “Why” questions will help with drive down to the heart level.

### *Discussion - Be willing to share the tension in your own heart.*

Let the group talk, answer, and interact at this point.

Allow the Holy Spirit to move and bring conviction to your hearts. Often group leaders want to fill every silent space with talking. Be willing to let the group members think, reflect, and simmer a bit. After 30-60 seconds repeat the question. Give them time to process and listen to the Holy Spirit. Again, at this point, you will have to help them answer for themselves, not other people and groups. This is about God speaking to them about their lives, not God speaking to them about everyone else's lives.

- Why do you have a hard time in this area?
- Why do you feel that way?
- Why do you think that?
- Why do we act that way?
- What is God doing in your heart right now?

***Tips** – It is vitally important that leaders help their group members realize that any conviction they feel, or **experience** is the Holy Spirit showing up in their lives. They are experiencing God at that moment! Conviction and insight mean that the Holy Spirit is right there with you, he loves you, and he cares about what is going on in your lives. That is BIG!*

Help group members realize that those experiences with God, those convictions and insights, are the content of their witness and should be shared with others where they live, work, learn, and play. Celebrate when you experience Jesus!

### *WE – What would happen if we all got this?*

This is where you cast vision for your group, the church, and your families.

Questions you might ask:

- What would happen if all of us began to surrender this area to God's will?
- What would happen if your group modeled Christ in this way?
- How can we work together to make this a reality in our lives?
- What would happen if our group showed the love of Jesus to one unchurched family in our community each month?

### **Prayer & Encouragement**

Many times, our prayer requests become lists that we just rattle off to God about sicknesses and tragedies around us. It is okay to pray for our needs, sicknesses, and our loved ones. But that is normally the default and our prayers do not go much further.

In addition to praying for our needs, spend time praying for opportunities to **live out** what God has shown you in **this study**. Pray for opportunities to **share** what God is **doing** in your lives with others. Have each group member identify one or two people that that are **lost or out of church** and pray for them each week by name. Pray that God would give group members an opportunity to share what they just experienced with those people this week.



# Discussion Guide Template

Date of Sermon \_\_\_\_\_

Speaker \_\_\_\_\_

Message Title \_\_\_\_\_

Key Texts \_\_\_\_\_

Main Idea \_\_\_\_\_

## **Share Time**

Each week you want to focus on getting to know one another, catching up on life, having some fun, and of course eating! This should be very warm, causal, and communal. Remember the goal is real community with real people. So be real and invite others to do the same.

## **Study/Discussion Time**

### *Transition*

What will you say to transition the group and introduce the topic? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### *ME – Tell them something about yourself that relates or illustrates the topic.*

This could be something you have had to figure out, a struggle you are in, and insight you've had, a choice you made, a worry you have, an opportunity you are considering, a relationship you are in – family, relatives, work, friends, someone you love, a weakness you have.

The idea here is that you want people to find commonality with you and the issue.

What will you say? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### *WE -- Help group members realize we all have this issue in common.*

How do children, students, parents, mothers, fathers, grandparents, employees, church members encounter the situation?

What will you say or ask your group to bring out the issue's relevance, write it out? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*GOD -- What does God say about it?*

This is where you turn to the Scriptures to answers the question, "What do we need to know?" "What does God say?" "How did Jesus live?" "How did characters in the Bible deal with it?"

What does God say about it? Write it out a few statements to help you remember the points.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*YOU – What do you need to do? (The Heart, Head, and Hands)*

This is where you discuss application. Answer the "So what?" or "Now what?"

Discussion - Be willing to share the tension in your own heart. Let the group talk, answer, and interact at this point. Allow the Holy Spirit to move and bring conviction to your hearts. Ask WHY questions. Several WHY Questions.

Conviction and insight mean the Holy Spirit showing up in their lives. They are experiencing God at that moment! Celebrate when you experience Jesus!

*WE – What would happen if we all got this, did this, or demonstrated this?*

This is where you cast vision for your group, the church, and your families.

- "What would happen if your group modeled Christ in this way?"

Write out your idea to share with the group. \_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer & Encouragement**

*Prayer:*

- Pray for opportunities to live our what you experienced with God.
- Pray for opportunities to share what God is doing in your lives with others.
- Pray for people who are lost or out of church and pray for them each week by name.
- Pray for opportunities to share what they just experienced with those people this week.

**Next Meeting:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_