

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide – Know Your Enemy #4

He Is The Devil / November 22, 2020 / Pastor Paul Taylor



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | What are your Thanksgiving plans? Have you had to adjust those plans due to COVID-19? Share a cherished Thanksgiving family tradition and a favorite Thanksgiving meal side dish.
2. We just concluded our series Know Your Enemy. In the first week, we examined the origin of Lucifer and discussed pride and worship. In week two, we saw that Satan is the enemy of truth and we confront him with God's Word. In week three, we dug further into worship. And on Sunday, we addressed the devil as an accuser and slanderer of both ourselves and God. What have been your key takeaways from the series? In what way(s) do you feel more equipped to recognize, confront, and resist the devil?

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT) ⁸Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. The devil accuses God to us by manipulating and twisting truth and setting us up "against the knowledge of God." Examples of these accusations against God include:

God doesn't love you. | God is holding out on you. | God doesn't want you to experience joy. | God is absent or punishing you when you experience disappointment, pain, suffering, and even death.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NIV) – ³For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. ⁶And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

- a) Before you became a follower of Jesus Christ, or if you aren't one currently, what were some of your biggest objections with God? How did these objections originate?
 - b) The devil's accusations don't stop once we begin following Christ. As a believer, where do you still encounter and wrestle with these accusations against God?
 - c) What does it practically look like to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ"?
4. The devil's role as our accuser conjures up images of an unfolding courtroom drama. God is the judge. The devil is the prosecuting attorney. And we, as followers of Jesus, are the defendants on trial as our standing with God is examined. Keep those images in your mind as you discuss the following questions.

Revelation 12:10 (ESV) – ¹⁰And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

- a) The devil's accusations against us would be easier to dismiss if they were all obviously false. But his accusations often carry truth in the form of reminders of previous actions and decisions we regret,

current struggles with temptation and sin, or life circumstances that are not as we hoped for and planned. What accusations brought against you by the devil have the greatest capacity to wound?

- b) Pastor Paul taught that there's a significant difference between condemnation and conviction. Condemnation, often the work of the devil, distances us from God whereas conviction, the work of the Holy Spirit, draws us closer to God. Can you relate with this distinction? Do you have an example, either past or present, where a condemnatory accusation hindered your relationship with God or a convictive accusation led to growth in your relationship with God?
- c) As defendants on trial, we need a defense strategy and a defense attorney. Read 1 John 1:8-2:1, Romans 8:1-4, 33-34, and Colossians 2:13-14 together. What do these verses tell us about our legal defense and who serves as our defense attorney against the devil's accusations?

1 John 1:8-2:1 (NLT) – ⁸If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. ²¹My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous.

Romans 8:1-4, 33-34 (NLT) – ¹So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ²And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. ³The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit... ³³Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

Colossians 2:13-14 (NIV) – ¹³When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

TAKING IT HOME

- 5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 together. God has called us to be at war with our enemy, not just for the sake of ourselves, but for the sake of others. How can confronting and addressing the devil's accusations be part of serving as Christ's ambassador and helping others reconcile with God? If you have a personal story related to this, feel free to share that with your group.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (NLT) – ¹⁶So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! ¹⁸And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

6. As you close your time in Community Group, read and reflect on the words of David in Psalm 25:

Psalm 25 (NLT) – ¹O Lord, I give my life to you. ²I trust in you, my God! Do not let me be disgraced, or let my enemies rejoice in my defeat. ³No one who trusts in you will ever be disgraced, but disgrace comes to those who try to deceive others.

⁴Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow. ⁵Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. ⁶Remember, O Lord, your compassion and unfailing love, which you have shown from long ages past. ⁷Do not remember the rebellious sins of my youth. Remember me in the light of your unfailing love, for you are merciful, O Lord.

⁸The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. ⁹He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. ¹⁰The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands.

¹¹For the honor of your name, O Lord, forgive my many, many sins. ¹²Who are those who fear the Lord? He will show them the path they should choose. ¹³They will live in prosperity, and their children will inherit the land. ¹⁴The Lord is a friend to those who fear him. He teaches them his covenant. ¹⁵My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues me from the traps of my enemies.

¹⁶Turn to me and have mercy, for I am alone and in deep distress. ¹⁷My problems go from bad to worse. Oh, save me from them all! ¹⁸Feel my pain and see my trouble. Forgive all my sins. ¹⁹See how many enemies I have and how viciously they hate me! ²⁰Protect me! Rescue my life from them! Do not let me be disgraced, for in you I take refuge. ²¹May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you. ²²O God, ransom Israel from all its troubles.

- a) As he experienced suffering and turmoil, David battled accusations against both he and God. Based on Psalm 25, what would you say are David's tactics in this battle?

- b) Pray the words of this Psalm back to God. Have each individual focus on a small section, or even on a single word, of the Psalm that stand out to them. Then have them pray and ask God to use this truth to "train my hands for war" (see Psalm 144:1) as they resist and flee from the devil.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Remember Song Release | Rivers Crossing Worship released an original single titled Remember on Sunday November 15th! You can purchase Remember on iTunes or listen to it on Spotify and Apple Music. Purchase Remember on iTunes: <https://music.apple.com/us/album/remember-single/1538437741>
2. 2021 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God's voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, visit <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>.
3. Volunteering at Rivers Crossing | Everything we do as a church is made possible because of our incredible volunteer teams. If you'd like to find a place to serve, visit <https://riverscrossing.com/get-involved/>.