



## Discussion Guide Red Letter Challenge — Part 2 LEADER GUIDE

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Hey small group leaders! We are very excited to have started the “Red Letter Challenge” last week! Here is the **HEART** of this series: that our church family will see and embrace that the BEST thing for their lives is to SEE Jesus as He truly is, be YOKED to Him, find REST for their souls, and BUILD their lives on His word. Would you pray with and for your small group over the next 7 weeks?

**Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!**

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?  
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)

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**“How crushing must it be for the shepherd to pour living water,  
only to then just watch the sheep sip?”**

[Corky Calhoun]

**LEADER RESOURCES** || **Leader Note** We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
  - Jesus chose an important Jewish festival (Tabernacles/Booths) to extend one of His clearest and most gracious invitations. Jesus invites His enemies, opponents, and the religiously engaged crowds to be with Him in a specific way: to be with Him in a way that satisfies deep inner thirst and transforms us. Then remarkably, by the very nature of His presence, Jesus makes us into a river of blessing to others! The power of Jesus’ invitation comes by understanding what He means by believing in Him which He equates to drinking refreshing water when thirsty.
- **John 7:37-39 Commentary & What is Sukkot? (Tabernacles/Booths)**
  - Use this commentary and short video for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Productivity Starts With Doing Nothing**
  - This would be an encouraging resource to share with your group after you gather.

**ENGAGE & CONNECT** || **Leader Note** The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.

When you have unexpected extra time (i.e. an appointment was canceled, get off work early), how do you like to spend that time? What does that do for you?

**\*OPTIONAL\* DEVOTIONAL RECAP** || **Leader Note** If all or the majority of your group is using the personal devotional book, this is an opportunity to allow people to share the main thing they gleaned from the previous week’s readings. This should be kept short (30 seconds per person) so there is time for the discussion and prayer time. Another option is to allow people to share this through a group text/chat.

What is one thing that God taught you, convicted you of, or invited you to begin doing as you read the devotional book last week?

**BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note** Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call to him while he is near.”*  
[Isaiah 55:6]

**BIG IDEA || Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today’s reading and discussion.

Our doing flows out of WHO we are becoming AS we spend time with Jesus. Being with Jesus does something profound to us!

**PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note** Have someone read aloud the passage below as instructed. Remember, your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!

Have someone read aloud John 7:37-39. Have another person read the passage in a different translation.

1. *This is a good opportunity to go first!* Jesus said to those listening, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” What are some ways you might be “spiritually thirsty”, but haven’t really recognized it until now? *Spiritual thirst can show up as a lack of peace, purpose, or joy; by seeking fulfillment in distractions like social media, unhealthy relationships, or busyness. To identify this, we can examine our emotional state and priorities. Addressing it involves turning to Jesus intentionally through prayer, time in Scripture, and asking for the Spirit to fill those empty places.*
2. What might it look like in your daily life to come to Jesus and “drink”? *Answers will vary: coming to Jesus to drink involves regularly seeking Him through spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible study, and worship; depending on His strength in times of weakness; turning to Him for guidance and comfort instead of relying on worldly solutions. It’s an intentional act of trust in Jesus as the source of life!*
3. In the sermon we heard, *“There is a pace of receiving the grace of His presence.”* As you honestly reflect on the pace of your life, what could you change so that there is more time and space to receive the grace of God’s presence? Let’s encourage and hold one another accountable to this!
4. How does the metaphor of “living water” connect to your own spiritual need today? *“Living water” refers to the Holy Spirit and the life-giving relationship believers can have with God through Christ. We often seek fulfillment in temporary things like careers, material success, or relationships. The living water represents the eternal satisfaction found only in God’s presence, meeting our deep spiritual thirst for meaning, purpose, and peace.*
5. In the sermon we heard, *“Jesus’ presence transforms us from thirsty to overflowing.”* What does it mean for living water to flow from within us, shaping the way we interact with others? Be specific about people in your life! *The rivers of living water symbolize the Spirit’s presence and power within us, continually flowing and giving life. We are called to share the grace, love, and truth of God with others. The Spirit should impact those around us, leading to acts of service, compassion, and sharing the gospel. Our lives should be a source of spiritual nourishment and encouragement to others!*

6. Think about a particular challenge or spiritual dryness in your life. How can the promise of the Holy Spirit change your perspective as you face that? *Answers will vary: the Holy Spirit provides comfort, guidance, and strength during tough times. Knowing that the Spirit is an ever-present help can give believers hope and resilience, knowing we are not alone. The Spirit's work can refresh and renew our spirit, even in the face of adversity, leading to perseverance and deeper dependence on God.*
7. In what ways do you sometimes limit the Holy Spirit's flow in your life? How can you overcome this? *We limit the Spirit by ignoring His leading, living in unrepented sin, or being too focused on worldly concerns. Overcoming this requires a heart of repentance and surrender, inviting the Spirit to transform our desires and actions. It also means cultivating spiritual disciplines and being willing to step out in faith, trusting the Spirit's power to guide and enable us.*
8. How does the indwelling of the Holy Spirit challenge the way you view your identity? *The indwelling of the Holy Spirit means we are not just followers of Christ, but empowered representatives of His kingdom. This changes our identity from being merely human to being children of God, filled with His power and purpose. It calls for a higher level of responsibility to reflect Christ in all we do, recognizing that God's Spirit dwells within us.*
9. How does understanding the Holy Spirit as "rivers of living water" affect the way we should pray for others, especially those who don't know Christ? *Understanding the Holy Spirit as "rivers of living water" encourages us to pray not only for salvation, but also for the Spirit's transformative work in others' lives. This emphasizes that God's Spirit is the source of spiritual life and growth, so our prayers should focus on asking God to pour out His Spirit in powerful ways to bring renewal, conviction, and faith.*

**STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note** This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.

Here are two truths about being with Jesus: 1) Immediate and urgent concerns will make God seem small and distant to us. 2) Busyness and hurry will make God seem inaccessible to us. The good news, however, is that Jesus invites you to start where you are, not where you are not! Based on the Holy Spirit's wisdom, what is a step of obedience that you can take?

Below are some best practices to consider for your own life. **Remember, we must be decisive about spending time with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!**

- Have a "secret" place and a best time to be with Jesus!
- The slow reading of Scripture and prayer as presence = *Someone you are WITH*
- Explore and practice other habits that suit your unique personality!
- Do not make the goal information, "ah-ha's", or special experiences!
- Have a throughout the day "check-in" with God!
- Put healthy guardrails around technology!

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

**PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note** We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompt below!

## Being With Jesus

- Let's take a moment to think about how Jesus welcomes us each day into His presence, offering rest for our souls and strength for our spirits. When we draw near to Him, His love reshapes our hearts, His peace calms our worries, and His wisdom directs our steps.
- Let's pray together that we will not only hear God's invitation but respond with joy, allowing His presence to renew and change us in deep and lasting ways!

**MEMORY VERSE** || **Leader Note** *Through this series, we want to encourage your group to memorize the passage below, as it is one of the foundational truths upon which the "Red Letter Challenge" is based on. Psalm 119:11 tells us, "I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you."*

*"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock."  
(Matthew 7:24-25)*

**RLC RESOURCES** || **Leader Note** *Below are additional resources that you can share and/or use before, during, or after you gather. If you have any questions about this, please contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)*

- **Rock Bridge RLC Website** → [rockbridge.cc/red](http://rockbridge.cc/red)
  - This contains an overview video and links to a 40 day Bible reading plan, which complement and enhance the Red Letter Challenge series.
- **Personal Devotional Book**
  - These are NOT required for use with the discussion guides. Feel free to take 10-15 minutes of your group time to share highlights OR share through a group chat.
  - [HERE](#) is a free audio version available. NOTE: this was made by another church, so please disregard the specific language used by them at the beginning :)
- **Participant Assessment** → [HERE](#)
  - This free tool helps people discover how they're doing in the 5 targets: Being, Forgiving, Serving, Giving, and Going. It is recommended that people take this at the beginning of the series, so share the link via text or email with them.
- **Videos** → [HERE](#)
  - These short videos (6-8 minutes) can be sent to your group before you gather, watched at the beginning of your gathering, or sent to your group as a way to follow up the discussion. They are NOT the content of the discussion, just an enhancement!
- **Red Letter Disciple Podcast** → [HERE](#)
  - This is a podcast by the creators of the Red Letter Challenge. It does NOT go along with the series, but does have podcasts about discipleship that will equip and encourage you. This would be best for people to listen to on their own.