

# Island Group Discussion Guide

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Week of September 14, 2025

THRIVING IN BABYLON • WEEK 7

HUMILITY + RESPECT = PERSUASION • JAMES 3:9-10



## OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to work in our hearts
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and help us understand biblical humility
- Pray for hearts that respect others as image-bearers of God, even when we disagree
- Invite Jesus to reveal areas where we need to show more respect to difficult people
- Ask for courage to lay down our need to "win" arguments and trust God's control
- Pray for wisdom to be peacemakers who point others to Jesus rather than away from Him

## DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Sometimes bristle at people who cut us off in traffic or give us the wrong food at the drive-thru. What everyday situations tend to bring out disrespect in you?
- **Read James 3:9-10.** Pastor Charlie said this passage shows us *"it's not about the other person... it's about my tongue! My words! My heart!"* How does this challenge our natural tendency to focus on what others are doing wrong?
- Reflect on this statement: *"Biblical humility recognizes that everyone is born in the image of God. Biblical humility offers respect to everyone."* How does understanding that everyone bears God's image change the way we should treat people who disagree with us?
- Pastor Charlie said we have *"really messed up the idea of respect with the acceptance of beliefs"* and that many people think *"If I show respect for someone it means I affirm what they believe."* He called this *"a great lie from Satan."* Why is it so important to separate respecting a person from agreeing with their beliefs?
- Larry Osborne said this about Daniel and his friends: *"I find that their respectful attitude, words, and behavior were radically different from the anger and resentment that is so common among many of us today, especially when it comes to how we respond to those who are strongly opposed to our values and faith."* How do you see this playing out in our culture today? How should Christians be different? **Application question:** Who in your life is most challenging for you to show respect to right now? How might God be calling you to change your approach with that person?
- Consider this statement: *"Daniel's humble respect was tied to his firm belief that God is in control of who is in control."* How does believing that "God is



in control of who is in control" change the way we should respond to leaders or authorities we don't like?

- **Read Jeremiah 27:8-11.** How does this passage challenge our instinct to resist or fight against those in authority over us?
- **Read 1 Peter 2:13-17.** Pastor Charlie reminded us that Peter wrote this while Nero was literally putting Christians to death. What does this teach us about showing honor even to ungodly leaders?
- **Read Romans 13:1.** This passage makes it clear that all authority is from God. **Application question:** How can you show appropriate respect for authorities in your life (government, workplace, etc.) even when you disagree with their decisions?
- Pastor Charlie stated "*Jesus never told us to create a Christian nation. Jesus never said establish a Christian nation on my behalf. Jesus never said impose my standards for godly living upon non-believers.*" Instead, "*Jesus told us to win over the lost.*" How does this challenge or affirm your perspective on the role of Christians in politics and culture?
- When the New Testament church was birthed, the Roman Empire was at its peak with no political freedoms, no family values, sexual perversion as the norm, and active persecution of Christians. Yet "*the focus of the New Testament is entirely on changing hearts, not on changing governments or culture.*" What does this teach us about our priorities as Christians today?
- **Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26.** Think about how this passage calls believers to pour out God's mercy and grace so "*they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil.*" **Application question:** How does this change your prayers for people who oppose you or your values?
- **Read 1 Peter 3:15.** Pastor Charlie emphasized the complete verse, including "*yet do it with gentleness and respect.*" He said "*we cannot throw hand grenades at our enemies in the name of Jesus and claim we're loving our enemies.*" What are some "hand grenades" Christians throw that actually push people away from Jesus?
- Pastor Charlie said he used to think "*I have to win. The right thing is to win... God wants me to win.*" But he realized "*I don't have to win because He's already won. I don't have to win, and if I lose, He's still winning.*" How does this truth free us from the pressure to always be proven right?
- We were given this challenge: "*Do you want to win? If you want to win, quit fighting.*" Examples were fighting with coworkers, neighbors, people on social media, and authorities. **Application question:** What specific "fight" do you need to stop engaging in this week? How can you bless that person instead?
- Pastor Charlie concluded: "*We can't take up our cross and fight earthly fights. We can't take up our cross and win earthly battles. We are called to take up our cross and lay our life down. That's what following Jesus is all about.*" What does it mean practically to "lay your life down" rather than fight to win in your current relationships and circumstances?

## CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.