

PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT

**RACE, THE STORY OF GOD
& THE STORY OF AMERICA**

Precious In His Sight: Race, the Story of God, & the Story of America

© 2017 by Midtown Fellowship. All rights reserved.

Published by Midtown Fellowship

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, or by any storage and retrieval system—except for brief quotations for the purpose of review, without written permission from the publisher.

Scripture taken from THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION. ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

CONTENTS

<i>A Letter from Your Pastors</i>	5
<i>Introduction</i>	
Race, the Story of God & the Story of America	11
<i>Chapter 1</i>	
Slavery	17
Study Guide: Red & Yellow, Black & White	24
<i>Chapter 2</i>	
Civil War, Emancipation & Aftermath	29
Study Guide: On Earth As It Is In Heaven	38
<i>Chapter 3</i>	
Reconstruction & Jim Crow	43
Study Guide: The Privilege of Good Deeds	54
<i>Chapter 4</i>	
The Civil Rights Movement	59
Study Guide: Gospel Weapons that Disarm	74
<i>Chapter 5</i>	
Today is History	79
Study Guide: Today is History	94

A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTORS

We try to remind you regularly that pastoring you and our church family is a privilege and a joy. You guys are awesome. It's hard to explain how much we love you. So even as we are launching this series on a heated conversation like race, we do so with a lot of joy and confidence. And as we do, we wanted to give you some disclaimers.

1.) YOU CAN LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.

We are not coming after you. You are already faithfully walking in many of the applications we plan to talk about in this series. Because of your love for Jesus, you do a great job welcoming people in regardless of racial or cultural background. All of our churches have members of various ethnicities who are sharing life as family. We see you seeking to be sensitive to this issue. You express an uncommon eagerness to listen and learn. People often note how much fun our city-wide Gatherings are, where the diversity of styles and skin colors across our family is on full display.

The overall tone of this series will not be one of rebuke. Our hope is to simply continue growing together when it comes to racial issues.

Now culturally speaking, stepping into the current conversation about race is somewhat dicey. People have vehement, passionate and often polarized perspectives on all kinds of racial issues. Many of these are fueled by political agendas and clickbait that get attention by intentionally being rude and overstated.

Nuance isn't celebrated (or even considered) nearly enough in this conversation.

And that's exactly why we have to continue engaging in this conversation. It's both necessary and a beautiful missional opportunity. As Christians, we have tools and a perspective that the world needs to move toward the peaceful hope and unity that most desire (though the American church has frequently and painfully neglected these tools). There are real people in our society who are hurting and need gracious Christians armed with gospel mercy and biblical clarity to proclaim and embody the redeemed life formed only by the blood of Jesus.

Sure it will be risky, awkward and uncomfortable at times, but that's never stopped us before. Part of our blood-bought identity is entering into the mess of our broken world with gospel hope and helpfulness.

2.) DON'T ASSUME POLITICAL AGENDAS.

Conservative or liberal political leanings are not a prerequisite for this topic.

You can agree with everything we say in this series and everything the Bible has to say about race issues and still lean toward or hold conservative or liberal political values. We intend to look into what the Word of God has to say about race, oppression, justice, love and compassion and draw out applications for our current time and place. In fact, that's exactly what we always seek to do as a church family. Nothing we are doing here is a veiled attempt to get you to align with a political platform.

3.) RACE ISSUES CAN BE OBVIOUS TO SOME WHILE INVISIBLE TO OTHERS.

One of the biggest problems with injustice issues in general, and specifically racial issues in America, is that if you haven't experienced them, they often seem invisible to you. Meanwhile, if you have experienced them or observed them directly, their realness and detriment are so obvious as to demand urgent attention and immediate action.

If you find yourself thinking, "I really don't see it", that's okay. It might be good to remind yourself that a lack of insight and experience doesn't mean the problem doesn't exist.

If you find yourself thinking, “Why can’t you see this?”, that’s okay. It might be good to remind yourself that there are people who have never experienced, seen or dealt with what you are dealing with. And that doesn’t necessarily mean they hate you or don’t care. The best solution is for us to all faithfully work together to see them accurately and respond appropriately.

In light of this paradox...

4.) THIS BOOK, SERIES AND CONVERSATION COULD BE DIFFICULT AT TIMES.

There’s a decent chance that there will be ideas in this series that will be tough to swallow. We are going try our best, but there’s a chance one of our pastors may misspeak in a sermon. There’s a chance someone in your LifeGroup might say something that makes you shift in your chair

We’re becoming more and more convinced that there’s almost no way to venture into this conversation without some of these uncomfortable and awkward moments happening. And each of these moments will provide another opportunity to give each other the grace that we have all received from Jesus.

5.) WE INVITE YOU TO A NO YELLING POLICY (AND NO MOCKING, INSULTING, HATING OR ANY OTHER KIND OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS EITHER).

James 1:19-21 “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

Just to be clear, this goes for everyone. The Biblical call to listen is not a bully tactic to silence others and win arguments. All of us need a heavy dose of listening marked by mercy, meekness and understanding. Especially for people who think differently than us. And all of us need to be corrected at times.

6.) THE BOOK YOU ARE HOLDING IS SUPPLEMENTAL AND PRIMARILY HISTORICAL.

The book you are holding is a supplement to the sermon series. It details parts of the story of race relations in America and includes space for sermon notes and LifeGroup discussion guides. The sermons will primarily work through the story of God as it relates to race, whereas this book is meant to serve as an overview of the persistent race problems our country has experienced.

Without the story of God, we won't be theologically prepared to see the deepest issues and hold out the truest solutions.

Without the story of America, we will lack necessary perspective and understanding as to where our culture's current race issues came from and why they are often so hard to move past.

Just like your personal history had massive effects on shaping who you are now, our country's history has shaped our present situation in the same way. We've attempted to present historical facts with as little commentary as possible.

The goal in all of this is to help us see the historical connections that led to many of the problems we have inherited. We are not starting from a blank slate. Even a cursory knowledge of these issues can bring about understanding and help us make connections to the current problems we are experiencing.

The Bible calls all of God's children to stand with and speak for the oppressed, which means we must be aware of oppression's history and presence in order to start. Our request is that you read the historical content we've provided here while looking for ways these historical events might still be affecting lives to this day.

IN CONCLUSION

Someday there will be no more mourning, nor pain, nor death nor tears in our eyes. (Revelation 21:4) Someday there will be no more racism, or hatred, or oppression and injustice that have caused untold amounts of pain, mourning, death and tears.

And until that day, as God's people we are called to do justice; to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

So let us do it armed with Jesus' hope and love.

Let us scorn the discomfort of hard solutions as we pursue peace at any cost. Let us persevere in whatever good deeds Jesus calls us to with every comfort that God is responsible for the coming redemption of all things.

Grace and peace,

Your pastors at Midtown

INTRODUCTION:

RACE, THE STORY OF GOD & THE STORY OF AMERICA

*Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red & yellow, black & white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world*

It's a children's song, but it beautifully hints at the history-sweeping story of God.

We were created by God to be with Him, to love Him, to walk in whole relationships under His good authority. Instead of this, we chose a self-centered rebellion. We chose sinful self-reliance, shame, heartache, and relational conflict.

Ever since the sin of our first parents, God has been coming after us. His relentless pursuit stopped short of nothing, even of limiting Himself to human flesh and being brutally murdered by the traitors he created. All of this He did because Jesus loves the little children, as well as the sinful, peace-shattering adults they turn into.

*Red & yellow, black & white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world*

The story of God is that by His grace He is saving people from every nation, race and tongue to be a part of His eternal family. Every skin color

and distant tribe is included in His rescue mission, as the Bible makes God's love for the nations unmistakably clear. The book of Revelation gives a picture of this multi-ethnic people praising Jesus at the end of time, when all walls erected between them are torn down fully and finally:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 7:9-10

When it comes to America's history with race, it is fraught with problems. Centuries of injustices have created all sorts of issues that you and I have inherited today. These problems have been dropped into our lap and help explain many of the things that are currently happening in our society.

THE CHASM

The racial problems that we have inherited explain an awful lot of the current tension in our society. Something happens—whether it's a shooting, a viral video, a protest, or another inflammatory comment by another political figure.

Different people look at the same events, and often come to very different conclusions. *What did you see? Who was at fault? Who's right and who's wrong? What do you think about _____ (fill in the blank with the latest controversy)?*

The same events, seen through different eyes, can yield wildly different interpretations. These differences often lie among racial lines, because different races have had vastly different experiences in this country over our existence as a nation.

The recent events that have brought racial tension to the surface in America are nothing new. They are only the latest occurrences in a long

history of racial pain, tension and strife. What the vast differences in reaction along racial lines tell us more than anything is that America is still deeply divided by race. Especially between white Americans and black Americans, because we share the most painful history.

Even to this day racial separation is a significant issue. We largely operate in different social circles, live in different neighborhoods, go to different schools, and even belong to different churches. Our family get-togethers not only look different from one another, they feel different—right down to the stories that are told, the shared history of our ancestors, and the extent to which race is a topic of conversation. These differences in experience and worldview seem to be lit on fire when a controversial event happens in our country.

All of this sometimes leads to the feeling that there is an uncrossable chasm between our races. In every period of our history there has been pain, mistreatment and racial division. Our society, try as it might, does not seem to have the necessary tools to adequately deal with this chasm.

Point to how much progress has been made on racial issues, how much better things are now than they were in even recent history, and you might just get a pained look from a black American. They may nod in agreement, but then have a list of a dozen instances where all is still not equal.

Bring up the centuries of mistreatment and abuse of African Americans to a white American, and they may do a mental shrug and settle into a sense of helplessness. Yeah, all those things were terrible, they might think. But that was a long time ago, and I had nothing to do with any of that...so what am I supposed to do?

THE THING ABOUT CHASMS

Racial issues can feel as hopeless as any. The divide seems to widen across a lot of painful history and settle in over time, leading to despair that any true and lasting reconciliation could ever happen. For Christians, however, there is a thing about chasms like this one.

Jesus doesn't do chasms.

He did not come to save a white person and a black person, only for them to draw an invisible line in the sand between them and stand there silently thinking, “You’ll never understand.” No—He came to make us family. He came to bring the story of God to America, of all places, right in the midst of our centuries of racial strife. Lines in the sand are not an option when we’ll share eternity together worshipping God in a sea of diversity.

The church has an incredible opportunity in this time and place, because we have God-given resources and motivation to deal with these historic problems when the world around us doesn’t. We have the compelling truth to tell with our lives that no blood runs deeper than Jesus’ blood.

Upon visiting a recent Baptism Gathering, one guest to our church made an incredible remark. He said:

“I wish the rest of the world could see what’s happening here. The media makes it seem like there is no hope that people from different backgrounds and races can live together in harmony. But whatever is happening here is proof that’s not true.”

This is the goal family—for us to continue to grow into the sort of reconciled community that the world needs and wants to see.



CH SLAVERY

1



It takes a lot of work to build a country. It's not easy to erect a society out of thin air. The first solution to this predicament was indentured servitude. Poor European immigrants would get a journey to America if they agreed to work for a few years to pay it off. The first 19 Africans to reach the colonies arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619, brought by Dutch traders who had seized them from a captured Spanish slave ship. They joined in the life of indentured servitude with their English predecessors, but were freed at the end of their agreement.

The first known instance of permanent chattel slavery happened in Virginia in 1640. Two white men and an African named John Punch tried to flee early from their indentured servitude and were caught. The white men were sentenced to an additional four years of service, but John Punch was sentenced to slavery. This event marked the first legal sanctioning of slavery in the English colonies, and was one of the first legal distinctions made between Europeans and Africans.

NUMBERS & NAMES

Over the few hundred years that slavery existed, it's estimated that 350,000 Africans were brought to America to be slaves (this number does not count the vast numbers that died at sea or the many more sent to sugar colonies in the Caribbean or Brazil). But of course, slaves

reproduced themselves, birthing their own offspring into lifelong slavery. So by 1860, the estimated total slave population in America was 4 million.

4 million slaves. That’s almost the entire current population of South Carolina. And each one of them had a name.

Slavery as an institution was enshrined in the Constitution of the United States. Ratified in 1789, the document stated in Section 9 of Article I that it was forbidden to ban the import of slaves before January 1, 1808. That’s basically the equivalent of saying, “We know this is awful, but we’re gonna need at least 20 more years...”

The image shows a handwritten ledger with columns for names, descriptions, and prices. The title at the top reads 'LEDGER OF 118 SLAVES SOLD IN CHARLESTON'. The entries include names like 'John', 'Mary', 'Sarah', and 'James', along with descriptions such as 'male', 'female', and 'child'. Prices are listed in dollars and cents, ranging from \$100 to \$825. The ledger is dated '1811' and signed 'James Smith'.

LEDGER OF 118 SLAVES SOLD IN CHARLESTON

Section 2 of Article IV made it illegal for states to free slaves who fled into them for protection, requiring them to return runaways to the states they fled from as property. The so-called Three-Fifths Compromise was negotiated by James Madison to allow slaves to count for $\frac{3}{5}$ of a person in counting a state’s population, thus giving states with higher numbers of slaves more substantial Congressional representation.

In other words, America’s government system began by stating that an African slave was not fully a person. They were in some way lesser than their white counterparts. As we will see, this sentiment will carry forward. In some overt ways and some subtle ways, this message will continue to be communicated to black Americans and white Americans alike.

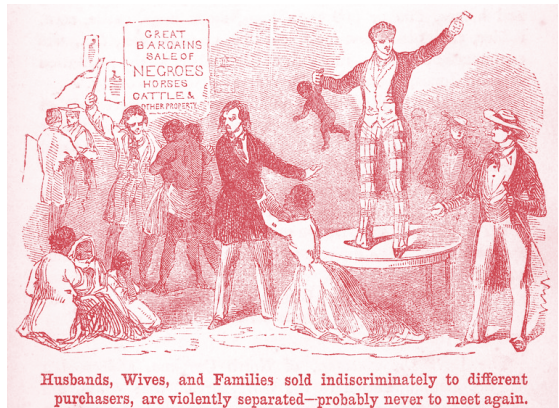
These image bearers of God were taken to a foreign land and forced to do tireless, backbreaking work sun up to sundown. Some had a quota of how many pounds of cotton they had to pick each day. All day long they worked under the shadow of the prominent whipping post standing right beside the cotton scale, ready for it’s next victim.

Many slaves were whipped, shackled, beaten, burned, mutilated, or branded as punishment for disobedience or any perceived infraction. Or worse yet, many were abused to simply re-assert the dominance of the master.

Female slaves lived with the fear of knowing that many of them would be taken advantage of by one of their male overseers. Many slave masters would rape their female slaves without recourse, and the mixed-race children would become slaves. The owners did not consider their own flesh and blood worthy of freedom if it was mixed with an African's DNA, and these raped women were left with a constant reminder of their assault.

In addition to the extremely harsh treatment, slaves lived in constant fear of being ripped apart from their own family members in the domestic slave trade. Husbands were separated from wives, children from their parents, brothers from sisters—just like that, to never see them again. Many owners treated slaves no differently than they treated cattle, having no compassion for their wailing cries while being permanently sold away from family members. The gift of bringing a child into this world was a peculiar burden for the millions leading a life they would never choose.

For many slaves, church was the only place they were allowed to gather with their people. They sang and cried and prayed for release from their bondage. It wasn't much, but it was cherished time. Unless an owner caught wind of a slave revolt, and then they weren't even allowed the refuge of gathering with God's people. Learning to read, write or preach was often outlawed, for fear that they were proclaiming rebellion when they gathered to worship. Even the smallest outlets of hope were under constant threat of being ripped away.



CARTOON DEPICTING A SLAVE SALE

STRIPES THAT WON'T HEAL

There was a runaway slave named Gordon who escaped from a Louisiana plantation in March of 1863. In order to mask the bloodhounds who were chasing him, he took onions from his plantation and rubbed them all over his body. Each time he crossed a creek or swamp, he'd take the onions out of his pockets and reapply the pungent scent. He fled over 40 miles during the course of ten days, finally reaching freedom at a Union army camp in Baton Rouge.

When Gordon (also known as “Whipped Peter”) arrived at the camp he underwent a medical examination, which revealed dozens of raised, vicious scars scattered across his back. Itinerant photographers stationed at the camp produced a haunting photograph of his back that ended up being circulated around the country.



GORDON “WHIPPED PETER”

The June 12th issue of *The Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper, had this to say about the picture:

“There has lately come to us, from Baton Rouge, the photograph of a former slave—now, thanks to the Union army, a freeman. It represents him in a sitting posture, his stalwart body bared to the waist, his fine head and intelligent face in profile, his left arm bent, resting upon his hip, and his naked back exposed to full view. Upon that back, horrible to contemplate! is a testimony against slavery more eloquent than any words. Scarred, gouged, gathered in great ridges, knotted, furrowed, the poor tortured flesh stands out a hideous record of the slave-driver’s lash. Months have elapsed since the martyrdom was undergone, and the wounds have healed, but as long as the flesh lasts will this fearful impress remain. It is a touching picture, an appeal so mute and powerful that none but hardened natures can look upon it unmoved.”

The surgeon of the First Louisiana regiment sent the photo to his brother in Baton Rouge with the following remarks:

"I send you the picture of a slave as he appears after a whipping. I have seen, during the period I have been inspecting men for my own and other regiments, hundreds of such sights—so they are not new to me; but it may be new to you. If you know of anyone who talks about the humane manner in which the slaves are treated, please show them this picture. It is a lecture in itself."

Those stripes on Gordon's back, though certainly physical, are also symbolic of the many forms of lashes ripped across the backs of an entire race of people. The lashes were mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual. The indignity of being treated as subhuman does not merely vanish with a proclamation of freedom. Just like the scars on Gordon's back, they rise up and settle into their space over time.

The system of slavery that America was built upon also affected its white citizens by indoctrinating them with the belief that skin color somehow denotes the value of a person—that to be white was normal while having darker skin came to be seen as lesser than.



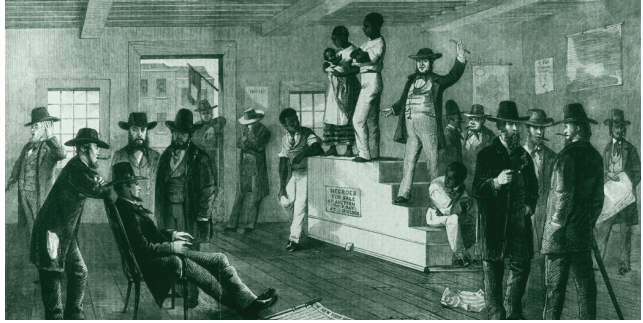
PHOTO OF AN ACTUAL SLAVE SHIP

Notes:

Notes:

CH 1

STUDY GUIDE: RED AND YELLOW, BLACK AND WHITE



SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:26-28, 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4 and 28:14; Psalm 22:25-28, 45:17, 67:1-7, 96:10 and 98:2; Isaiah 49:5-6, Matthew 24:14, Revelation 5:9-10 and 7:9-10

QUOTES:

"Isn't it amazing that we are all made in God's image, and yet there is so much diversity among his people?"

Desmond Tutu

"If you don't like diversity, you are going to hate heaven. It's the one place where no one will fight over whose cultural expressions are best suited for God's work. At the throne of a resurrected Jewish carpenter [...] a radiant sea of people from every tribe and tongue [will cry] out in perfect harmony."

Dan Dewitt

"All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you."

Psalm 22:27

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Read Genesis 1:26-28. Where do you see examples in our society where the imago dei is being denied? (We mentioned racism as one example in the sermon. Do you see others?)

Read 1 John 2:15-17. In what ways are racism and prejudice rooted in the “sinful pride of life”?

Reflect: Think back and describe your life experiences with people from different races and cultures. (Consider the following: Have you/ do you currently live or work in a place where you are a minority? Does your social network include people from various racial and cultural backgrounds?)

- What types of people are you most likely to see yourself as superior to? (Include but don't limit your answer to race.)

- What types of people are you most likely to see yourself as inferior to? (Include but don't limit your answer to race.)

- Have you had any particularly damaging experiences with people (or a person) from a different race or culture? How were you affected by it?

Read Revelation 5:9-10 and 7:9-10. Picture what John describes. Compare and contrast it with what you see in our culture.

- If our church become a full reflection of the diversity in our city, what changes do you think this would bring about? Which of these changes might make you uncomfortable?

Pray for our church to reflect the diversity of our city.

Pray that we would gladly accept any changes needed for us to grow in this direction.

Pray that we would continue to grow in being willing to lay down our cultural preferences to help others feel more "at home."



CH

CIVIL WAR, EMANCIPATION & AFTERMATH

2



What did it take to free the estimated 4 million slaves in America?

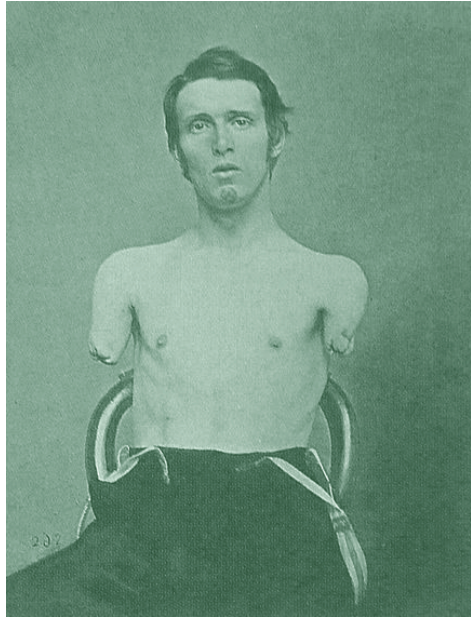
The bloodiest war in American history.

A man named Abraham Lincoln ran for president in 1860, where he and fellow Republicans supported banning slavery in all U.S. territories. Slavery had already been abolished in many northern states, and there was fierce debate on its expansion to western states. Southern states viewed this growing anti-slavery sentiment as a violation of their constitutional rights, citing the Fugitive Slave Clause of the Constitution which stated that runaway slaves who escaped to another state had to be returned to their owner. Many believed that slaveholding was a constitutional right due to this clause.

The slave states were quickly losing political power to an increasingly powerful North, and before Lincoln's inauguration in 1861 seven states had declared their secession from the Union and joined to form the Confederate States of America. These original seven states all depended on cotton-based economies—South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas (more states would join later). The first six states to declare secession had the highest percentages of slaves in their populations, a total of 48.8 percent.

The first major military event that sparked the Civil War happened right here on our South Carolina soil at Fort Sumter in Charleston. On April 12th, 1861 the first shots were fired as Confederate forces advanced on Union troops stationed at the Fort, and on that fateful day, a war was born.

The war ended in 1865, and estimates state that approximately 750,000 soldiers lost their lives. In addition, an unknown but large number of civilians died. The war accounted for more deaths than all other U.S. wars combined.



**ONE IN THIRTEEN VETERANS WERE AMPUTEES
AN ESTIMATED 60,000 MEN LOST LIMBS IN THE WAR**

A LITTLE SPEECH AND A LONG PAPER

Halfway through the bloodshed of the Civil War, on January 1st 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. A single stroke of his pen changed the legal status of millions from “slave” to “free.” Practically what this meant is that as soon as a slave escaped the control of the Confederate government by either fleeing or being reached by Union troops, the slave became legally and physically free.

The Proclamation was not a law passed by Congress, but was issued as a war tactic under Lincoln’s constitutional authority as commander in chief of the armed forces. With slavery being protected by the Constitution, the only way he could free slaves was as a tactic of war—not as the mission itself. (The abolition of slavery was later formalized in the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.) Of course, this granting freedom to slaves served the Union army’s purpose because it harmed the stability of the Confederacy and added many new soldiers to the ranks of the Union army.

This happening during a war meant that the Confederate states didn't just immediately acquiesce to this ruling, so it had minimal practical effect at first. Of the millions of slaves it affected, it's estimated that between 20,000 and 50,000 slaves were immediately emancipated because they lived in regions where Confederate forces had already been subdued. Eyewitness accounts at places such as Hilton Head and Port Royal, South Carolina record celebrations on January 1st as thousands of slaves were informed of their newfound freedom. But the freedom of many was delayed, as many plantation owners, knowing their livelihood was being threatened, moved their slaves as far from Union forces as possible.

Slaves had, against their wills, been a part of the rigors of war for the Confederacy by preparing food, sewing uniforms, repairing railways, working in factories, building walls and serving as hospital workers and common laborers. Into this machinery of war, news of the Proclamation spread quickly by word of mouth, arousing hopes of freedom and causing many to escape to Union lines.

George Washington Albright, a teenage slave in Mississippi, recalled that like many of his fellow slaves, his father escaped to begin fighting with the Union army.

According to him, slave owners tried to keep the news from their subjects, but the good news spread to them anyway. In response to this message of redemption, the young slave became a "runner," traveling throughout the region to bring news of the Proclamation to secret slave meetings and plantations.

As Union armies continued to take control of Confederate states, vast numbers of slaves were released to freedom. By June 1865, the Union Army controlled all of the Confederacy and had liberated all of the slaves.



BLACK & WHITE TEENAGE UNION SOLDIERS

Booker T. Washington was only 9 years old when news of the Proclamation reached him in Virginia. He recounts the memory:

As the great day drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual. It was bolder, had more ring, and lasted later into the night. Most of the verses of the plantation songs had some reference to freedom.... Some man who seemed to be a stranger (a United States officer, I presume) made a little speech and then read a rather long paper—the Emancipation Proclamation, I think. After the reading we were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother, who was standing by my side, leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks. She explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see.

FREE AT LAST (?)

Over the course of several years, millions of African American slaves were freed. The label of “property” was taken off of them, they were allowed to walk away from their “owners,” and many tasted freedom for the first time in their lives. But this joyous moment led to a troubling question: what kind of world were these former slaves released into?

Slavery as an institution was over, but the countless problems the institution created were not in any way swiped away with the stroke of a pen. As late as the month of his death, Abraham Lincoln was pondering what to do with the newly freed slaves and even considering deporting them back to Africa (even though a vast majority of the slaves were not born in Africa and had lost all connection with their culture there). Lincoln actually asked former Union general and politician Ben Butler to calculate the logistics of deportation, and received back this report:

Mr. President, I have gone carefully over my calculations as to the power of the country to export the Negroes of the South and I assure you that, using all your naval vessels and all the merchant marine fit to cross the seas with safety, it will be impossible for you to transport to the nearest place...half as fast as Negro children will be born here.

The freed slaves were obviously not leaving, and the question remained as to what to do in response. The idea of reparations was considered, and many freedpeople expected to receive land as a gesture of goodwill—an expectation communicated by many politicians. This is where the term “40 acres and a mule” comes from, but these reparations did not happen on any large scale.

The four million former slaves were now people without land, formal education, or even cooking utensils. They had few economic resources and were surrounded by hostile people who wanted to prove their emancipation was a mistake. The proponents of the Confederacy not only lost the war—they lost hundreds of thousands of men in battle—friends, family members, sons and cousins.

The South lay in ruins after the war—the once prosperous region was set up for a long season of poverty. Many humiliated white Southern citizens, with deeply embedded beliefs of white supremacy and empty pockets from the war, were forced to release the keys to their economic success and watch them walk away into freedom. To say the least, for the newly freed African Americans this was not going to be an easy transition. There was Southern anger to go around, and over time freed blacks would bear the brunt of it. In some areas, one out of every four African Americans died of disease, starvation, and killings.



WINSLOW HOMER'S 1876 "A VISIT FROM THE OLD MISTRESS"

SHARECROPPING

Many former slaves had no knowledge of anything except agriculture, so farming seemed like the only option. But without a cent to their name, how were they supposed to acquire land to grow crops? Planters still needed laborers, and former slaves needed jobs they were qualified to

do, so this led to the implementation of sharecropping—a system where a landlord allows a tenant to use their land in exchange for a share of the crop.

This system encouraged sharecroppers to work to produce the biggest harvest they could, and also increased the chances they would remain tied to the land and not leave for other opportunities. Many black families rented land from white owners and raised cash crops such as cotton, tobacco and rice. Landlords or nearby merchants would lease equipment and farm animals, and provide food, seed and other items on credit until the harvest season when they would all settle up.



SHARECOPPERS ON THE ROADSIDE AFTER EVICTION

This practice has a long history around the globe, and it often left sharecroppers open to abuse by high interest rates, unpredictable harvests and dishonest landlords. These abuses left many families severely indebted and required the debt to be carried over to the next year and the next, solidifying the foundation already laid for generational poverty. Laws favored the landlord and made escaping this system difficult, and it grew in scope over time. Poor white farmers, who previously had done little cotton farming, needed money as well and became sharecroppers.

BLACK CODES

Free blacks presented a serious challenge to the boundaries of a white-dominated society, so many states and local governments passed laws that aimed to uphold long-held beliefs and practices of white superiority. The sharp racial divisions that slavery created were not erased by Emancipation, they just took a different shape and form.

In 1865, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Georgia all included language in their new state constitutions which instructed the legislature to “guard them and the State against any evils that may arise from their sudden emancipation.” In some States, Black Code legislation used text directly from the laws concerning slaves, simply substituting Negro or other words in place of slave.

For example, many states passed what were called vagrancy laws. Newly freed slaves had no home, no money, and no guaranteed job prospects, so where were they supposed to go? Southern whites perceived black vagrancy as a sudden and dangerous social problem, so laws were passed to deal swiftly and harshly with any blacks who were deemed to be wandering or unproductive. These laws used vague terms and granted wide powers to police officers enforcing them.

In South Carolina, a conviction for vagrancy allowed the state to “hire out” blacks for no pay. The South Carolina version of these laws also called for a special tax on blacks (all males and unmarried females), and inability to pay this tax would result in a conviction for vagrancy. The law also created separate courts for black people, authorized capital punishment for crimes like stealing cotton, and created a system of licensing and regulation that made it difficult for freedpeople to conduct normal commerce.

The South Carolina code clearly borrowed terms and concepts from old slave laws, going so far as to refer to bosses as “masters.” The slaves were freed, but, well—were they? In this period of time the freedom they’d long prayed for was finally granted to them, but the deck was still stacked against them in innumerable ways.

Pasty Mitchner, a former slave in Raleigh, NC, was interviewed in 1937 at the age of 84. She had the following to say about this point in history:

“Slavery was a bad thing en’ freedom, of de kind we got wid nothin’ to live on was bad. Two snakes full of poison. One lying wid his head pointin’ north, de other wid his head pointin’ south. Dere names was slavery an’ freedom... Both bit de [negro], an’ dey was both bad.”

Notes:

Notes:

CH

STUDY GUIDE: ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

2



SCRIPTURE:

Romans 10:10-13, Galatians 3:23-29, Ephesians 2:8-22, Colossians 3:11-14, Revelation 5:9-10 and 7:9-10

QUOTES:

"The gospel Paul preached destroyed racism ('neither Jew nor Greek'), economic classism ('slave nor free'), and gender inequality ('no male and female'). The local church should be a mosaic that the world looks at and says, 'So that's what heaven looks like.'"

Derwin L. Gray

"God's desire is for us to experience multi-ethnic fellowship now in the local church as it will be for eternity. God's heart is total reconciliation."

Scott McKnight

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Read Ephesians 2:8-13 and Galatians 3:23-27. How does Paul specifically describe what is true for those who follow Jesus?

Read Ephesians 2:14-22 and Galatians 3:28-29. Why does Paul make the connections he makes between a Christian's identity in Jesus and the racial/cultural unity of the church?

- What are things you see in the world when it comes to race that you wish you could change? What are things we can do as a church, through the power of the gospel, to make sure these sinful patterns are not reflected in our church family?

Read Colossians 3:11-14. Is there a type of person that you seem to have a harder time dealing with? Why?

- In what specific ways does the gospel lead to reconciliation between you and that type of person?

- As a community how can we encourage each other this week to take any necessary steps of repentance and reconciliation?

Pray that our church family would display the power of the Gospel through reconciled people of various races.

Pray that our LifeGroup and church family would continue to grow in living on mission with people who are different than us.

REX THEATRE FOR COLORED PEOPLE



CH

RECONSTRUCTION & JIM CROW

3



As helpful as the Emancipation Proclamation was, it did not give all necessary rights to newly freed African Americans. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were passed in 1865, 1868, and 1870 respectively. These amendments officially abolished slavery, granted citizenship and equal protection under the law, and prohibited federal or state governments from denying eligible citizens the right to vote based on “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

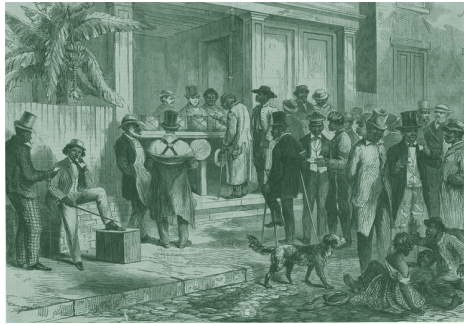
These amendments were passed during a unique time in history called Reconstruction, an era that began when the Civil War ended and lasted until 1877. The intent behind this era was to literally “reconstruct” the areas of our country that had been ravaged by slavery, the war and poverty. Its overarching goals were to restore national unity, grant civil rights to the freed slaves and put into practice ideals that the Union fought for.

During this time, federal troops continued to occupy the South in order to enforce new laws and protect blacks from the people that had enslaved them. The presence of the military during these years eased some tension and ensured that progress was made. In addition, many white Christians from the North organized agencies, raised money and sent educators to the South to aid the plight of former slaves. These Christian missionaries worked to start schools and build churches for the freed slaves.

Economic poverty continued for most blacks during this era, but they were able to vote, serve on juries, and hold elected office. In many areas of the country where their population was significant (including South Carolina), they were able to quickly make great strides in political representation. On a visit to the South Carolina House of Representatives, northern reporter James S. Pike noted that: “The Speaker is black, the clerk is black, the doorkeepers are black, the little pages are black, the chairman of the Ways and Means is black, and the chaplain is coal black.”

Blacks and whites served alongside one another in elected office and went to school together in this brief season of growing racial equality. These remarkable changes in the public involvement of black Americans were threatening for many white Americans, who feared for their way of life and group position.

When federal troops withdrew from the South in 1877, white southerners began to respond in force to the perceived economic and cultural threat they saw in the advancement of blacks. As the soldiers who provided a watchful eye marched out of southern states, so did the security and progress of African Americans.



FREEDMEN VOTING IN NEW ORLEANS, 1867

JIM CROW

The reprieve that Reconstruction brought to black Americans trying to establish their footing in this nation was short-lived. At the end of Reconstruction the South was still poverty-stricken, and white southerners lashed out against these changes to re-establish legal and political dominance over blacks through discrimination, intimidation and violence. 1877 marks the beginning of what was called the Jim Crow era, where the rights and freedoms of African Americans were denied by a series of race-based laws.

Jim Crow laws referred to any state law that established different rules for blacks and whites. The phrase “Jim Crow” traces back to a performance by white actor Thomas D. Rice in 1832 called “Jump Jim

Crow.” The song-and-dance routine caricatured black stereotypes in the form of a character named Jim Crow, and by 1838 the phrase had become a derisive slang term for a black man

These laws were a way to circumvent Constitutional rights given to freed slaves, effectively creating a racial caste system. Far from being a flash in the pan, many of these laws lasted well into the 1960s.



VOTING RESTRICTIONS

In a democracy, the right to vote is a basic right of every citizen. Without this right, people can be easily forgotten and mistreated by their government. This is exactly what happened to black Americans in the Jim Crow era. Despite the 14th and 15th Amendments that guaranteed their civil rights, their right to vote was systematically dismantled by state governments in the South.

COVER TO AN EARLY EDITION OF "JUMP JIM CROW" SHEET MUSIC (C. 1832)

In 1890, the state of Mississippi held a convention to write a new state constitution to replace the one they had since Reconstruction. Since white government officials could not actually ban blacks from voting due to their constitutional rights, they created voter restrictions that made it very difficult for most black Americans to register to vote.

The first tactic was the poll tax, which voters had to pay in order to vote in an election. This was a difficult burden to place on black southerners, and many simply did not have the means to pay it. This alone excluded untold numbers from voting. This tactic unintentionally excluded many poor whites from voting, so Mississippi also enacted a "grandfather clause" that allowed immediate registration for anyone whose grandfather was qualified to vote before the Civil War.

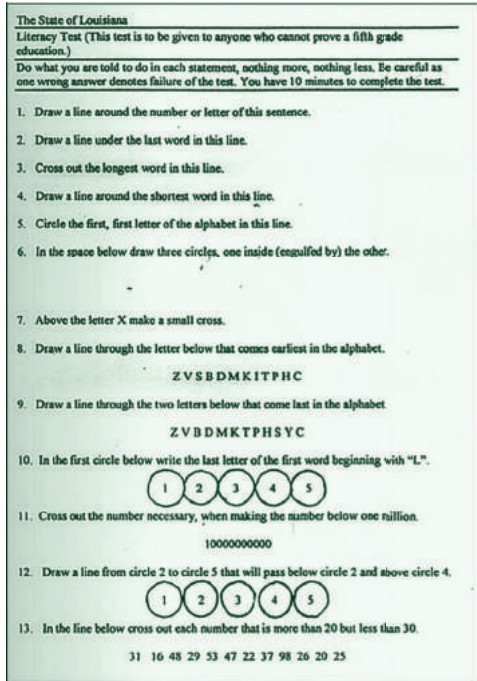
An even more drastic measure they instituted was the literacy test. A person seeking to register to vote had to read a section of the state constitution and explain it to the county clerk who processed voter registrations. This county clerk had the sole power to determine whether the person seeking to vote was literate.

This practice proved to be devastating on a number of levels. An estimated 60% of black Americans in this time period could not yet read, so they were immediately disqualified. Even for those who could read, the clerk would choose complicated technical passages from the constitution that were nearly impossible to pass, while picking simple sentences for white citizens seeking to vote.

These efforts to block the representation of black Americans were crushing, effectively silencing an entire race. During Reconstruction 90% of black voting-aged men were registered to vote, and by 1892 that number was demolished to 6%.

These same measures were copied by most other states in the South, and black voter turnout plummeted. In Louisiana the restriction was so effective that by 1910 only 730 black men were registered to vote, only 0.5% of eligible black men in the state. Fourteen years earlier there were 130,334 registered black voters. In North Carolina, black voters were entirely eliminated from voting rolls from 1896-1904.

In the midst of this suppression of black voters, Woodrow Wilson was elected President in 1912. Wilson was the first southern-born president of the post-Civil War period, and federal offices had been integrated since after the Civil War. Despite the setting he walked into, Wilson reintroduced



**THIS IS A LITERACY TEST GIVEN TO BLACK VOTERS IN 1960
 IF YOU MISS ONE QUESTION, YOU FAIL**

segregation to federal offices and appointed many segregationist Southern politicians due to his own beliefs that segregation was best for whites and blacks alike. By requiring job candidates to submit photos with their application, his administration practiced racial discrimination in hiring. Then at Gettysburg on July 4th, 1913, the 50 year anniversary of Lincoln's declaration that "all men are created equal," Wilson celebrated America's progress in front of the crowd gathered:

"How complete the union has become and how dear to all of us, how unquestioned, how benign and majestic, as state after state has been added to this, our great family of free men!"

SEGREGATION

Segregation became the backbone of the Jim Crow era. Laws across the South were implemented to create separate public schools, libraries, restrooms, public transportation, parks, restaurants, water fountains, and so on. Again, because of constitutional rights given to black Americans, access to these things could not officially be denied, but they were sectioned off under the guise of "separate but equal."

These laws institutionalized serious economic, educational, and social disadvantages for black Americans. The majority of the time "separate but equal" was a complete farce, with facilities and opportunities open to blacks being consistently inferior and underfunded compared to those open to whites. Sometimes segregated facilities meant no facilities for blacks existed at all. Public libraries for African Americans were not introduced



**AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN LOOK AT
A WHITES ONLY PLAYGROUND, 1956**

in the South until the early 1900s, and even then they were only available sporadically and stocked with outdated, secondhand books.

This de jure segregation (segregation by law) happened throughout the south, but it wasn't the only form of distinction. De facto segregation (segregation by fact) also covered the rest of the country due to patterns of housing segregation and job discrimination.

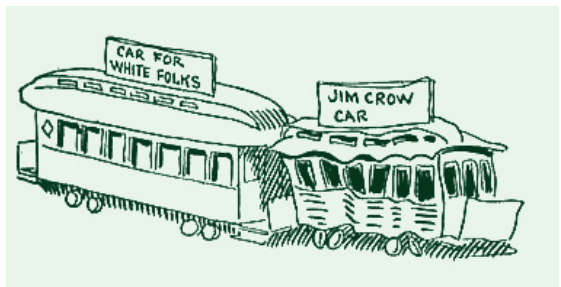
PLESSY VS. FERGUSON

In 1890, Louisiana passed a state law mandating separate accommodations for passengers on railroads. The law already specified that blacks were not allowed to ride with whites, but the addition also excluded “colored” (mixed-race) people. In New Orleans a group of concerned citizens sought to rescind the law, so they persuaded Homer Plessy, a man who was one-eighth black and of fair complexion, to ride a whites-only car and test the law.

In 1892, Plessy bought a first-class train ticket departing from New Orleans. He boarded the whites-only car, informed the conductor of his racial lineage, and then took his seat. Moments later he was directed to exit the car and board the “coloreds only” car. Plessy refused this order, and was immediately arrested.

The group that organized the protest, The Citizens Committee of New Orleans, fought the case all the way to the Supreme Court. When it was finally heard by the Court in 1896, the group lost the case and the Court ruled that

“separate but equal” facilities were constitutional and not a violation of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. This Supreme Court result would prove devastating to the equality of African Americans, as it upheld the basis of legalized discrimination against them for 58 more years before it was overturned.



1904 CARICATURE OF “WHITE” AND “JIM CROW” RAIL CARS

LONG-LASTING EFFECTS

Over the course of almost 90 years, Jim Crow laws had sweeping and debilitating effects on racial equality in America. Many rights given to African Americans were rights in name only, as they could not be accessed or exercised.

Throughout the Jim Crow era, some politicians demeaned blacks in an effort to win the votes of poor whites, who often feared losing their jobs to blacks. The Jim Crow laws these politicians enacted were enforced by law enforcement officials in poor black communities, leading to a long-lasting foundation of mistrust in law enforcement. Groups like the KKK emerged, spewing racial hatred and threatening violence to keep blacks “in their place.”

In South Carolina, black and white textile workers could not work in the same room or enter through the same door, and many industries across the nation passed union rules to exclude hiring blacks. In Richmond, VA one could not marry someone of a different race, nor even live on a street unless most of the residents were of the same race. Mobile, AL passed a Jim Crow curfew that would not allow blacks to leave their homes after 10pm. Oklahoma instituted black and white phone booths.



AFRICAN AMERICANS BEING FORCED TO SIT IN THE BACK OF THE BUS

In North Carolina black and white students had to use a different set of textbooks, and in Florida the books couldn't even be stored together. The city of Atlanta kept two different Bibles in courtrooms: one for black

witnesses and one for whites. Despite their broad scope, even official Jim Crow laws did not account for all discrimination faced by black Americans in this period. Blacks were pushed out of contention for white jobs in New York and all over the country, and they were kept out of white stores in Los Angeles.

Any black citizen who dared break these rules would face humiliation at best, and many fared far worse. An estimated 4,000 African Americans were lynched in the South during the Jim Crow era, some for simply being accused of a crime or for a social transgression on the level of bumping into a white woman.

Prisons, hospitals, colleges and even orphanages were segregated. The inferior resources available to black Americans severely damaged the growth of a stable black middle class, allowing generational poverty to fester far beyond the empty pockets of newly freed slaves. In 1944, a Swedish tourist who visited the South noted that segregation was so complete that whites did not see blacks except when being served by them.

These laws touched every part of life for black Americans all the way into the 1960s, and their effects continue to reverberate throughout history.



A FAMILY ORDERING FROM THE "COLORED" WINDOW

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

CH

3

STUDY GUIDE: THE PRIVILEGE OF GOOD DEEDS



SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 1:16-17, John 13:34-35, Romans 8:20-23 and 12:15-18, Galatians 6:9-10

QUOTES:

"We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or [to be] black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders. Raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."

John Ehrlichman, Former Aide to President Richard Nixon

"If your mind is Bible-saturated, you would consider it absolutely astonishing if structural racism were not pervasive wherever sin is pervasive. In other words, Bible-shaped people should expect to see structural racism almost everywhere in a fallen world."

John Piper

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Read Romans 8:20-23. The curse of sin entered the world through one man and spread from there, so that every person and creation itself is now stained by sin.

- What types of sin have most affected your life? How do these types of sin cause collateral damage (effects on other people and creation)?

- Can you see any ways that these sins have become institutionalized into the systems of our culture (social, government, education, family structure, workplace, etc.)?

- Have you personally ever sensed that you were being overlooked or mistreated as part of a problematic system? What was your response?

Read Galatians 6:9-10 and Isaiah 1:16-17. Remembering that everyone cannot do everything, what good deeds might God be calling you into, according to your ability (specifically as it relates to defending the oppressed)?

- Does the reality of historical oppression prompt any changes with the way you approach your job? Neighborhood? Particular friends?

Pray that we would gladly embrace the privilege of being equipped to serve others in good deeds.

Pray that we would not grow weary in fighting sin and the effects of sin at every level (personal, communal and systemic).



CH

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

4



In 1963, exactly one-hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, Martin Luther King Jr. stood at a civil rights march in Washington, D.C. and gave his most famous speech. In “I Have a Dream,” King noted a painful perspective on the progress of America:

“Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.”

One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, black Americans still experienced extensive amounts of discrimination. The devastating effects of the Jim Crow era produced haunting questions for African Americans. What is one to do in the face of systemic racial segregation, inequality, and violence? When constitutional rights are granted but are inaccessible, what is the way forward?

BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION

For many decades, the fight for civil rights was centered primarily in the legal sphere, seeking better treatment through lawsuits, organizations, and other political avenues. In 1909 the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) was created with the goal of ending discrimination through educating people on the issues and changing laws. Its crowning achievement was the legal victory in the Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954.



PROTESTING OF SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Fed up with poor, overcrowded schools, black parents from several different states (including South Carolina) enrolled their children in white schools. They were blocked from doing so, and the cases ended up being combined together. Over the course of a few years the case reached the Supreme Court, and

in a historic decision the court overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine upheld in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* back in 1896.

This historic ruling argued that even in segregated schools of equal quality, having segregated facilities was inherently unequal and therefore a violation of the 14th Amendment. The Court stated that the “segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group.”

However, once again black Americans witnessed the friction between laws and reality. It’s one thing for the government to declare school segregation unconstitutional, and it’s another thing to actually force those schools to integrate. It took another Supreme Court case the following year, called *Brown II*, to seek a timetable for enforcing integration. The NAACP wanted a specific timetable, but the Supreme Court simply ordered integration to happen with the more general phrase “with all deliberate speed.”

CHANGING TACTICS: DIRECT ACTION

Many African Americans were invigorated by the victory of *Brown*, but also frustrated by the lack of immediate practical effects. Even with a Supreme Court win, they were faced with harsh resistance by proponents of segregation and voter discrimination. After each step of legal progress, years of action and court challenges were needed to implement new laws and unravel frequent examples of institutional discrimination.

As a response to this, many black Americans began to lose faith in gradual, law-based approaches to desegregation and began to emphasize a strategy of “direct action.” This new approach relied on mass mobilization of people through boycotts, sit-ins, marches and similar tactics of nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience.



KKK NIGHT RALLY IN CHICAGO, C. 1920

Churches, local grassroots organizations, and black-owned businesses mobilized volunteers to participate in more direct actions that defied racial discrimination, with the goal that this would be a more rapid means of change than the traditional approach of mounting court cases. In the aftermath of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the African American Civil Rights Movement was born.

BOYCOTTS, SIT-INS AND FREEDOM RIDES

On December 1st 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, local black leader Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus to a white passenger. This act of nonviolent resistance ended in her arrest and caused national publicity. Some throughout history have named her the “mother of the civil rights movement.”

Following her protest, the NAACP pushed for full desegregation of public buses. The city rejected the reforms, so civil rights leaders organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The majority of public transit users at the time were black, so this boycott (which lasted 381 days)

reduced city revenues significantly. In November 1956, a federal court mandated Montgomery's buses to desegregate. This boycott, aimed at the pockets of those in power, would form the foundation for others to follow suit.

During this boycott in Montgomery, Martin Luther King Jr. gained prominence. National attention was attracted to his leadership through the lengthy protest, and his appeals to Christian brotherhood and American idealism began to create an impression on people throughout America.

Sit-ins became another successful tactic in this movement of civil disobedience. In many drugstores, African Americans could come in and buy products, but they were not allowed to sit down and order food at the all-white lunch counter. A "sit-in" was an organized protest where black Americans walked up to a segregated lunch counter, often with receipts from items they'd bought at the drugstore, and waited to be served lunch. When they were refused service, they would ask why their money was good for products, but not for food—and simply refuse to get up and leave.



A WOMAN BEING FORCEFULLY REMOVED FROM A SIT IN

Many protesters were trained to dress professionally, sit quietly, and leave every other stool open for white sympathizers to join if they decided to. In 1958, sit-ins in Kansas drugstores proved to be successful in getting an entire chain of stores to change its policy of segregated seating.

In the following years, major sit-ins were organized in Greensboro, Richmond, Nashville and Atlanta—most of them led by students. As this trend spread across the South, police and officials were sometimes called upon to physically remove the demonstrators from lunch counters. This often served to further increase the animosity between black Americans and law enforcement officials.

In 1960, the Supreme Court decision *Boynton vs. Virginia* ruled that segregation for interstate travel was unconstitutional. But again, a passed federal law did not equate to immediate local implementation. So activists began organizing Freedom Rides to both test and practically implement the law. These activists rode buses through the Deep South to desegregate seating, terminals, restrooms and water fountains.

This proved to be dangerous for many brave enough to join the protest. In Anniston, Alabama one bus was firebombed, forcing passengers to run for their lives. In Birmingham, Public Safety Commissioner Eugene “Bull” Connor gave local KKK members fifteen minutes to attack an incoming group of freedom riders before ordering police to protect them. The riders were severely beaten, and one white activist on the bus required fifty stitches to his head.



FREEDOM RIDER BUS ON FIRE, ANNISTON AL

Other riders were met with mobs and violence. Freedom Rides expanded into Jackson, Mississippi where riders were arrested for breaching the peace or refusing to obey an officer. By the end of the summer in 1961, more than 300 riders had been jailed. Many were harshly treated while locked away. They were beaten sporadically, put in harmful devices called “wrist-breakers” that could break prisoners’ bones when tightened, and had their cell windows closed on hot summer days.

Public sympathy for the freedom riders caused the administration of President John F. Kennedy to issue a new desegregation order on November 1st 1961. This order allowed passengers to sit wherever they chose on a bus, and “white” and “colored” signs in terminals that hung over waiting rooms and water fountains came down.

VOTER REGISTRATION & MORE ATROCITIES

In the wake of successful sit-ins, boycotts and other tactics, civil rights activists began leading organizations to help black citizens register to vote. One such activist was a WWII veteran named Medgar Evers. He came back to Mississippi after the war ended in 1945, when he and some other black ex-servicemen decided to vote in a Mississippi election. A white mob stopped them from doing so. He later related:

“All we wanted to be was ordinary citizens. We fought during the war for America, Mississippi included. Now, after the Germans and Japanese hadn’t killed us, it looked as though the white Mississippians would...”

This effort to register black voters spread from Mississippi across the South to Georgia and South Carolina. By 1963, voter registration had become an integral tactic of the movement. Like other tactics, these efforts were met with arrests by local lawmen and violence from groups like the KKK. Evers became famous for the statement “You can kill a man, but you can’t kill an idea.”



PROTESTORS PEACEFULLY MARCHING FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

Voter registration became an integral part of the Birmingham Campaign in the same year, along with sit-ins and kneel-ins at local churches. The city passed an injunction against all these protests, and Martin Luther King Jr. was among those arrested

and jailed on April 12th, 1963. While he was in solitary confinement, a sympathetic guard smuggled a newspaper to him with an article co-written by a group of white ministers titled “A Call to Unity.” The article agreed that racial injustice existed, but that the fight against it should happen in the courts, not in the streets. Not allowed to have paper in his cell, King began writing his response to these white ministers in the

margins of the newspaper. The famous response would later be published as “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”

As the movement in Birmingham continued, black high school students began to take part in demonstrations. In what would come to be called the Children’s Crusade, over 1,000 students skipped school on May 2nd to meet at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church to join the demonstrations. Many of them were arrested for attempting to march to City Hall to speak with the mayor, so students gathered at the church again the next day. As they began to march, Eugene “Bull” Connor unleashed police dogs on the children, then turned the city’s fire hoses on them. Footage of this was broadcast around the nation.



ALABAMA GOVERNOR GEORGE WALLACE STANDS AGAINST DESEGREGATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AND IS CONFRONTED BY US DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL NICHOLAS KATZENBACH IN 1963

On June 11th, 1963 the governor of Alabama tried to block the integration of the University of Alabama. He stood with a group of officers to prevent the enrollment of black students Vivian Malone Jones and James Hood. That day, President John F. Kennedy sent a military force to make Governor Wallace step aside and allow the students to enroll. That evening, President Kennedy addressed the nation on TV and radio with his historic civil rights speech. He called on Congress to pass new civil rights legislation and urged citizens to embrace civil rights as a moral issue.

Just a few hours after this historic address in the early morning hours of June 12th, Medgar Evers pulled into his driveway after a NAACP meeting, carrying T-shirts that read “Jim Crow Must Go.” As he stepped

out of his car, he was shot in the back and killed. His killer, a member of the Klan, went to trial twice for the killing, but was not convicted until 1994—31 years after the murder—when he was 73 years old.

After Evers assassination, an estimated 5,000 people marched through Jackson, Mississippi, led by Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders. The next week, as promised, President Kennedy submitted his Civil Rights bill to Congress.

On September 15th of that same year, a group of KKK members bombed Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham and killed four young girls.

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

On August 28th, 1963 an estimated 200,000-300,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial, where King would deliver his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. The major focus of this historic march was the passage of the civil rights law President Kennedy proposed after the upheaval in Birmingham.



THOUSANDS GATHERED IN WASHINGTON ON AUGUST 28, 1963

After the march, King and other civil rights leaders met with President Kennedy at the White House. While it seemed that Kennedy was sincerely committed to passing the bill, it wasn't clear if the bill would have enough

votes in Congress to actually pass. This situation would become more complex when President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22nd, just three months after the march.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Lyndon Johnson, who became President after Kennedy's assassination, decided to use his influence in Congress to push for Kennedy's wishes. In January of 1964 Johnson met with civil rights leaders, and in his first State of the Union address, Johnson asked Congress to "let this session of Congress be known as the session which did more for civil rights than the last hundred sessions combined."

On June 21st of the same year, three civil rights activists who were volunteering in Mississippi to help African Americans register to vote disappeared. This news story captured the nation, and weeks later they were found dead. Two of the student workers were white northerners, and



LYNDON B. JOHNSON SIGNS THE HISTORIC CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

one was a local black Mississippian. Though it proved helpful to the goals of the movement, the amount of coverage this story received frustrated some black activists, believing the media valued the lives of whites and blacks differently.

The ensuing outrage to these murders was used by President Johnson and civil rights leaders to build a coalition strong enough to pass the bill. After almost two months of filibuster on the floor of the Senate, President Johnson got the bill passed, and on July 2nd, he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This bill banned discrimination based on "race, color, religion, sex or national origin" in public accommodations and employment practices. Furthermore, it authorized the Attorney General to file lawsuits to enforce the new law.

SELMA & THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Black voter suppression through Jim Crow laws still covered the South in 1965. Three marches from Selma to Montgomery were organized that year to walk the 54 miles to the state capital—the sheer distance communicating the great desire of African Americans to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

The first march was held on March 7th, and as marchers crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they were attacked with billy clubs, bull whips and tear gas by county and state troopers. This attack again sparked national outrage, along with broadcast images of the beaten protesters and a murdered white minister who joined in the march. The events in Selma persuaded President Johnson and Congress to overcome opposition from Southern legislators and pass effective voting rights enforcement legislation. In Johnson’s speech to Congress, he said:

“Even if we pass this bill, the battle will not be over. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and state of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life. Their cause must be our cause, too, because it is not just Negroes but really it is all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome.”



STATE TROOPERS VIOLENTLY ATTACKING THE MARCHERS

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed by Johnson on August 6th. It suspended poll taxes, literacy tests, and other subjective means of voter suppression. It also authorized federal supervision of registration in districts where such measures were being used. Within months of its passage, 250,000 new black voters had been registered, one third of them by federal examiners. When the act was passed, only about 100 African Americans held elective office—all in northern states. By 1989, there were more than 7,200 African Americans in office, including more than 4,800 in the South.

THE LAST YEAR

1968 marks the last year of the official Civil Rights Movement. Housing discrimination was still a massive issue, allowing property owners, landlords, and lenders to refuse fair housing opportunities to African Americans. From 1966-1968 civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., championed fair housing laws, for them only to be filibustered by the Senate. Walter Mondale, a Senator who advocated for the fair housing bill, noted that over these years these laws were the most filibustered laws in U.S. history. He commented that:

“A lot of civil rights [legislation] was about making the South behave and taking the teeth from George Wallace (Alabama governor), [but] this came right to the neighborhoods across the country. This was civil rights getting personal.”

On April 3rd, 1968 Martin Luther King Jr. would give his last sermon—a stirring portrayal of his vision for American society titled “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop.” The last words in his sermon were the following:

“Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land! And so I’m happy, tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man! Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!”

The next day, he was assassinated.

Riots broke out in over 110 U.S. cities in response to his death. On April 10th, six days after King was killed, the fair housing law was passed by the House of Representatives. On the next day, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968 into existence. It prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing based on race, religion or national origin.

To put this history in perspective, a person born in 1968 would be 49 years old today. These events happened during many of our lifetimes and the lifetimes of our parents.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. REMOVING A BURNED CROSS FROM HIS YARD WITH HIS SON

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

CH 4

STUDY GUIDE: GOSPEL WEAPONS THAT DISARM



SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 4:1-4, Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 1:10,
1 Thessalonians 2:12, 1 Peter 3:9

QUOTES:

"God is not asking blacks to be white or whites to be black, but for both to be biblical."

Tony Evans

"Friends become wiser together through a healthy clash of viewpoints."

Tim Keller

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Have someone in your group recap the four virtues that Paul urges us to walk in.

- Which of these virtues is most lacking in our society's current handling of racial issues?

- Which of these virtues do you most need to grow in?

Read Colossians 1:9-12. How do we get strengthened with God's power for all endurance and patience when we are at odds with someone or find ourselves stuck in a disagreement?

Read Romans 12:18. Are you currently walking in any damaged relationships because of ongoing disagreements? Remembering it all doesn't depend on you, are there any steps you need to take to be at peace with them?

- What encouragement and accountability do we need to give each other as we take these steps with humility, gentleness, patience and an eagerness for unity?

Pray that our lives and our LifeGroup would be marked by the gospel weapons of humility, gentleness, patience and eagerness for unity.

Pray that God would strengthen us with the ability to disagree, remain united and use our love as a tool to draw people to Himself.



CH

TODAY IS HISTORY

5



In 1961—almost exactly in the middle of the Civil Rights Era—our nation came upon the 100 year anniversary of the Civil War. Here in Columbia, a representative from Aiken, John May, wanted to fly the Confederate flag at the State House in commemoration of the Civil War centennial anniversary. His original goal was to introduce legislation to fly the flag for a year, but it didn't get passed in time, so he just asked someone to put the flag up, and they did.

The flag did not come down until July 10th, 2015, less than a month after Dylann Roof murdered nine black Christians gathered for a Wednesday night Bible study at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston.

As we have seen from looking at our history, racial pain is not relegated to the distant past. The tentacles of our history reach us in this very moment, and today is another chapter of the story of race relations in America. Today is history.

This is why it is of utmost importance that we be the multi-ethnic people of God together and model reconciled relationships.

This is why it is necessary that we think of ourselves first as Christian Americans, not as white Americans or black Americans. Because the family of God runs deeper than skin color or even the history of our ancestors.

This is why your tone in the things you say matters. Because it affects real life people in our church family.

This is why we have to listen to one another. Not rushing to judgment and not assuming motives, with the realization that your experiences may not be their experiences. No one in our culture naturally enters into the discomfort and joy of this listening to one another, but Jesus has given us exactly the tools we need to do so.

In an effort to jumpstart this kind of listening to one another, we have compiled a list of quotes from members across all of our churches to see how race is a factor in our people's lives even to this day.

QUOTES



ANTOINE KELLY (FIRE DEPARTMENT CAPTAIN):

As an African American growing up in the South, racism wasn't something that affected me as a child. I wouldn't say that it didn't occur, but maybe my innocent mind didn't comprehend what was happening, and maybe my parents did a great job shielding me. It wasn't until I got into my teenage years that I started dealing with racial issues. Issues as simple as me realizing that unlike my friends, I might not ever be able to

date the girl I liked because her parents may not approve simply because of the color of my skin. That happened multiple times. My fiancée and I are now even taking steps to help her rebuild a relationship with her father, because he stopped speaking to her on the account of my skin color following our engagement.



DALISHA WILLIAMS (DOCTORAL STUDENT IN EDUCATION):

The biggest way I've experienced racism in my life is through the lens of a teacher of color in the public school system. African American children for centuries have been disenfranchised through the educational system. Beginning with the denial of education during the enslavement of Africans, followed by separate and grossly unequal schools, to current inequities such as resegregation, the under-sourcing of urban and inner city, and inequitable access to rigorous curriculum.

This is such a big deal because by under-preparing African Americans in the educational arena, the thought that African Americans are intellectually inferior to whites is exacerbated. Additionally, quality of life indicators such as wealth, access to healthcare, and social mobility, for African Americans will continuously fall without equitable educational opportunities.



JORDAN ZOLLINGER (POLICE OFFICER):

I am trying to work hard to see other people's perspectives on race issues. I've been doing a lot of reading, especially biographies. So far I've read biographies on Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass, and John Perkins. I'm trying to talk to my black friends to hear them out. I am starting to understand more and more where distrust of the police and the justice system comes from. I don't know if law enforcement is going to be where I spend the majority of my career, but through a lot of prayer and talks with my Lifegroup I do think being a police officer is a great way for me to help people and slowly make a difference.

I work really hard to make sure every interaction I have with African Americans is marked by dignity and respect. I really try to go above and beyond, but I hate that sometimes there is nothing I can do to avoid being misunderstood; it's seen as a white cop assuming a black man is guilty when all I am doing is operating by the book and trying to speak and act with respect. I don't want to perpetuate cycles, so I hate it when I am misperceived. My biggest fear is that one day I will be in a viral video and all the books I've read, all the conversations and interactions I've had will be out the window. Even though I've worked so hard to honor my fellow African American citizens, nobody will care and I will be seen as just another racist white cop.



TAY CLARK (STUDENT AT BENEDICT COLLEGE):

When I was growing up my mother always told me that it would be hard being a black man in this world. I never understood until I left and came to Columbia for college. The first encounter I had with the police was during a fight on campus. Some of the city police came to help calm and clear the crowd. I heard one officer drop the N word. It stung because even though I had nothing to do with the fight and mostly avoiding it, I automatically felt that I was part of the situation.

As time continued and the Black Lives Matter movement began, I really felt hopeless and just wanted to give up. Back to back shootings made me feel like I had a big target on my back and I was scared to step out of my own dormitory on campus. I would lie to people and say that I was ok. I know that Christ still loves me, he values me, and he still sees me as his own. So I can feel like I have this target on my back for the rest of my life, but I can always run to Christ when I am weak.



CARLY BURNS (SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE STUDENT):

Growing up in a family familiar with hardship made it hard for me to believe that I had any sort of privilege, especially not white privilege. When I came to college, the systemic effects of racism and oppression became more evident to me as I learned about them in my courses, but I didn't have a personal encounter with it until one of my friends, who is black, came up to me at work and said that a police car had been behind him on his way in. He cried and cried as he drove, scared of what could happen if he got pulled over.

Hearing his story gave me a glimpse into the profound pain non-white people experience just by living in our society, something I had never seen or heard about growing up in a practically all-white town. I thought the white experience was the normal experience, and if you were being "discriminated against" in housing, employment, or even driving, it's because you were doing something wrong. Not being able to see how prevalent racism is and even denying its dangerous effects prevented me from truly loving my neighbor. It wasn't until my eyes were opened to the real discriminatory experiences of non-white people that I was able to see their pain and hurt with them as an ally, friend, and sister.



DAVID GRIGGS (POLICE OFFICER):

I work hard to remember that every call I go to is important. That person will remember my interaction with them for the rest of their life, while I might go to multiple calls per day. I always interact with people on one of the worst days of their lives. Nobody calls the police when they are happy and things are going well.

I've been the first on the scene to suicides multiple times. I've had to run towards gunfire. I've been shot at. My life has been threatened more times than I can count. People have told me they were going to find where I live and come kill my family. I almost never feel safe when I am wearing my badge.

When I go to certain areas I am immediately hated, especially when I go into poor areas. It's hard because I know race plays a part in it and if historical circumstances were identical, crime and poverty would be identical between white and black Americans. And I do think the criminal justice system tends to favor wealthy people. It's not an easy situation to be in.



TYRONE HICKS (STATE EMPLOYEE):

I'm so honored for the opportunity to talk about my experience in regards to race. This is a subject that is so complex and so varied, I could probably write a book about what I've seen and grown up with; however I will do my best to try and paint a condensed, accurate picture of what race has meant to me and the lens I have viewed it through. I happen to be from the lower part of South Carolina where the vestiges of slavery are literally right in your face.

There is a place in our town where the old slave market was located and everyone knew that this is where people—humans—were bought and sold. I knew very early on the history of my people and how in many ways, things have changed a lot, but in a lot of ways that history has seemed to stay in the hearts of many. There were people who, quite frankly, I knew I could not associate with because of my skin color. You just kind of knew growing up which stores were favorable and which ones were not. I grew up understanding that I could not afford to slip up one bit, because I would not get the same kind of favorability in the court system. That being said, I had parents who taught me that the results of hard work speak for themselves and no one could deny that.

In a lot of ways my upbringing was quite different than African Americans who grew up say in the inner city or in a rural community. My father was a senior enlisted man in the Marine Corps and my mother was a teacher, so I lived in a very diverse and multicultural neighborhood. I grew up exposed to different cultures and peoples and loved it! I was always aware though that regardless of how good my grades were, or how well spoken, or involved in the community, for some that did not negate to them that my skin color made me “less than.” It’s something that I’ve learned to accept, but I’ve tried to not let it define what I do, or how I interact with others.



STEVE VON FANGE (FORMER VICE PRESIDENT BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD, CURRENT MIDTOWN STAFF MEMEBER):

In 1967 my two best friends were Dave & Speedy at school. Dave was white and Speedy was black. At an early age I saw them as equal friends at school, but started to realize that Speedy never came over to play after school because he didn’t live in our neighborhood and he seemed to never do as well in school. Years later I realized he lived literally on the other side of the tracks in a place called Pughesville and was bussed into our school system. He didn’t have the additional educational help that I had, and as the grades progressed we ended up being in different classrooms.

Being in Virginia and in a very white society, I started to see that Speedy was actually not allowed to go to my pool as a visitor. The swimming & racket club where we would hang out all day in the summers had a small sign that said “No Blacks Allowed.” At my age, I didn’t even realize this until sometime in late middle school, when I heard the managers talking about blacks in very ugly ways (expecting me to concur), and then they pointed out that sign to me.

Years later in the workforce, I was able to make friends on both sides of the racial divide. However, I could tell that it was not normal for my demographic, and I would frequently hear stories, jokes, and ugly comments about other races. I’ve heard these comments even in Christian-owned businesses, where blacks were only considered for warehouse jobs and not the front office.

In moving to SC, the racial tension was obvious in late 1984 when we were looking for a place to live. Agents or “friends” would tell us to not go to that school or area because of “them” being there—they would talk to us like this as if it was fully expected that we agreed with them. Over the next 20 years in my job in Columbia, there were many diversity campaigns to move the culture to respect everyone. However, there is a severe disadvantage when you don’t have an unofficial mentor within a large company (or just in business in general). These diversity programs regulate outward behaviors, but they don’t get into the friend networks that are developed in a work setting. These networks can be very powerful in helping people navigate through the organization in an upward way.



KEVEN FREDERICK (OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST):

You can still make it and be black.

I've been called just about every name in the book by white people: "nigger," "thug," "drug dealer." By young white people and old white people. I've never been involved with any form of drug dealing myself. Always assumed that if I was white with my credentials (graduated high school at 17, Bachelor's Degree at 21, and Masters Degree at 23) I would be viewed as "successful" by the majority. But visually/culturally I don't fit the part.

I know the "look" and I could change it if I wanted to so I could fit in with the more "sophisticated" crowd...you know, shave the beard, stop wearing Timberland boots, take off the headphones, move out of the hood, and much much more and I may even be seen as a respectable black guy.

But I'm not going to do that. First of all because it's not me, and as long as I'm not disrespecting anyone then I'm going to continue to be me. Secondly, I represent a demographic of people who have been disrespected/oppresed all their life. They benefit from seeing someone like me who did not have to change their culture in order to be successful.

And my kids will be the same way. We will not move if our kids are zoned for “worse schools.” As they are successful in school, other urban/inner city kids will also be able to see they can make it too.

They don’t have to leave or become someone else (as the two are often synonymous in black culture) in order to be successful, as those kids and our kids will be from the same neighborhoods, going to the same schools. The reality is black people see “successful white people” all the time. Or if they see a “successful black person,” they cannot relate to them because usually they behave so differently as far as culture is concerned. “They don’t look like me.” This does not have to be so.

So in a nutshell I don’t mind being called “hood,” “thug,” or “drug dealer” as much anymore. I’m honored to be numbered with those viewed that way. This is me, and I’m not changing. Culturally none of us have to.



MAZIE JASPER (ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER):

When I was growing up, my family was one of the two black families in our predominantly white neighborhood. Most all of my friends were white, russian, or hispanic. I didn’t realize it then, but most of my childhood was spent trying to be white because I knew society treated black people as

lesser. I hated how people used to treat me. I also hated my dark skin because I knew society associated lighter skin with being pretty. I didn't play with black dolls growing up—only white ones because of this.

I also had experiences where people would say things like, “You're smart for a black girl.” My neighbor's dad looked me in the eye when I was a mere 8 years old and said, “You're the smartest black girl I've met.” I didn't realize it until I was older that this was not a compliment. Now, I have grown to love my black skin and my “blackness.” This is how God created me and I am made in His image.

Notes:

Notes:

CH

5

STUDY GUIDE: TODAY IS HISTORY



SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 1:18, Psalm 37:30, Proverbs 4:6-7, James 3:13-18

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Read James 3:13-18. How have you grown in wisdom throughout this series?

- As we close out the series, what are your biggest remaining questions? How can/will you seek understanding?

- As a LifeGroup, what are our hopes and dreams for the future in light of what we've learned?

- What steps will we commit to to see those hopes comes to reality?

Pray for our church to reflect the diversity of our city.

Pray for humility to admit what we don't know, and to continue to ask earnest questions as we grow.

Pray for those who are oppressed in America; that God would show us whatever power, wisdom and strength we have and can use to love them well.

