

Racism, the Gospel, and the Church Community Group Questions

1. Make a temporary pact in your group during this discussion to try not to dismiss the following scriptures to instead point out all the perceived faults in the opposing viewpoints. A good rule of thumb is: if everything we're saying begins with "but" or "what about", then perhaps we aren't yet fully hearing before we speak
 - a. Read **Proverbs 18:13** out loud before proceeding).

2. Read John 4:7-9. Verse 9 says, "The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)" Later in this story, even Jesus's disciples were astounded that he openly interacted with a Samaritan.
 - a. What does this narrative reveal about Christ's insistence on crossing racial lines to listen and love those whose opinions (like this woman) were different than His own?
 - b. As a community group, how are we doing the same?
 - c. As an individual, how are you doing the same?

3. In the current climate of a million conflicting viewpoints and political hot takes, why do you think it is so tempting to dismiss or roll our eyes at the tone and posture of the gospel itself in terms of how radical it truly is concerning racial issues? In other words, why do we separate "spiritual" things from "real life" things? Which is seemingly more real to us?

4. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

- a. Discuss this quote in light of the attributes of God found in the following verses:
 - i. **Psalms 103:6 (ESV):** “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.”
 - ii. **Jeremiah 9:24 (ESV):** “... but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”
 - iii. **Jeremiah 22:3 (ESV):** “Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.”
5. We obviously do not condone violence or destruction in our cities due to rioting or inappropriate responses by individuals and radical organizations who abuse the Constitutional right to protest that all citizens are entitled to.
 - i. In light of this, how might the inappropriate reactions of a few (proportionately) inadvertently keep us as the Church from hearing the requests of millions for years to please pay attention to what they are experiencing?
 - ii. How can we express true biblical empathy and take gospel action to love with gentleness, yet also cry out justice and righteousness in all of the above situations without using one issue to ignore the other?
6. Read **Colossians 5:8-14 (ESV)** out loud. “But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge

after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

- a. Pray with your group about truly committing our hearts and attitudes to the truths of the gospel found in this passage. Are we willing?
- b. If we decide to do otherwise in our hearts, attitudes, postings, conversations, etc., let's at least admit we are purposefully not aligning ourselves with "compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."
- c. If this is where we are, it's okay to realize it and start there so we can be honest and allow the gospel to begin renewing our minds and transforming our hearts, just as all Christ-followers are expected to be doing.