

God Sees All Colors

Leader's Guide on a study and discussion on racism and justice

There has been quite a bit of news coverage and images of the racial tensions overheating, bubbling over onto the streets across America. Many people have been hurt, even killed, in the current unrest. We hear passionate opinions, some facts, and some fake news related to racism and injustice. Emotional reporting can tend towards lop-sided or incomplete story-telling.

What are Christians to make of this? How can we be faithful to Christ and make an impact for good?

Not to diminish the current struggle, but the reality is that racism and injustice has been around a very long time, since the beginning of humankind. Can we learn from our past to guide us forward?

- I. Read the story of Moses and his siblings in Numbers 12.
 - a. The key to Miriam's and Aaron's motives in their hearts is identified in vs. 1. Can you identify it? (Brother Moses was an Israelite, his wife was a Cushite, a black-skinned of a different race)
 - b. Notice how their racist attitude against their sister-in-law shows itself in vs. 2. (They begin to give into their pride, putting Moses down, elevating themselves)
 - c. The rest of the story is mostly about how God and Moses deal with this racism and pride.
- II. How is Moses' personality and attitude described?
 - a. What do you remember about Moses' life prior to this account that may have impacted his attitude? (Born an Israelite, raised in an Egyptian Pharaoh's household, witnessed the brutality of Egyptians over Jewish slaves, killed an Egyptian slave driver, was sent into the desert to die as a punishment, was taken in by Jethro the Midianite, married Jethro's daughter and had mixed race kids with her, confronted Pharaoh over injustice of slavery, led the Israelites out of slavery).
 - b. Notice how Moses intervened with God on behalf of his sister Miriam? Would you consider Miriam and Aaron protesters? Why? Would you call Moses an activist?
 - c. What can we learn about racism and injustice from this account and Moses' history?
- III. Read the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:1-45.
 - a. Where might there be some racial tension in this story? (Samaritans and Jews).
 - b. Why tension between these? (Historically Samaria was part of the 12 tribes of Israel, they wandered through the desert under Moses into the promised land. Ten of the tribes settled in the north region. They were eventually conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. The Jewish men were marched away to Assyria and the

Jewish women were left behind to intermarry with the Assyrian men. The Samaritans were the descendants of these inter-racial marriages, not “pure” Israelites)

- c. For an interesting addition to this well-known story of the Good Samaritan read Luke 10:33. Why do you think Jesus chose a Samaritan to be the good guy in this parable? (For the use of Samaritan as a racial slur see Jn. 8:48).
 - d. Notice the racially instigated comment from the Samaritan woman in vs. 9. Also the surprise of the disciples in vs. 27.
 - e. How does Jesus address the racial issue?
 - f. What seems to be His main concern with the woman? (her spiritual well-being, salvation, relationship with God, much deeper, eternal concern, than ethnicity)
 - g. Note that not only is there strong racial tension, but also some gender inequality issues as well. She is called a “sinful woman” (vss. 16-18).
 - h. Why do you think the disciples did not say anything to Jesus about their thoughts in vs. 27? (They likely knew what Jesus would say about loving everyone)
 - i. What can you glean from this account regarding racial tension and Jesus’ attitude?
- IV. What about the related issue of injustice?
- a. How would you define injustice? (Try to define first. Then look it up in a dictionary) What does a dictionary say? Were you close?
 - b. Do you think God is “just”?
 - i. Look up Romans 6:23 – (All have sinned)
 - ii. Look up Romans 3:23 – (The wages, what sinners have earned is death, not only physical death, but also eternal, soul punishment)
 - iii. If God is just, He must punish sinners with this kind of death.
 - iv. But what does the second half of Romans 3:23 tell us? (God’s free gift is eternal life, which has already started!)
 - v. So...
 - 1. Justice would be for all people to die this eternal death. That is *punishment*.
 - 2. Mercy is not getting that punishment, not getting eternal death.
 - 3. Grace is getting eternal life. Not earned, not deserved, a gift.
 - vi. Read Romans 5:8 to see how this is put succinctly.
 - vii. So we are living the dream! We are living that eternal life now! It will only get better upon our physical death. How shall we then respond to Jesus’ love, work, and death? (devoted to Him, thankfully, faithfully, be more like Him)
 - viii. Jesus practiced justice. He sought to help those who were experiencing injustice.
 - 1. What does He do in Matthew 15:29-31?
 - 2. See God’s idea of justice in Psalm 146:5-9?

3. How might these two sections (and there are many more!) guide us as followers of God in Christ?
- ix. A ministry of reconciliation. Read the below passages and story and see if you can develop your own concept of reconciliation of ministry.
1. 1 John 4:20 – in your heart.
 2. Micah 6, 1 John 4:20 – in your actions.
 3. *Two Wolves* illustration
 4. 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 –
 5. Colossians 3:11 –
- V. Brainstorm ideas on ways you might be Christians (little Christs) in the current situation of racial tension and injustice in our country.



An old Cherokee grandfather is telling his grandson a story. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said.” It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One is evil — he is anger, envy, greed, arrogance, resentment, lies, and ego.” He continued, “The other is good — he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The wolves are fighting to the death.

*Wide-eyed, the boy asks his grandfather which wolf will win.
The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”*

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