

THIS HUMAN RACE

Plenty of people have talked about how “sad” the instances of racism on display over the past month have made them feel. But to move past what we’re experiencing as a nation with nothing more than a bad case of “sad” is to miss the significant opportunity of this moment. For those of us who are black, “sad” fails to capture the feelings of watching the continued evidence of pervasive racism we’ve seen. And for those of us who aren’t, “sad” fails to represent the reality of what we *should* be feeling if we are to truly be friends and family to our black brothers and sisters. Now, in response to the realities of racism and consequent fear of the police, we can either fixate on facts (i.e. “many cops are not bad,” “the justice system is improving,” “white perceptions of black behavior are often not based in reality”), or we can focus on the one thing that actually has the power to change our country: experience. If we’re going to change the things that are within our power, then in addition to speaking out about injustice, we must also examine the way we interact with other human beings— who scripture calls the very image of our Creator— in light of the law of Christ.

Start Talking

1. Think about your average day. Do you tend to focus more energy on believing the right things or exercising love?
2. When did you first notice that the roles and rules that apply in our flawed society tend to change based upon a person's outer appearance?

Looking Back

1. Did the confidence that God is with you allow you to do anything differently this past week? Why, when, and what?
2. When did you exercise a measured response this past week? When did you merely “react” as expected?
3. What changed for you when you reminded yourself that your current circumstances represent a chapter, not the entire story? How does it reframe your temporary predicament?



What About You?

1. If you're honest, what unhelpful feelings, thoughts, or attitudes have you found lurking within your heart and mind this past week?
2. Especially for those of us who are white, what thoughts or voices have kept you from speaking out on behalf of your black brothers and sisters in the past?
3. What do you think is the difference between simply not being racist, and being actively anti-racist?
4. How have you changed as a result of having friends who don't look like you?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: John 13: 34 – 35. Galatians 6:2. John 15: 15-16. Matthew 5: 43 – 48.

1. What was Paul like when it came to dealing with people of other racial and religious backgrounds before he began following Jesus? After?
2. What accounts for Paul's radical transformation from a commandment-keeping racist to a person who continually displayed his willingness to lay his life down for people who looked and lived nothing like him?
3. Andy has referred to the "new commandment" Jesus gave on the night before his arrest as, "the law of Christ." How do you understand this law? What does it demand of each of us?
4. Paul speaks here about, "carrying one another's burdens." What do you understand that to mean?
5. What implications does, "carrying one another's burdens" have on our willingness to speak out against injustice?

Putting It All Together

1. Think critically about your life. How should people who don't look like you experience you? How do people who don't look like you experience you?
2. What do you think the "law of Christ" looks like in everyday life? What are three ways you can practice it this week?
3. Whose burdens can you carry this week? What would it look like for you to be there for them over the next few days?
4. We get caught up thinking in terms of "white culture" or "black culture," etc... Where is your culture getting in the way of loving and valuing other human beings? What parts of your own cultural experience or heritage do you need to set aside to carry someone else's burdens this week?
5. What destructive attitudes do you anticipate having to resist within yourself this week? How can you prepare for the battle?
6. What are three tangible ways you can begin to move from simply not being racist this week, to being actively anti-racist?
7. What would it look like to pursue meaningful friendships with people who don't look like you?

