

No. 6: Considering the Command We Think We Keep, 2

“Black Lives Matter”

Sunday Evening Bible Study

January 15, 2017

Review From Last Week

1. All human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26,27). Therefore, all lives matter.
2. Because all lives matter, black lives matter.
3. The 6th commandment negatively condemns the violent act of murdering a human being *and* the corruption of the human heart that conceives and carries out the homicide (Ex. 20:13; Gen. 4:1-13; Jas. 4:1,2; Mt. 5:21,22).
4. The 6th commandment (as all of the ten commandments) has a negative and positive aspect. It commands us to do *nothing* to harm our neighbor's life and it commands us to do *something* to guard our neighbor's life. (Ex. 21:29; Lk.10:3)
5. Those who have greater power have greater responsibility to protect those who have lesser power (Lk. 12:48). In general, white Americans have possessed greater power than black Americans.
6. Failure to acknowledge the harm that others experience and failure to do something protect them from harm is a violation of the 6th commandment.

Some Working Definitions For An Emotionally Charged Conversation

1. **Racism:** “1) Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior. 2) The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.”
 - “Racism is an explicit or implicit belief or practice that qualitatively distinguishes or values one race over other races.” Presbyterian Church in America, 2004
2. **White Guilt:** “White guilt is the individual or collective guilt felt by some white people for harm resulting from racist treatment of ethnic minorities by other white people both historically and currently.”
 - 2.1 Guilt is a powerful emotion that may or may not be justified.
 - 2.2. True guilt is the conviction of sin one feels for doing something wrong or failing to do something right. This guilt can be positive and productive (2 Cor. 7:10).
 - 2.3 False guilt is the conviction of sin one feels when he or she is falsely accused. This guilt is often counterproductive and leads to poor judgment. (ex. voting for a black candidate just because he or she is black; indiscriminately giving money without expecting accountability, creating dependency, unhealthy enabling, over-reliance on government programs, etc.).
3. **White Privilege:** “Societal privileges that benefit people identified as white in Western countries, beyond what is commonly experienced by non-white people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances.” Unearned advantages and perks that come with being white.
 - 3.1 White people unconsciously enjoy the privilege of: (some adapted Jon Greenberg).
 - Feeling normal
 - Generally having a positive relationship with the police.
 - Being favored by school authorities
 - Attending segregated schools of affluence.
 - Learning about my race in school

- Finding children's books that overwhelmingly represent my race.
- Soaking in media biased toward my race
- Escaping violent stereotypes associated with my race
- Playing the colorblind card, wiping the slate clean of centuries of racism
- Being insulated from the daily toil of racism
- Living ignorant of the dire strait of racism today
- Having a white-sounding name that gets me called back for an interview
- Getting better treatment from a jury
- Knowing my failures won't be attributed to my race
- Getting to not think about my race
- The ease of being able to arrange my life so I am only with my own race
- Knowing that there would be no resistance if I moved to a neighborhood I want to live in
- Going shopping without being followed or harassed
- Easily finding Band-Aids, baby dolls, and hair care products in a store near me
- Using the same dialect at work or when leaving voice mails as I use at home
- Knowing there has never been the black equivalent of the KKK
- Almost always voting for someone of my race in a political election

3.2 White privilege does not mean that all white people are wealthy, or have it easy, or don't have to work hard. White privilege means there is a clearer path out of poverty and into upward mobility for white people than there is for black people.

3.3 Having white privilege does not make one a racist and it is not a sin. Refusing to acknowledge white privilege may be sin.

3.4 The reality of white privilege must be met with the reality of white responsibility. Those who have greater power have greater responsibility to protect those who have lesser power (Lk.12:48). In general, white Americans have possessed greater power than black Americans.

4. Black Lives Matter (BLM): "An international activist movement, originating in the African-American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism toward black people." BLM rose in response to high-profile shootings, especially those with video evidence:

2013 George Zimmerman acquitted in the death of Trayvon Martin. BLM begins with three black women

2014 Michael Brown shot and killed by a police officer in Ferguson, MO. Protests follow.

2014 Eric Garner suffocated while being arrested in New York City. Protests follow. Other high-profile shooting deaths of black men: Dontre Hamilton, John Crawford III, Ezell Ford, Laquan McDonald, Akai Gurley, Tamir Rice, Antonio Martin, Jerame Reid.

2015 Dylan Roof kills nine African-American church members of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, including its senior pastor, in an effort to start a race war. Also, at least 16 other high-profile incidents of black men, some unarmed, being shot by police officers.

2015 Walter Scott, stopped broken traffic light, unarmed, flees police and is fatally shot in the back.

2016 Alton Sterling killed by police in Baton Rouge. Philando Castile fatally shot by police officer while his girlfriend live-streamed the incident on Facebook.

2016 At a BLM protest in Dallas over the Sterling and Castile shootings, five Dallas police officers ambushed and killed by a black man who said he "wanted to kill white people."

2016 Terence Crutcher fatally shot by police in Tulsa. Keith Lamont Scott fatally shot by police in Charlotte, NC, sparking multiple nights of protests in Charlotte.

5. Bottom Line:

5.1 Racism tends to create a set of circumstances (pride, hate, anger, rage, envy, vengeance, etc.) that foster the act of murder, the damnable violation of the 6th commandment (1 Jn. 3:15)

5.2 No one who knows and loves the Bible can justify racism: Gen. 1:27; Gen. 5:1-3; Acts 10:11; 17:26; Eph. 2:14-16; Nu. 12:1).