

growing
further

Love No Matter What Race

Love. No Matter What

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Proverbs 19:11 (TPT)

A wise person demonstrates patience, for mercy means holding your tongue. When you are insulted, be quick to forgive and forget it, for you are virtuous when you overlook an offense.
(Memorize)

Racism is a problem that the world has had ever since the Tower of Babel when God caused the races to form by causing many different languages to be spoken. The reason is that racism is not a people problem but a sin problem. The basis of all racism is pride. We think for some reason that our group, which was created in God's image, is somehow better than your group, which happens also to be created in God's image. There is no Biblical justification for racism because after God created humanity he said that it was "very good." When God created Adam and Eve he created within them all of the genetic material necessary to produce all of the races, so all of Adam and Eve's descendants are also "very good" in God's sight. The important question for a Christian is not if someone belongs to a particular race, but is that person going to heaven or hell. As Christians, we should be as racist as Jesus was which was not at all.

**OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE –
SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.**

- 1.** Have you ever experienced racism? Share with the group the circumstances that were involved. How did it make you feel? What is the difference between racism and bigotry? Have you ever interacted with a bigot? What was the result? What does it mean to be prejudiced?
Answer – Racism is what it sounds like, opposing a person simply because of their genetic makeup. Bigotry is defined as intolerance toward those who hold different opinions from oneself. Therefore, it is possible to be a bigot without being a racist, although it seems most racists also are intolerant of the opinions of those they oppose. Prejudice is pre-judging someone because of some characteristic about them, whether that is skin color, national background, religious background, political party, etc. Even if we are not racist or a bigot, most of us hold some type of prejudices against certain people. All of these are sin.
- 2.** Pastor Rick said that there are three ideas at the root of all racism, what are they? Do you agree? Can you think of any other ideas that lead people to be racist? Can you think of some Biblical references that refute these ideas? Do you think that a person's family environment has anything to do with racism? How?

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Answer – The three ideas with some verses that refute them are: 1. I am better than you in some way. (Romans 3:9-12, Philippians 2:3); 2. I am more valuable than you are. (Matthew 23:1-12, Romans 12:3); 3. God loves me more than you. (John 3:16, Luke 11:10, Acts 10:34, 35). Many if not most people inherit their racism from their families.

3. The Bible teaches that everyone is created in the image of God. Modern science teaches that we are a result of biological evolution. Which of these views could provide a scientific basis to believe: I am better than you are in some way or I am more valuable than you are? How? One of the most renowned racists in modern history used evolution as the foundation for his racism; do you know who it was?

Answer – Evolution provides a scientific reason to be racist: If I am more evolved than you are in some way then that makes me more valuable and better than you are. Adolph Hitler believed that the Aryan races were more evolved than those he opposed. He believed that Jews were little more than animals. Communism also based their treatment of groups of people on the theory of evolution. Lenin and Stalin believed that people were like natural resources to be used in whatever way benefited their communist country, even if it meant to kill them like any other animal.

4. Some things that fuel racism, bigotry, and prejudice are stereotypes. What is a stereotype? Can you think of some common stereotypes of Christians that are not Biblical? What are some stereotypes of Irish people? Why are stereotypes wrong? Why do you think we are so susceptible to stereotyping people? Why is it wrong to do this?

Answer – Stereotyping is attributing to an entire group of people behavior patterns that only some of the group may be guilty. Stereotypes of Christians might be: they look down their noses at everyone else, they are very judgmental, and they have a “holier than thou” attitude. A common stereotype of an Irish person is that they all have a short fuse and a long temper. It is wrong because everyone is an individual and should not be judged on the actions of another person.

1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

5. Have you ever met someone that you had already formed an opinion about only to find you were completely wrong? How about the other way around, someone met you and you changed their opinion of you when they got to know you? Do you think it was because you or they had not done what the above verse talks about? If everyone were to apply the above verse and treat people the way God does, what do you think would happen?

6. Pastor Rick said that there is only one-way to end racism, what was it? Do you agree? Why or why not? Do you think the government can end racism through legislation? Why or why not?

Answer – Pastor Rick said that the solution to racism is to lead everyone to Christ. The government can do nothing to change the human heart, which is where racism originates. Only God can do that.

MAKING IT PRACTICAL (OPTIONAL)

Below are some practical things you can do to avoid being racist.

Level 1 Challenge: Honestly ask and answer the following question: Am I racist in any way, shape, or form? If your answer is yes, confess it to God and begin to choose to think of that group of people as individuals God loves and not as a group. It would help to learn about the groups of people we have been prejudiced against to see each one as an individual.

Level 2 Challenge: Is there anyone that you have treated badly because of racism, bigotry, or prejudice? If so, go to them and apologize. Ask them to forgive you. This could be a great opening to share Christ with them and that you are apologizing because that is what God commands you to do.

Level 3 Challenge: As a group find an opportunity to serve a group of people that are generally discriminated against for some reason. Show them how that God loves them no matter what.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

PRAY for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.

PONDER YOUR PROGRESS after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what did not. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment.

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Going Further is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We have designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is more important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as, "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spend 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately, as part of your accountability to the group, you want to commit to personal life change.
- Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessing of success.

