

For the sermon preached on
6/7/2020:
"Thinking Biblically on Race"

Group life is even more critical during this incredible season. Over and over, group leaders are reporting that suddenly, there is a new hunger to connect, share, pray, and meditate on Scripture together and so we are making these guides available weekly and suggesting a new format during this season.

There are a number of differences between meeting in person and meeting online, ranging from the obvious to the subtle. One is, given our attention spans for online meetings, we want to encourage you to limit the length of your call between 45-60 minutes and we are calling this “Check-In Plus One.” Meaning, spend a few minutes checking in with your group and see if there are any new needs with them (or even amongst their neighbors). “The One” is to spend time in study. As our Stay at Home continues, our desire for meaningful content and interaction will grow. Given our new format, the study guides based on Sunday’s Sermon will be designed to be more application based (as opposed to unpacking the text with the Inductive Bible Study method). You might consider sharing the passage beforehand with your group in hopes that they might spend more time with the Scripture before the gathering.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the Group Life Team

Welcome everyone to the Zoom call and outline the goal of this call being 45 minutes. Spend 15-20 minutes checking in with one another, then move into a time of prayer, and then spend some time discussing the application of the Scripture passage.

A “Check-in” question might be, “Now that we have completed so many weeks of our Stay at Home quarantine, how are you doing, and is there anything new that has arisen in your life or in your neighborhood that we can pray about?”

For the Group:

Discussing racism is often a sensitive and loaded topic. Further complicated by our meeting on Zoom, we want to do our best to extend grace to one another, remembering we all have different entry points into this conversation, as well as unique experiences throughout our lives. Let's avoid any sense of judgement and enter our time with humility, desiring to learn what the Lord wants to show us.

Let's begin by dedicating this time in prayer.

Q – Pastor Bryan opened the sermon by giving vision to the message: “Our purpose isn't to offer **simple solutions** to complex problems, or to **prescribe a particular response** that works every believer. We're simply offering a **biblical framework** that **defines the space** Christians need to **operate** in as we **respond individually** and **collectively** to the challenging issues and problems of our time. We may **arrive at different conclusions** and feel led to **different action steps** as led by the Spirit, **but** those conclusions and steps must be **informed** by Biblical truth.” And then proceeded to give the following 4 points on thinking Biblically about racism:

1. We are ALL made in God's image – equally loved, valued, and destined for eternal glory (*Genesis 1:27-28; Revelation 7:9*).
2. Racism is a sin which has infected every human society and every human heart, including mine (*Acts 13:34*).
3. Those who have power and advantage must use it for the flourishing of all people (*Isaiah 58:6-12*).
4. The work of racial justice and reconciliation belongs to the church, because we have been brought near and made one in Christ (*Ephesians 2:14-17*).

Which ones capture your attention and call you to reflect further and why?

Q – Long-time member of Grace, Kim Stanfield, shared profound insights with us as well as action steps (like “Listen and believe,” and “Have conversations,” and “Engage civically”). What are some of the points Kim made that you took to heart?

Q – In response to this message, what is one thing you feel the Lord calling you to do this week to grow in anti-racism and to help the Church work towards justice and reconciliation?

Growing in this conversation will take time, humility, and a steadfast commitment. Let us pray for our resolve to continue to become the people that Jesus has called us to be – those that love their neighbors, those that honor the Image of God in all people, and those committed to God's justice. Let's pray ...