

FOR *unity*

Psalm 133:1 says, “How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live in unity.” If this is true, the opposite is true as well. It is unpleasant and destructive when brothers and sisters live in disunity. We know this all too well in every arena of life, but there is no area where this is true than racial unity. We live in a world rife with racial tensions, tensions that have played out significantly in our own communities. What do we do? As followers of Jesus, we are called to lean in, listen, and be for racial unity, even when it is hard and uncomfortable. This is the gospel.

As we do this today, we want to exhibit unity even in our discussion time. As such, here are some helpful guidelines for your discussion:

- ***Listen first.*** Understand that people are coming from vastly different backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences. Listen to their story.
 - ***Focus on you.*** It is easy in discussions like this to focus on what other people aren't getting right. Instead, focus on your own journey and what God is teaching you.
 - ***Elevate the discussion.*** Racial discussions are often diminished to certain phrases or categories (Republican/Democrat/Black Lives Matter/All Lives Matter/Blue Lives Matter, etc.). Instead of focusing on those categories, elevate the discussion to what God and Scripture have to say.
 - ***Embrace Discomfort.*** Be willing to be uncomfortable as you wrestle through what God has to say and what he is calling us to do as individuals and a church.
1. Why do you think even approaching the topic of racial unity is so triggering and emotional for people? What tensions and fears do you have and feel on this issue?
 2. Respond to the following statements and verses. How do they inform our view of each other?

“There is only one race and if you are a believer in Christ then who you are in Christ should be the central factor of your identity. In other words, we are Christians before we are European or African or Asian or American or whatever genetic make-up dictates your ethnicity. Ethnicity doesn't determine who we are, the bible declares that God is no respecter of persons which means that God will and can use anyone and our ethnicity doesn't give us any advantages or disadvantages in the eyes of God. God created diversity and it is good but it never has nor will it ever suggest hierarchy. Skin color does not determine value!”

Lawrence Kirby

“Be color blessed not color blind”

Dr. Derwin Gray

“We must face the fact that in America, the church is still the most segregated major institution in America. At 11:00 on Sunday morning when we stand and sing and Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Acts 10:34 Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

3. Lawrence Kirby said that we must reject subtle cultural prejudices. What are some common subtle prejudices that people have of other races? That you have?

4. The only way for racial unity to occur is if followers of Jesus speak up in the face of racism. What does this practically look like for you? How do you do this with grace and truth?

5. What is one practical step you can take towards racial unity this week?