

# Racism

By Bob Kline

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Read the comments related to Colossians 3:12–15 and Luke 10:25–28 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: According to this passage, what should be the result of those who put on love for one another? Does racial prejudice contribute to or contradict this passage?

### Assignment Two

Read Galatians 3:23–29 and then read the comments related to Luke 10:29–32 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What are the three opposing pair-groups Paul names in this passage? What happens to the pair-groups after faith comes?

### Assignment Three

Read Leviticus 19:33–34 and then read the comments related to Luke 10:33–37 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What reason does God give the Israelites for loving their alien neighbors? What other teaching of Jesus is this similar to? (Hint: Look at Luke 6:27–36).

### Scripture to Memorize

*“But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” James 2:9*

### Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that God's love brings people together in unity.

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Ethics, Lesson Two, Week Eighteen

## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

On April 12, 2014, a black man named Freddie Gray was arrested by the Baltimore police. During the transport back to the station, he suffered injuries to his spinal cord that claimed his life a week later. On August 9, 2014, a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, shot and killed an unarmed black man during a robbery investigation. Both incidents sparked violent protests and riots across the country as civil rights leaders charged that racism was responsible. How does the Bible say we should treat people of a different race?

### Who Is My Neighbor?

**Read** Luke 10:25–37 out loud.

#### Studying the Passage, vv. 25–28

**Verse 25. a lawyer.** This was not an attorney who represented clients before a judge but an expert in the Torah, the Law of Moses. **put him to the test.** Most lawyers considered Jesus a false teacher and constantly followed Him around, asking questions designed to trip Him up in front of His followers. They were trying to discredit His testimony, a tactic today's lawyers still practice in court.

**Verse 26. What is written . . . ?** Jesus commonly answered His critics by turning their questions back on them. In this case Jesus emphasized that His teaching was based on God's unchanging Word, a source the lawyers themselves considered sacred.

**Verse 27. You shall love.** The lawyer answered Jesus's question by quoting the Shema. The Shema is the command from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 to love God supremely and to love one's neighbor as oneself. Jesus affirmed in Matthew 22:40 that the Shema was the foundation of the entire Old Testament. **Verse 28. correctly.** The lawyer gave the correct answer, displaying accurate head knowledge. Jesus would go on to show that accurate head knowledge isn't enough.

#### Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on what sort of bond forms between those who love one another according to Colossians 3:12–15.

#### Studying the Passage, Luke 10:29–32

**Verse 29. justify himself.** To *justify* means "to try and make yourself appear to be doing the right thing when you know you're really doing the wrong thing." **who is my neighbor?** In true legal fashion the lawyer was trying to confuse the issue by looking for some kind of definition from Jesus with which he could disagree. He wasn't asking questions because he was looking for answers. Instead, he was asking because he was looking for an argument. But instead of engaging him in a legal argument about definitions of words, Jesus wisely chose instead to tell a story.

**Verse 30. half dead.** After being robbed and savagely beaten, this anonymous Jewish man was left for dead. Without medical care he would die. **Verse 31. priest . . . other side.** A fellow Jew, one of the religious leaders of Israel, passed the dying man because touching him would have made the priest "ceremonially unclean," unable to perform his duties for a short time. Not only did the priest not care for the dying man; he made sure he passed him on the opposite side of the road.

**Verse 32. Levite.** All priests came from the tribe of Levi although not all Levites became priests. Because all of them were from the “priestly tribe,” they considered themselves spiritually elite, better than “common” Israelites. They also followed the law strictly. Touching a bloody man would have made the Levite “unclean” for a short time. The Levite also passed him on the other side of the road.

#### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on what Paul says about separating people into groups in Galatians 3:23–29.

#### **On Your Own**

In the space below, write how you would feel if you were the victim of a severe beating, like the man in the story, and people walked around you to avoid getting dirty.

#### **Studying the Passage, Luke 10:33–37**

**Verse 33. Samaritan.** Jews hated Samaritans because they were a mixture of Jewish and Gentile blood. When the northern kingdom was conquered by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC, the Assyrians took most of the survivors captive and repopulated the region with other conquered people. The two groups intermarried and produced children that were part Jewish and part Gentile. Judean Jews despised and avoided the Samaritans because of their racial impurity.

**Verse 33. felt compassion.** Jesus pointedly stated that this despised Samaritan displayed more human kindness and empathy toward the wounded Jewish man than his spiritually elite kinsmen.

**Verse 34. came to him.** In stark contrast to the priest and Levite who passed by on the opposite side of the road, the Samaritan came to his side. He bandaged his wounds, took him to an inn to recover, and paid the bill himself.

**Verse 36. Which . . . neighbor.** Jesus answered the lawyer’s challenge with a question to which the lawyer already knew the answer. Precise definitions won’t tell us who our neighbor is, but love will. **Verse 37. Go . . . same.** Jesus lived and taught in a way that set an example for us to follow. It’s not enough to know the truth in our minds; we must live it out in our lives.

#### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on what God reminded the Israelites of in Leviticus 19:33–34.

#### **On Your Own**

In the space below, write some practical ways you can help create unity and discourage division among people of different races.

#### **Discussion Questions**

Notice how Jesus intentionally used physical proximity in telling this parable. The priest and Levite passed on the other side of the road while the Samaritan came near to care for him. Do you think this is important in race relations? Why?

## **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

## **Since Last Week**

5 minutes

Give the group this update: “In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to. . . .”

## **Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

## **Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

## **Prayer**

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

One of the most miraculous aspects of creation is the way God wove unity and diversity together so harmoniously. Although the universe is immensely complex, with a staggering array of materials interacting with one another in every imaginable way, the universe exists in amazing balance. Creation reflects its Creator. Just as God is infinitely complex yet absolutely unified within Himself, so His creation reflects both unity and diversity.

God created mankind to be diverse in many different ways: height, strength, intelligence, personality, gender, appearance, and so on. We are as different as we are alike. Difference, however, is not superiority. What makes us all equal in dignity and worth—what unifies us in our diversity—is that we all bear God's image. Unique in all creation, man alone was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). The Bible describes all the other living things as coming from the earth "after their kind" (Genesis 1:24). Only man was created in the image of God.

What does it mean to bear God's image? Scholars don't always agree on the answers. One of the things it most certainly means is that He created us with the capacity to have loving relationships with Him and with our fellowman. It also certainly means that whatever His image is in us has priceless value to God. It is because we bear His image that He became like us and died on the cross to redeem us from the penalty of our sin. God's word makes clear that our worth is not measured by our race or nationality but by His image.

So the answer to the lawyer's question—Who is my neighbor?—is not at all difficult. It's whoever is next to you. Whoever that may be.

### **Parent Question**

*In the midst of racial diversity, what does God desire us to pursue? Why?*

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