

Check the Box

Conversations with our kids about our
multicultural history and family

By Rachel Winzeler Ferguson

For my daughters

*For other parents having the same kinds of
conversations with their kids*

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Note from the Author:

I started writing this book because I wanted my daughters to be prepared for the big change of moving from Brazil to America. In Brazil I was American, my husband was Jamaican, and my daughters were Brazilian. In America, I was white, my husband was Black, and my girls were mixed or “What are you?” We were leaving a small safe community where everyone knew us, and moving to a different culture where my girls would go to school and meet people who didn’t understand them and their stories. We were leaving the label “Missionary family” behind.

I knew the best way to be understood by others (or, at worst, to stand up to bullies), was to know who you are and what brought you to where you are. As I started to explain our family history, I realized I couldn’t tell it without explaining the history of Jamaican slavery. Since my daughters were born and spent most of their first years in Brazil, I needed to explain Brazilian history, and how that played out in how people sometimes related to us (specifically when talking about hair). Since we were moving to America, and they would probably spend most of their lives there and relate to it as their home, I needed to explain United States slavery history as well, because who knows how people would/will label them.

Personally, I entered a season of lament. Lament of leaving so much I loved, and a home I had chosen. Lament of having to face a whole new culture as a multicultural family. As I tried to write our family history, there was the lament of so much pain and suffering. Lament that my husband’s side of family history was missing. Lament over racial issues in America. There was also lament over a pandemic, and so much ambiguous loss. Lament was, for me, an integral (and preliminary) part of figuring out how to talk about race. Throughout this book there will be questions in BOLD. I hope you take the time to consider and answer them.

What is Lament to you?

3 Parts of Lament



Complaint

Grief stage: Anger, Depression

Feelings and questions. sitting in the situation. Letting go.

When others lament:

Listen. Wait. Believe what they say and feel is real.



Clarify

Grief stage: Bargaining, Denial

What you specifically want and need. Putting it into words.

Ask "How are you inviting me to respond to what you are saying?"



Connect

Grief stage: Acceptance

What is the truth? True about God, the past, and about me?

Pray. If they ask for help, give it. Be available. Be patient.

I wrote this book to complain and let it out, to clarify and put into words for myself and my daughters so much feeling that was blurry. And to connect with truth: about God and where He was in all of this, about me, and how I can help my daughters understand the good and the bad and move past bitterness to find something more true and real. I think that is the purpose of lament. I also wrote this book to help others complain, clarify, and connect through lament, and have conversations with their kids about their history as a family, as a nation, and as a world.

I was challenged by a friend to invite God into this "Race Journey," as I called it. To open the door for how He wanted to redeem it, because our God is in the redemption business. How did I want our daughters to deal with race? How did I want our daughters to deal with life? Redemption is God's plan to fix our

broken relationship with Him. If He is all about redemption, then I need to be all about redemption, and fixing the broken relationships in my life, as well as in my church, community, and culture, through His power: and that is what I want my daughters to know.

Redemption is going from the “Without God” box to the “With God” box, as well as God fixing the broken image of God in us. Redemption always costs someone something, and what are the practical implications of redemption in our world today? How can I prepare my daughters for whatever may possibly come in the future? There are many things that, as Terry Pratchett said, “Even if it’s not your fault, it’s your responsibility.”

Where there is something specific to our family, I put it in italics. When I found a specific resource for something, I put a number, with the resource listed at the end of the chapter. With many of the resources, I don’t agree with all of what they say: but I do think they make some good points concerning what I recommended them for. Please take the good and leave the rest. At the end of the book, I added some additional questions and thoughts about lament which came up while writing the book, but didn’t seem to fit inside the book. Finally, there is a glossary and resources list, that I hope you find is only the beginning of what you find out there.

For this book, which is first for my girls and second for others who want to start thinking about the same kinds of questions, I want to say this: Part 1 is about being and feeling like you are outside the box: the box being the categories we put people in, or feeling “normal.” Part 2 is about being inside the box and inviting others in: the box being the one God made for everyone (the “With God” box) and God’s big plan is to have us all in His box again. This is called Redemption. This is fixing broken relationships, and this is the plan for our lives now too. But the adventure of what that looks like for each one of us? That is still being written.

4 Steps to Fix Broken Relationships

When a relationship is broken, someone needs to take responsibility to fix it, or it will continue to get worse.

-  **Acknowledge**
Change stage: Contemplation
-  **Apologize**
Change stage: Preparation
-  **Make it Right**
Change stage: Action
-  **Recommit**
Change stage: Maintenance

Having a change of mind. Carefully gathering your thoughts and deciding how to act. Understanding the situation, and realizing where you went wrong.

Admitting how and why you were wrong. Clearly stating the situation, and where it went wrong. Not hiding anything.

What is it you need to stop doing/start doing now that you know this? Ask: HOW can I make it right? And then really listen. Work together to make a plan and do it.

You probably won't get it all right the first time. Keep coming back to your commitment to making it right and try again. Grow your relationship through communication.

@2girlsncurls-Information learned from Supercamp

15 Resources for Talking to Kids about Race

"Netflix Jr." **YouTube** channel playlist "Celebrating Black History Month"

"PBS Kids" **YouTube** channel playlist "Celebrate Black History Month" and "PBS kids talk about"

Hereweeread.com has a 29 days of Black History download free printable

Centerracialjustice.org has a lot of resources

Learningforjustice.org PDF download "Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism..." and "Social Justice Standards"

Apa.org has a list of anti-racism resources

"That Missionary Life" Podcast has the audiobook series for "Check the Box"

"Five Minutes of Fergie" **YouTube** channel playlist "Five Minutes of Talking to Kids about Race"

"Storytime with Ms.Jay" **YouTube** channel playlist "Black History Month Read Alouds"

Diversebooks.org has Resources for race, equity and inclusion

Embracerace.org has lots of resources and downloads

Letstalkcambridge.org has PDF Resources for Talking about Race with Young Children

Jbcc.harvard.edu has PDF Resources for Talking to Your Child About Racism

Metropediatrics.com has anti-racist resources and "Race education race conscious conversation starters" pdf

Amazon.com has "Check the Box: conversations with our kids about our multicultural history and family"

More resources you know:

Outside the Box

Part 1

Chapter 1: Boxes as Tools

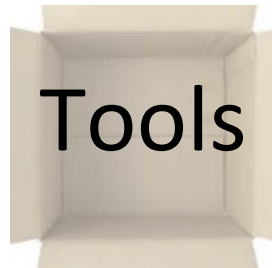
How can boxes be **tools**?

How can **boxes** be a problem?

How do you describe your
family **ethnicity**?

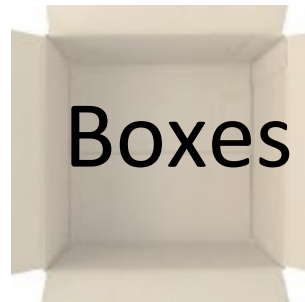
What is **Race**?

Where do **you belong**?



I know you are curious and want to know where you came from and your family history. Let's try to explain it with boxes. You have boxes for your toys, right? Most people like to put things into boxes, so they can use the stuff later. In our minds, it's like we have boxes to put information into, and put away to use later. This isn't a good or bad thing: just a **tool** (something we use to get things done).

How can boxes be tools?



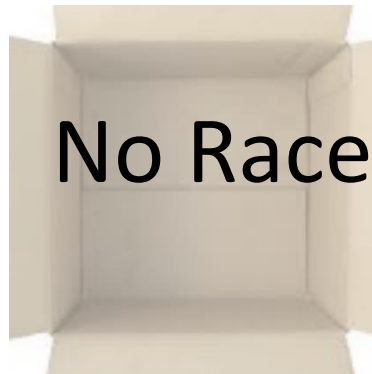
Boxes can be a problem when we think the way we put things into boxes, or what we put into boxes, are right, and other ways are wrong: without being open to learning more. Or when some boxes are better than other boxes. When it comes to who you are, most people in America will normally try to put you into one of five race boxes: White, Black, **Hispanic**, (meaning anyone south of North America), Native, or Asian. This is because of a lot of things, and a lot of history.

How can boxes be a problem?



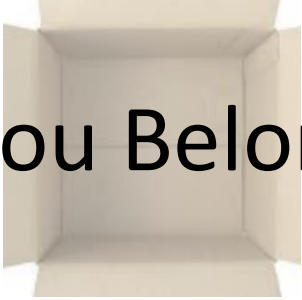
The truth is, most people don't fit into just one race box. They are a mixture, or consider themselves part of a smaller box (or category) called "**Ethnicity.**" Ethnicity is from a specific country or culture. *For us Fergies, Mommy's family is mostly all put into the white box by other people, but came from (mostly) Switzerland and Scotland. They've all been in America for a while now. Daddy's family is mostly all put into the Black box by people, but they are from Jamaica. You were born in Brazil, so you can check most all of the race boxes on forms except Asian or Native. This will confuse some people, and that's okay.*

How do you describe your family ethnicity?



Actually, there isn't any "race." (1) People are just people. It is just one box that God made (with lots of different ethnicities). Race boxes were made up as a way to organize, divide, and control people. If one kind of people do one kind of things, and another kind of people do other things and act other ways, then it would be easier to understand. It is also easier to say that my way is better than someone else's way, so my race box must be better than your race box. The answer isn't to say everyone is the same: we know that isn't true. But it is true that we are all special in different ways and all valuable because God made us.

What is Race?



You Belong

It is okay to be different, and for people to not know what box to put you in. Maybe you don't want to be put into a box at all. Maybe you want to be in a different box than people put you into. You belong in the people box, with everyone else, while you figure out your differences and what makes you special. Maybe you aren't sure where you belong. **You belong with us.** Let's learn more about your family history, and what made you who you are.

Where do you belong?

Chapter 1 Resources:

1. Answers in Genesis (.org) has a book called “One Race, One Blood”

Understanding the Difference

Race	Ethnicity	Nationality
This doesn't actually exist! Was made to divide people by differences they could see.	Grouping of people based on shared social traits like languages, culture, history and ancestry.	Your country of citizenship/passport.
Examples: Black, white, Asian, Native American, Hispanic...	Examples: Arab, Jewish, English, Chinese, Maori, Korean...	Examples: British, American, Kenyan, French, Brazilian...
What Race(s) do people see you as?	What Ethnicity(s) are you?	What Nationality(s) are you? by Layla F. Saad


Chapter 2: Slavery and Expansion

How do you explain **slavery**?
Has slavery always been about
resources?
How do you explain
Colonization?
How do you explain the
Atlantic Slave Trade?
Why was skin color connected
to **power**?



Just like our family takes care of each other, people over history have gathered into groups to stay safe. Sometimes a group would fight another group to get something they wanted, especially land and resources. The winning group could do whatever they wanted to do with the losing group. Oftentimes, the losing group had to serve and do whatever the winning group said to do: they were no longer free. This is called **slavery**. (1)

How do you explain slavery?



Resources

Slavery is when one person owns another person, like you own your toys. In the past, this was mostly because of land wars (taking over a place and people), or **resources** (like money). If someone owed money, they'd be a slave until they paid it off. Or if they needed money and couldn't care for their family, they might sell themselves to someone rich so they wouldn't die not having food.

Has slavery always been about resources?



Colonization

Around the 1500s, people from Europe realized that there were places all over they never knew existed. Unfortunately, many Europeans did not think of the people in those new places as people like themselves, but as resources to be used. This time was called **Colonization** (which was when people traveled and made colonies). (2) Europe traded guns, textile, and wine to Africa in exchange for stolen people, who they took to the Americas to work growing sugar and coffee.

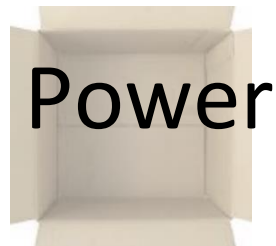
How do you explain Colonization?



Atlantic Slave Trade

To make things work best for Europe, they bought and forcibly moved around 10 million people from Africa to North and South America. This was called the **Atlantic Slave Trade**. (3) The people who originally lived in North and South America were enslaved, removed, killed, or died from the new diseases that the Europeans brought (but thank goodness many are still here today! 4) They were called Indians because the people from Europe thought they were in India. Today we call them Native Americans, or indigenous people, because they were here before anyone from Europe came.

How do you explain the Atlantic Slave Trade?

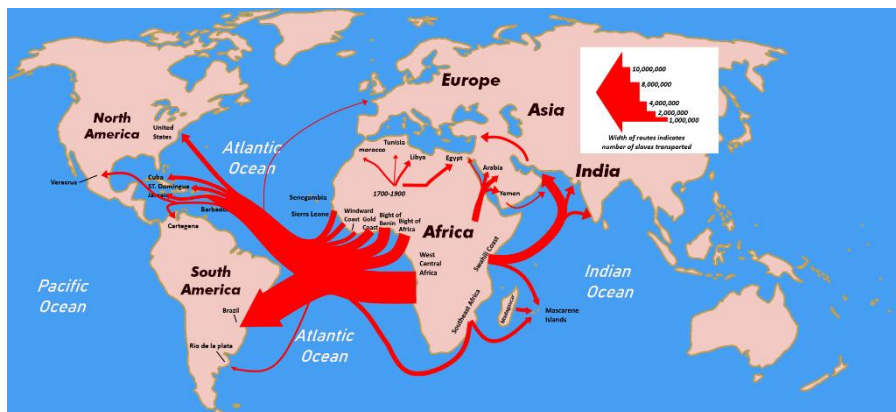


Most of the people from Europe had lighter brown skin, while those from Africa and North and South America mostly had darker brown skin. It was an easy way to tell the difference. Many of the people with lighter skin thought they were better than those with darker skin since they had gained control. They began the idea of “race,” and said it was science, but that was not true. Since they had the **power**, they thought they must be more important and better than other people, and their skin tone must be better too. This is a really sad part of your family history, and changed everything for everyone. (5)

Why was skin color connected to power?

Chapter 2 Resources:

1. YouTube channel “Prager U” video called “The Short History of Slavery.”
2. YouTube channel “Explaintychannel” video called “Colonies Explained.”
3. YouTube channel “Ted-ed” video called “Atlantic Slave Trade.”
4. My Native American friend asked me to make sure to point out that they are still around, when talking about their history
5. YouTube channel “Origin of Everything” video called “Why did Europeans Enslave Africans?”



Chapter 3: The Mindset of Slavery

How do you explain someone thinking you are **not equal** to them?
How do you explain **chattel slavery**?
How do you explain **Christian's** part in slavery?
How was the **Bible** used wrongly to help continue slavery?
What's the truth about being in **God's image**?



Not Equal

Skin color is an easy way to divide people into boxes. You can quickly see who is a part of your box, or group, and who isn't. You can't change what color of skin you have, and you don't choose it. In history, it helped white people to keep control of people with darker skin as slaves. Most people who enslaved other people believed that people with darker skin weren't even humans: or at least **not equal** to them.

How do you explain someone thinking you are not equal to them?

Chattel Slavery



Most of the slavery based on race was a kind called **Chattel Slavery**. (1) It wasn't from war or money, they weren't slaves because of religion, owing money, or choices, but just because of their skin color. There was no end in sight. Everyone labeled Black was put into a slavery box their whole life: and their kids, and their kids' kids. Very few people were ever able to leave slavery. Even if you were half-white, or mostly white, one drop (2) of being Black meant you were a slave in America for your whole life (3) (in other countries, the history is different).

How do you explain chattel slavery?



Christians

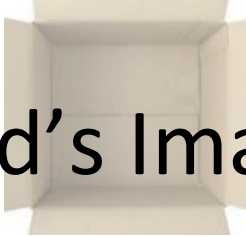
A real sad thing about slavery is that most of the people from Europe who had enslaved people said they were **Christians**. They said they wanted to tell the other people in the world about Jesus. But very few of them really wanted to invite others into God's family: instead, they wanted to control others and make money from the work the enslaved people did. (4) There have always been, and always will be, people who say they are Christians but don't really know Jesus, or give their life to Him. It isn't our job to figure out who is telling the truth: that is God's job, and He knows everything.

How do you explain Christian's part in slavery?



Many enslavers used the Bible (often, the story of Noah's son Ham having to serve his brothers) to say that people from Africa (darker skinned) were supposed to serve the people from Europe (lighter skinned). (5&6) This is a big, evil lie: taking God's name in vain and using the Bible wrongly. Other people said that God had made a system of **Authority** (that means who is in charge), and that white men were in charge of everything, then white women, then everyone else. To many of them, Black people were just like animals.

How was the Bible used to help continue slavery?



God's Image

God says we are ALL made in **His image** with all of our skin colors and ethnicities. We are each important enough for Him to die for. He actually made all the skin colors on purpose, and made us different to show all the different parts of who He is as God. God gave us one big rule as Christians: to love God and love others. (7) God calls us to serve each other—not to own others. Can you love others while making them your slave? No. (8) *For us Fergies, because of how many people were horribly taken from Africa, the history of slavery, and your history, is different in each of the places you are from: America, Jamaica, and Brazil.*

What's the truth about being in God's image?

Chapter 3 Resources:

1. YouTube channel "NBC News Learn" video called "From Servitude to Slavery"
2. Book "One Drop: Shifting the Lens on Race" by Yaba Blay
3. Book "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents" by Isabel Wilkerson
4. YouTube channel "GlobalBlackHistory" video called "The role of Missionaries in the colonization of Africa"
5. Book "White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity" by Robert P. Jones talks more about the different ways the Bible was used to promote/continue/excuse slavery
6. YouTube channel "NBC News" video called "'Slave Bible' Removed Passages To Instill Obedience And Uphold Slavery"
7. YouTube channel "Bible Project" video called "Image of God"
8. Book "How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America" by Clint Smith, questions "But weren't there good slave owners?" Answered: "If a person kidnaps your kids but then feeds them and doesn't hurt them, does that mean it was okay to kidnap them? Were they a good kidnapper?"

Chapter 4: Multicultural Slavery

How do you explain the **mindset** that allowed for slavery in the United States?

How do you explain the **Civil War**?

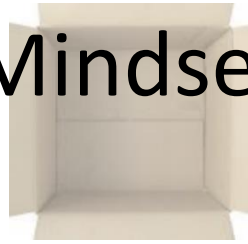
How do you explain **Reconstruction**?

How do you explain **Segregation**?

How do you tell **Jamaican** (West Indies) slavery history?

How do you tell **Brazilian** slavery history?

Mindset



In America, about 500,000 people were stolen from Africa and enslaved. There were more white people than black people in America, but there were many more poor people than rich people. One way the rich people made sure to have the poor white people on “their side” without really helping them was to put them in their "white box" together. (1) The poor white people might not have much, but they thought “At least I have more than the Black people.” This is a **scarcity mindset** (a mindset is a way of thinking) that thinks if we treat everyone equally, there will be nothing left for me. (2) *For us Fergies, this history is important to learn because this is where you are growing up, and most people will think that this is your history.*

How do you explain the mindset that allowed for slavery in the United States?



Civil War

A scarcity mindset is selfish and doesn't follow God's number one rule which is to love God and love others. It finally took a war called the **Civil War**, where the North said slavery had to stop and the South wouldn't. (3) Many, many people died. The North won the war, and slavery was made against the law in 1865, but that didn't change the mindsets that people believed about Black people being less equal than white people. It didn't change the boxes that people had made up in their minds. (4)

How do you explain the Civil War?



Reconstruction

When America worked to rebuild after the war (called **Reconstruction**), the North didn't end up putting in the hard to work of changing mindsets (5), and the South worked even harder to keep the wrong mindsets and keep white people and Black people separate. Our reconstruction failed, and we've never had, as a country, a time of addressing the pain of slavery, and actively working to fix all of the resulting problems that came from it.

How do you explain Reconstruction?

Segregation



Segregation was purposefully keeping Black people out of white spaces (6&7). If white people couldn't use slavery to control Black people, they found other ways to do it, like putting many Black men in jail, not letting them vote, and making laws and systems that made it hard for Black people to do anything near white people. One of the biggest things they worked against was Black and white people getting married (8&9): they knew that once you become family, that often becomes more important than your mindsets.

How do you explain Segregation?



Jamaica

In Jamaica, about 4,500,000 people were stolen and brought to the West Indies area. Those who were enslaved far outnumbered those who enslaved them in Jamaica. There were places where those who were enslaved took over (like in Haiti: 10) or where those enslaved ran away and made free areas, such as the Maroons in the mountains of Jamaica (11), who were fierce warriors. Slavery was **abolished** (that means made illegal) in 1834 in Jamaica, as it was England's colony. *For us Fergies, this is your family history, and how your ancestors arrived in Jamaica from Africa. Some of your grandmother's family was Maroon.*

How do you tell Jamaican (West Indies) slavery history?



In Brazil, about 5,000,000 people were stolen and brought from Africa (12). Those who were enslaved outnumbered those who enslaved them in Brazil, but not as much as in Jamaica. Brazil asked Europeans to come to Brazil to help “**whiten**” the population. (13) Their goal was to intermarry so that generally people would look “lighter.” The lie they spread was that whiter was better and richer, so you wanted to be whiter to have a better chance at life. Brazil was the last major country in the world to end slavery, in 1888. Slavery has left a horrible mark on every part of the world. *For us Fergies, You were born in Brazil, so you are Brazilian, but this history doesn't connect directly to you*

How do you tell Brazilian slavery history?

Chapter 4 Resources:

1. "The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism" by Jemar Tisby
2. "The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together" by Heather McGhee.
3. YouTube channel "PragerU" video called "Was the Civil War about Slavery?"
4. "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents" by Isabel Wilkerson
5. YouTube channel "PragerU" video called "Reconstruction: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"
6. YouTube channel "HUB Scuola" video called "The history of segregation in the USA"
7. "Let Justice Roll Down" by John Perkins
8. YouTube channel "World Channel" video called "How America Outlawed Interracial Marriage | The History of White People in America"
9. "Loving" the movie
10. YouTube channel "Jabzy" video called "Haitian Slave Revolt | 3 Minute History"
11. YouTube channel "Vagabrothers" video called "The Maroons | Jamaica's Forgotten Nation"
12. YouTube channel "Vox" video called "What it means to be Black in Brazil"
13. YouTube channel "Kiratiana" video called "The Whitening of Brazil: Why Black Brazilians Marry White (Ad Junior)"

Chapter 5: Immigration

How do you explain **modern slavery**?

How do you explain the effects of **immigration**?

What is it like for **first-generation** immigrants?

How do you explain **stereotypes**?

How do you explain **white privilege**?

Modern Slavery



Just because slavery was illegal, didn't mean people didn't find other ways to do it: **slavery still happens today.** (1&2) Just because the laws said that all people were equal and human, didn't mean that people stopped teaching or thinking that the boxes they had made during slavery were wrong. Unless you purposefully learn to take people out of the boxes you've put them in, they will stay there in your mind, and that will end up affecting how you act.

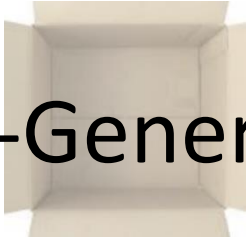
How do you explain modern slavery?

Immigration



Imagine all the things you would have to believe to make slavery seem okay in your mind! As more **immigration** (3) (that is people moving from one country to another) happened around the world, people added more boxes and ideas of how they thought those people were: most often not based on truth, or knowing the person, but from other people from their own box talking about people in other boxes behind their backs (this is called gossip).

How do you explain the effects of immigration?

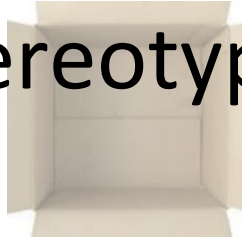


First-Generation

Immigration was and is a big deal. It took a lot of work for our brave families to leave their homes where everything was familiar and they knew everyone. Many immigrants didn't have a lot of money to come to America, and they had to work really hard. They had to live with family until they saved up enough to move into their own place. They had to learn a new language. They had to get used to a new way of doing just about everything. Everyone in America, except for Native Americans, were immigrants at one time or another. There is a lot of pressure on first-generation immigrants to fit in. *For us Fergies, in mommy's family, this happened one or two hundred years ago. In daddy's family, it was after he was born, meaning he is a first-generation immigrant. (4)*

What is it like for first-generation immigrants?

Stereotypes



Stereotypes are the ways that people think someone in a particular box is like. Stereotypes can be true, or can be wrong. Most people do not want to be stereotyped: they want to be known as their own person. That is why friendship is a powerful tool against stereotypes. How can you know what is true about a person? You get to know them! As you understand some of your history, you can see where some stereotypes may be put on you about who you are. If you believe the scarcity mindset, the best way to make sure you get to keep your box the same is to make sure other people in other boxes don't get to come into your box. But is that a good way to live?

How do you explain stereotypes?



Privilege

White people have had more access to money and freedom since they were not forced to move and be enslaved (for the most part, as a people group) for most of modern history. Laws and systems were often made in favor of white people, since white people were the ones making laws. We call this **white privilege**. (5) Privilege can be something special you get that someone else doesn't, or maybe not having a problem that other people have. It doesn't mean your life is easy or better than someone else's life. Our family has a lot of privilege in many ways, and it is important to understand that and be grateful, while also realizing that it isn't the same for everyone.

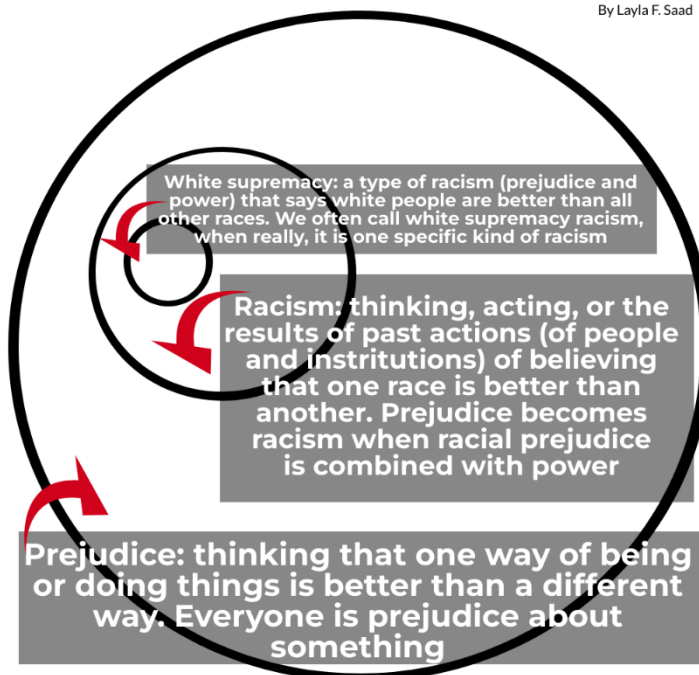
How do you explain white privilege?

Chapter 5 Resources:

1. YouTube channel "TDC" video called "Modern Slavery: The Most-Afflicted Countries."
2. International Justice Mission (Ijm.org) founder wrote "The Locust Effect" A21 (a21.org), led by Christine Caine, also does great work
3. YouTube channel "Vox" video called "The racist history of US immigration policy."
4. YouTube channel "Storybooth" video called "It Wasn't Easy Growing Up As An Immigrant"
5. YouTube channel "Channel 4" video called "Heartbreaking Moment When Kids Learn About White Privilege | The School That Tried to End Racism"

Prejudice, Racism, and White Supremacy

By Layla F. Saad



Chapter 6: Heritage

How do you explain **racism**?

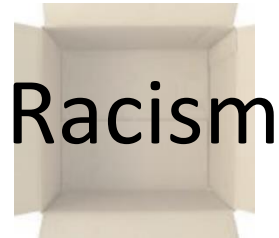
How do you explain **colorism**?

How do you explain **classism**?

What is your maternal and
paternal **heritage**?

What are your family's **values**?

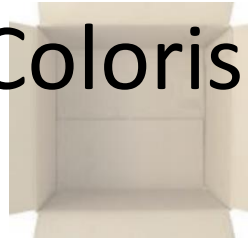
What is your **partner's heritage**?



In America, prisons were often used as another form of slavery. (1) Police were also often used to “protect” the white people box from the Black people box. (2) The white people box was still generally considered better than the black people box for many, many years: this is called **Racism**. Racism is also in the systems that were made by people acting on their wrong mindset about white and Black people. Often these effects still hurt people without anyone doing it on purpose—or being racist—but because the systems were not changed. (3)

How do you explain racism?

Colorism



In Jamaica, the white and Black boxes became a bit more fluid and turned into more of a light-skinned box and a dark-skinned box: this is called **Colorism**. (4) This is also true of other places around the world: where often, only darker skinned people will be treated badly, or there will be a kind of sliding scale of how people are treated (5&6). This is especially sad because it shows that even if we move past white/Black issues, we always seem to find something else to treat some people better than others, and divide people.

How do you explain colorism?

Classism



In Brazil, their boxes slowly changed to be more about a “rich box” and a “poor box,” with many of the same qualities and stereotypes from the previous white and Black boxes. this is called **Classism**. (7) Many times, racism, colorism, and classism are all tangled together. Often, if you believe or act on one of them, you often believe and act on the others as well. You may not be bullied on being white or black, but maybe for having a darker skin tone than someone else, or having more curly hair, or not wearing “cool” clothes. (8&9) If someone is looking to put you down, they will find a reason somehow.

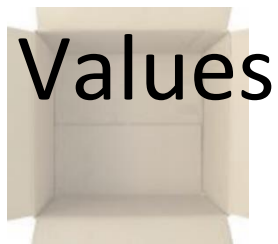
How do you explain classism?



Heritage

*For us Fergies, mommy has always been in the white box with most of the people around her being white too. You have lots of Aunties who have worked hard to preserve our family's stories. On Mom's dad side you have hard working people who loved Jesus from Switzerland: "**Winzeler**" comes from wine-seller, because we grew and sold grapes. On Mommy's mom side we have traditions of education and celebration: "**Coombs**" is from "McCombs," from Scotland. We have family tree lists going back generations and generations, and we are grateful for our **heritage** (which is what our family's past gave us).*

What is your maternal and paternal heritage?



*For us Fergies, your grandma Winzeler taught me how important it is to make do with what you have. When she and grandpa got married, she had \$20 a week to buy all the things she needed for food and for the house. She learned to be creative, and she made it work. She also, as you know, values kindness. To **value** something means to think it is really important, and to want to do it. Grandma never lets you get away with being mean! Grandpa Winzeler grew up working really hard on a farm. He taught me how to keep going and get the job done. He values working hard and being faithful, especially to God.*

What are your family's values?



Ferguson

*For us Fergies, our last name, "**Ferguson**," is a bit more complicated. Ferguson is Irish, so a Ferguson family probably came from Ireland to Jamaica, and owned slaves: we don't know. It is a similar story with Daddy's mom's side of the family: "**Manning**," which has English origin. What we do know is that Black "Irish" and "English" people in Jamaica were slaves at that time in history, who had been stolen from Africa. That is a very heavy thing to know when you think about your own last name.*

What is your partner's heritage?

Chapter 6 Resources:

1. The Netflix film "13th"
2. YouTube channel "NPR" video called "History of Policing in America | Throughline | NPR"
3. YouTube channel "Holy Post" video called "Holy Post - Race in America" (part 2 is also really well done)
4. YouTube channel "Creative Technology & Design" video called "Colorism"
5. The movie "Light Girls"
6. "The Vanishing Half: A Novel" by Brit Bennett
7. "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" by Ruby K. Payne
8. Book (and YouTube video) "Hair Love" by Matthew A. Cherry
9. Documentary "Good Hair" with Chris Rock is amazing

Chapter 7: Gaps

What **DON'T** you **know** about your family history?

What is a **sad** part of your family history?

How and when did your family **migrate** to America?

How do you prepare someone for **being different**?

How do you **value differences**?



Don't Know

*For us Fergies, we don't have any **recorded history** from Daddy's side of the family, only what people who are currently alive heard from the people before them (that is called oral history). From that, what we know your Dad's great-grandpa was a light-skinned teacher in Jamaica with the last name of Ferguson. That means he had some power and education. Perhaps he was the son or grandson of a slave owner named Ferguson (where he got the name), who got an enslaved woman pregnant. We don't know.*

What DON'T you know about your family history?



*For us Fergies, what we do know is that Daddy's great-grandpa Ferguson and Ms. Hudson, a white woman, had your Dad's grandfather. He was run off before the baby was born. We don't know what was right and wrong about it. We don't know if they loved each other or not. We don't know how the story would be different if racial issues were not a part of the picture. I feel this **not knowing** in a deep, sad way.*

What is a sad part of your family history?

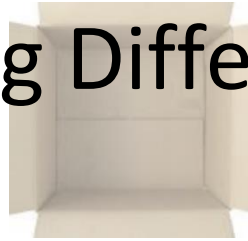
Migrate



*For us Fergies, your Dad's Grandfather was raised by old Grandma Hudson, as his mom was young, and her parents refused to see your Dad's Grandfather as part of the family, because of his **skin color**. When your Dad's Father (Your grandpa you never met) died in America while waiting to get heart surgery, your Grandma made the tough decision to work really hard to move the family to Connecticut. She had to work two jobs for many, many years to be able to **migrate** to America. She had to leave a lot of people that she loved, including your dad, for a long time.*

How and when did your family migrate to America?

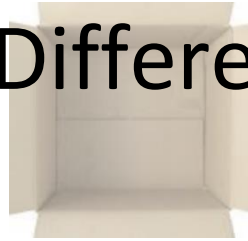
Being Different



*For us Fergies, auntie Suzette took care of Daddy when he was 2 to 6 years old, while Grandma worked for Daddy to be able to come to America. When Daddy was 6 years old, he finally came to the USA. Some of his classmates made fun of his Jamaican accent, so he learned how to hide it, acting and speaking like the other students around him. He didn't want to be different, or to be put in a different box. It is **very hard to be different** from those around you, especially if someone is mean about it. That is one of the reasons why we want to understand our differences, and celebrate them.*

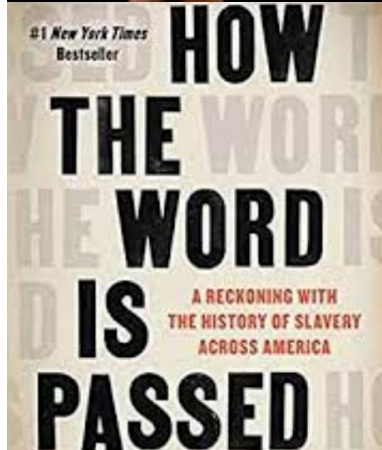
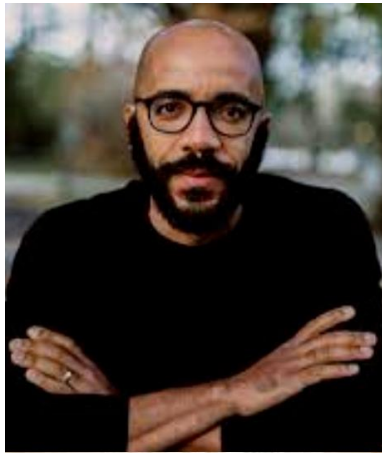
How do you prepare someone for being different?

Value Differences



*For us Fergies, while your dad worked hard to fit in, I fit in too well in some ways. Most everyone around me was just like me, and I felt almost invisible. I loved learning about other cultures, and when I went to Brazil when I was 16, it was like I **fell in love** with Brazil. I worked and lived there for many years before I met your dad, and then after we got married we moved there together. It meant a lot to us that you were born in Brazil, and learned Portuguese together with English (even if you don't remember it). We want you to value being different and other cultures, because we both learned that growing up.*

How do you value differences?



“This is the problem of the memory of slavery, that we have all these gaps.” Araujo (a historian) said. “And you need to fill those gaps with something.” Gaps have to be filled. Gaps that David Thorson spoke of at Monticello when he said, “I think that history is the story of the past, using all the available facts, and that nostalgia is a fantasy about the past using no facts, and somewhere in between is memory.” There are the gaps that exist inside me, a Black man in America unable to trace my roots past a certain point in history. Whose lineage beyond the plantations where my ancestors were held remains obscured by the smog of displacement. They are the gaps that I am trying to understand, the gaps I am trying to fill.”

Chapter 8: Bullies

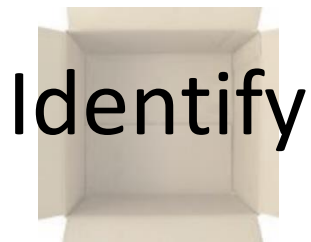
What part of your family history do you most **identify** with?

How do you explain **bullying**?

Shouldn't you be **color blind**?

What are the good things about your **community**?

Who can help if you are bullied?



*For us Fergies, you have an American and a Brazilian passport. You were born in Brazil, and we have lots of close friends there that we hope to visit again. Your Father was born in Jamaica and you still have some family there, so we really hope to see more of this part of your story as you grow up. You can learn a lot about Jamaica from your Grandma, aunties, uncle, and cousins. You will probably live most of your life in America, and probably mostly **identify** with American middle-class culture. I hope you choose to love all your stories.*

What part of your family history do you most identify with?



Bullying

*For us Fergies, in Brazil, you looked a lot like the most of the people around you. But in America, people don't know your beautiful American, Jamaican, Brazilian stories: they just know that you (probably) look **a bit different** from them. Some people will think that is really cool, and some people get scared at things that are different from them, or even angry. They may **assume** (that means to think things without having facts or asking) you are white, Black, or even Hispanic. They may assume other stories, or their own stories are also true for you. You do not have to fit into anyone else's box. Don't accept a box that doesn't feel right for you. Some people will talk about you in a mean way or do mean things to you: we call that **bullying** (1&2), and it is not okay. You might even find yourself doing this to other people (3): that is not okay either.*

How do you explain bullying?



Color Blind

Some people think that the color of your skin doesn't matter. That is true in some ways, but not in other ways. *For us Fergies, my family taught me that what was most important was to love God and to love others, and they lived that. I had friends with different ethnicities growing up, and while their skin color didn't matter to me, I learned that they all had very different stories than I did, and these stories were important.* Sometimes, in saying color doesn't matter, it means that people don't **take time to listen** and learn and understand how the differences in our stories are important to them. Many people just assume that everyone thinks the same things that they do and have the same history. (4) They may be shocked or angry when they are told they are wrong. It takes a long time to listen. We don't want to ignore color—we want to celebrate it!


Should I be color blind?



Community

*For us Fergies, there are a lot of really great things about Jamaica, Brazil, and America. I hope you get to learn more of them as you grow up. In America, both sides of your family (at different times) have been able to make a good home. They worked hard, learned a new language and culture, and now have their own places to live and everything they need (and want). There is a lot of hard things that have happened, but also stories of people who have given everything to make things right. When our family came to America, we had (and still have) amazing **communities** (that is groups of people we are a part of like our church, our family, and our friends) that welcomed us, and helped us: we could not have done it alone. You have a great school with teachers who really care about you. You are not on this journey alone.*

What are good things about your community?



What Can Help

The more you know who you are and what defines you and who you want and choose to be, the less it matters what other people think. If they bully you (about race or about anything else), it doesn't need to affect you at all. You can tell them that you don't fit in their box they have for you. If you don't feel safe: just walk away from someone bullying you. We want you to know that you can come to us, your Mom and Dad, about anything, big or little. You have teachers and grandparents and aunties and uncles. **We are here for you.**

What can help if you are bullied?

Chapter 8 Resources:

1. YouTube channel "Fight Child Abuse" playlist called "Protect yourself Rules." They have them for k-3rd grade, and 4-6 grade.
2. YouTube channel "Storybooth" video called "I Stood Up to Racist Mean Girls" and "Standing Up to a Racist Bully."
3. YouTube channel "Storybooth" video called "I Did The Wrong Thing After Being Bullied"
4. YouTube channel "MTV Impact" video called "Why Color Blindness Will NOT End Racism | Decoded | MTV News"



Chapter 9: Be You

Who can help when you are bullied?

What does it mean to be **“Mixed”**?

What’s your **responsibility**?

What are your **prejudice** boxes?

How do you tell your **unique** story?

Who can Help



*For us Fergies, not many people know what it is like to be American, Jamaican, and Brazilian, but your Mom, Dad, and sister have been with you through it, so can understand many things other people can't. We also know you are going to have to figure out many things for **yourself**. This is your journey of immigration, just like your family did in the past. If you keep looking, you will find other people who don't fit into boxes, or who don't want to live in boxes, or who can learn new boxes, that you can connect with.*

Who can help when you are bullied?



If you are a multicultural person living and growing up in America, most people will see you as Black or mixed. (1) Being mixed has its own set of struggles. You are some of some, none of just one. Many people will refer to you as just part of a whole, as a “half.” But I want you to know that **you are not less than a whole**. In fact, it means you have twice (or more) of the experience and perspective. Being in the middle of Black and white means some people will see you as “too much” or “too little” of what they want you to be. That is not true.

What does it mean to be “Mixed”?

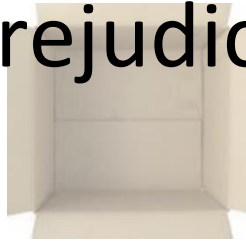
Responsibility

An illustration of an open, empty cardboard box, centered behind the title 'Responsibility'.

Sometimes you can help others break the boxes and stereotypes they've made about you, and that feels really good. But remember, if someone doesn't change--that isn't your fault, and doesn't mean you did anything wrong. That's **their choice**. You can only choose your attitude and choices—not theirs. The more someone lets their boxes and stereotypes grow, the more they act on it. If they find other people who agree with them, it becomes harder and harder for them to change how they think.

What's your responsibility?

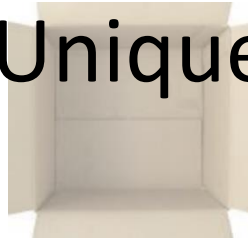
Prejudice



Remember, **we all have boxes**. Maybe about race, maybe about other things. But we can start to break the boxes and stereotypes by getting to know people who are different than you. Some people think “normal” has to look and be only one way: they make their “normal” box, and people who do or look different are in another box that is not normal, or as good. This is called **Prejudice**.
(2) Acting on your prejudice (or bias) is saying or doing something that lets other people know that you think your box is better than their box.

What are your prejudice boxes?

Unique



You are very **unique** (that means no one is just like you), and so is your story. being unique can help you understand that everyone else is very unique in their own ways too. Different is normal, and everyone's "normal" is different. It helps us to be kind to others when we remember that we haven't heard everything about their story yet. We always need to listen. We always have more to learn.

How do you tell your unique story?

Chapter 9 Resources:

1. YouTube channel “BBC Three” video called “Things Not To Say To Someone Of Mixed Race”
2. “How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice” by Jemar Tisby

What are healthy habits to guard against prejudice?

- Learn and remember that different is normal and normal is different
- Learn and remember that everyone is unique (just like you!) and has a unique story that you probably don’t know all about
- Examine your life and see if you are treating some people better than others—and figure out why
- If someone you love and trust tells you that you are being prejudice about something—figure out why they think that
- Make friends with people who are different than you
- Read books, watch movies, follow on Social media people who are different than you

What do I do if someone is prejudiced against me?

- Tell them to stop, and that it is not okay
- Tell an adult (especially your parents!) if someone is bullying you
- Walk away if the person isn’t willing or ready to stop or change
- If you feel safe and want to, explain to them why their prejudice is wrong

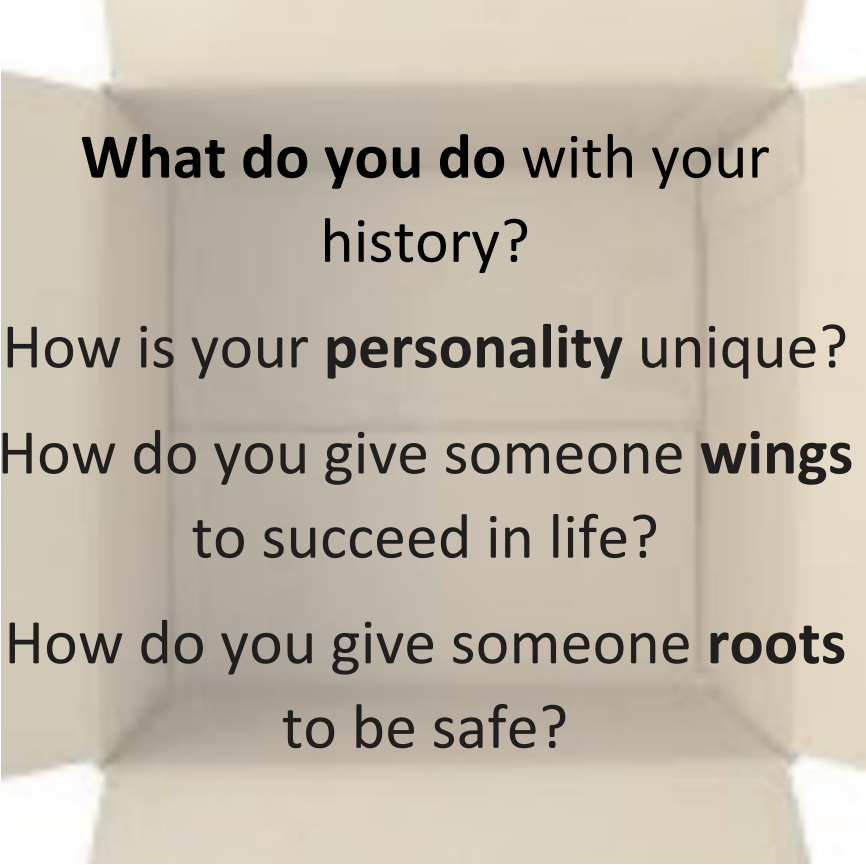
What do I do if I see someone else being prejudiced against someone?

- Step between the people and tell the person saying it to stop
- If they don’t listen, or you don’t feel safe, start talking to the person being shown prejudice and help them walk away
- Call someone else (an adult) to help if you don’t feel safe
- If you feel safe and want to, try to share with the person showing prejudice why it is wrong, if you think they are ready to listen

Inside the Box

Part 2

Chapter 1: Roots and Wings



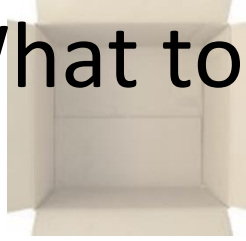
What do you do with your
history?

How is your **personality** unique?

How do you give someone **wings**
to succeed in life?

How do you give someone **roots**
to be safe?

What to do



You were born, without choosing it, into a specific family with specific heritage, history, and ethnicity. We have talked a lot about it because it is important to understand where you fit and where you came from. I want you to know the good stuff and the bad stuff and know that while this is your history, **but you choose what you do with it.** I hope that the more you understand about the past, the better you can understand why other people may think and treat you certain ways, and how that says more about them than about you.

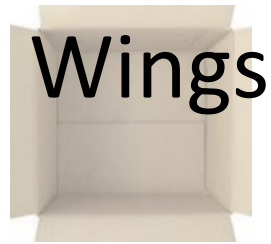
What do you do with your history?

Personality



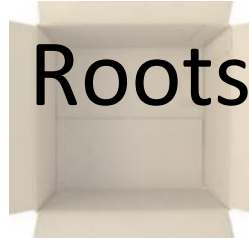
You were born with your own **personality** (that is your character, the way you do things and why you do them, and so much more) and are a person that is different from everyone else. Somehow your being different your own way is a reflection of God in a new way. It is like a different facet (that is a side or “face” of a gem) of a diamond. Each facet shows Jesus to the world in a different way that no one else can. Your reflection of God is who God made you to be: it is everything that makes you YOU. (1&2) It is your personality, and who you choose to be and become more of, and it is also your family and things passed on to you from the past.

How is your personality unique?



We've talked about how to be outside the box: about your heritage (that is the things your past gives you) and how you fit into the story. We also talked about how you get to write your own story. As your parent, I want you to know that you can do anything and be anything: it's like I want you to have **wings** to fly like a bird as high as you want, and not let anything stop you.
(3)

**How do you give someone wings to
succeed in life?**



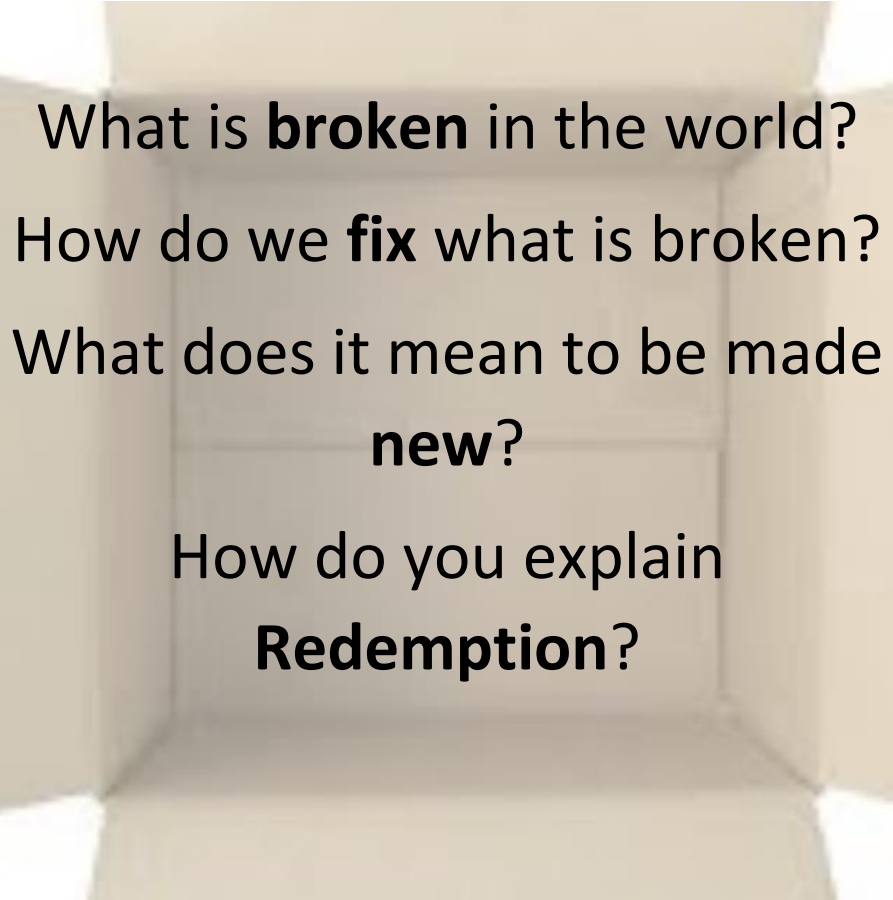
I also want you to have **roots**. To grow strong like a tree that no one can blow over and break. I want you to be secure and sure about what is true and real and beautiful and good. I want to share with you about your spiritual heritage and how being inside one special box is where true freedom is found.

How do you give someone roots to be safe?

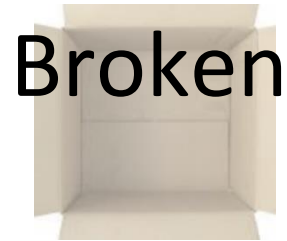
Chapter 1 Resources:

1. "When God Made You" by Matthew Paul Turner
2. "Made by God: Celebrating God's gloriously diverse World" by Tony Evans
3. "The 6 Needs of Every Child: Empowering Parents and Kids Through the Science of Connection" by Amy Elizabeth Olrick and Jeffrey Olrick

Chapter 2: Redemption

An open cardboard box is shown from a top-down perspective, looking into the empty interior. The box is light brown and has its flaps open. The text is centered within the box.

What is **broken** in the world?
How do we **fix** what is broken?
What does it mean to be made
new?
How do you explain
Redemption?



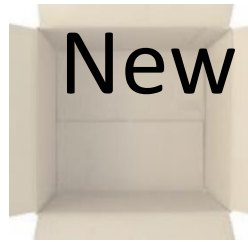
The sad part about our story is we know that our reflection of God is **broken**. Our personality is broken. Our family is broken. Our history and heritage is broken. Our culture is broken. Our mindsets are broken. And our world is broken. Have you ever noticed that things are just messed up everywhere? That is the effect of sin, from way back to the Bible story of Adam and Eve. (1)

What is broken in the world?



Sometimes the different parts of us look really, really broken to those around us, like the whole history of slavery: everyone can tell that it was a very, very broken history. Sometimes it looks like we have it all together, and don't need God to fix anything. But no matter what- **God is the only one** who can come in and remake things to be how they are supposed to be. He does the big work of **fixing** things, and gives us the ability to join in on fixing little things with Him. God is the only one who can make things new.

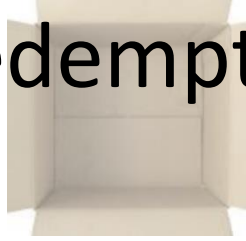
How do we fix what is broken?



There are two different kinds of “**new.**” (2)
One kind of new is like when you get a brand new toy you always wanted, and never had before. It is new. But there is also a kind of new when something that already was is made new: like old painting that can be painted over and made something so special and so NEW. That second kind of new is like what God wants to do with us. He fixes us and makes us new, He doesn't throw us out and start over.

What does it mean to be made new?

Redemption



God's plan is to take all of that broken, ugly mess and make it into something really beautiful. This is called **Redemption**. (3) But God doesn't just snap His fingers and fix everything: He lets us choose if we want to be made new or not. He waits for us to give Him permission, because He loves us and won't force us to do anything. It's important to invite Him into redeeming every bit of us, making us all new.

How do you explain Redemption?

Chapter 2 Resources:

1. YouTube channel "Bible Project" video called "Sin"
2. I first heard this from Skye Jethani, either on the Holy Post Podcast, or from one of his books, "Futureville: Discover Your Purpose for Today by Reimagining Tomorrow"
3. YouTube channel "Bible Project" video called "Sacrifice and Atonement"

Chapter 3: God's Plan

What is your **God story**?

What is **God's plan** for your
life?

What is God's plan for
everyone?

Why do we need redemption
to be "**with God**"?

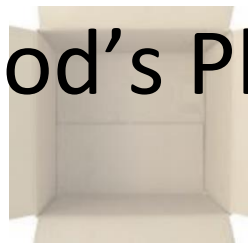
God Story



*For us Fergies, when I was 7 years old, your grandma and grandpa sat next to me on the couch in the living room and explained what it meant to be a Christian: to give my life to Jesus. And that day, **I did**. But it took me a while to really feel that I was safe in God's hands, and that He would take care of me, even if I messed things up bad. For a long time, I felt like I needed to do something to be good enough to be a Christian.*

What is your God story?

God's Plan



For us Fergies, once I knew for sure that I was God's child (a princess!), I knew my life wasn't mine anymore: I gave it to Jesus. But then I had one REALLY BIG QUESTION:

What did God want to do with my life?

What was the plan? I searched the Bible and read lots of books and asked lots of people. I wanted to be able to follow Him and obey Him no matter what. Couldn't He just write the answers of what to do in the sky or something? I also wanted to know the plan so I could feel like I had more control and could understand things better.

What is God's plan for your life?

Everyone



It is important to realize that I was asking the wrong question. The question isn't, "What is God's plan for my life," but "What is the plan that GOD wants to do?" Once you have the question right, it's easy to find the answer in the Bible: God's will is redemption. (1) That is it. That's the great plan. That is what everything is about- that is the plan for everyone. The story ends like this in the Bible, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" (2)

What is God's plan for everyone?

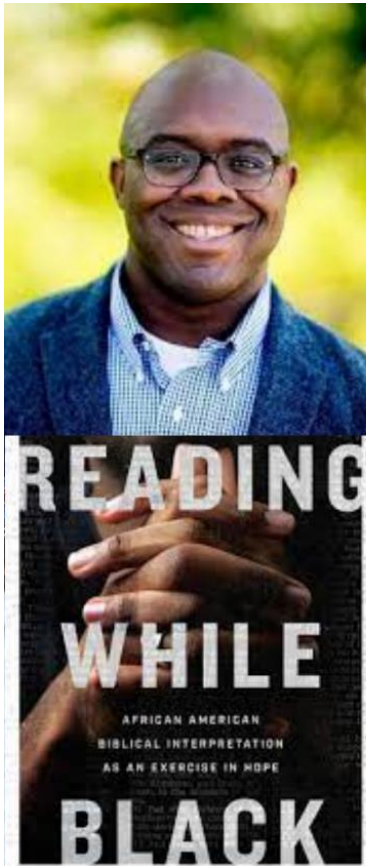


Let's go back to boxes. God started off making one box: the **"With God"** box. Adam and Eve were in it, and it was big enough for everyone, from all time, for all time. But Adam and Eve chose to sin, and that made another box: the **"Without God"** box. The **"Without God"** box is empty of God. It is everything He is not. Where the **"With God"** box is life and perfect: the **"Without God"** box is death and sin—everything is broken. The really bad news is that once the **"Without God"** box was made, that is where we all start out, when we are born. (3) Redemption was God's big plan to get us from the **"Without God"** box back into the **"With God"** box. We didn't make a way, God did, and we can't get there without Him. (4)

Why do we need redemption to be "with God"?

Resources:

1. Ephesians 1:4-10
2. Revelation 21:5
3. Romans 5:12-17
4. John 14:6



“When a Black person learns the history of our suffering and then continues to experience the aftershocks of the seismic disruption of slavery in our ongoing oppression, a feeling of rage or even nihilism begins to rise. Our suffering is not an inadvertent consequence of an otherwise just system. It was designed this way. What are we to do with this anger, this pain? How does Christianity speak to it? What does the cross have to say, not simply to human suffering, but the particular suffering of African Americans? I want to present four Christian reflections on the issue of Black anger and suffering. First, I argue that Israel’s pain and anger as recorded in the prophets and the psalter provide a means of processing Black grief. Secondly, I contend that the prophets warn that the ever-spiraling cycle is a dead end. Turning to the New Testament, I maintain that the cross functions as the end of the cycle of vengeance and death and that the central biblical themes of the resurrection, ascension, and the final judgement are necessary in any amount of Black anger and pain.”

Chapter 4: Made New

An open cardboard box is shown from a top-down perspective, with its flaps folded outwards. The interior of the box is a light beige color. The text is centered within the box.

How does redemption work
with **triangles**?

How did God redeem us by
fixing **broken relationships**?

How do you explain **free will**?

How **many** boxes are there?

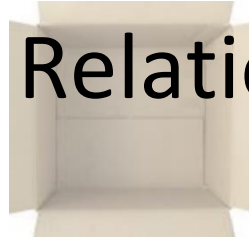
Triangles



When sin happened, it didn't just put us into the "Without God" box, it also meant that instead of being a reflection of God, we were now a broken reflections. If God is like a big triangle, and we were little **triangles**: we became circles instead. Redemption is the way that God takes us into the "With God" box, but it also gives us the Holy Spirit, who comes inside us, like a triangle in our circle. The more we grow in Him, the more we reflect Him inside us to those around us, and look more like that triangle. (1)

How does redemption work?

Broken Relationships



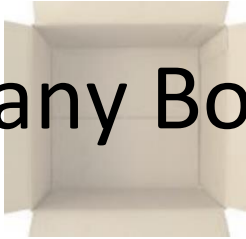
Making us new is a miracle that only God can do. It cost God everything to redeem us: becoming a baby (Jesus), living a perfect life on earth, and dying for our sins (and raising from the dead three days later) (2). If He gave everything to redeem us, and His plan is redemption, why do we think that as Christians (that means “Little Christs”) that joining Him in redemption work wouldn’t cost us something? **Fixing broken relationships will cost us our whole life!** We can’t make things new like God does, but we can work with Him to make things right in little ways.

How did God redeem us by fixing broken relationships?



Why didn't God just put us all into the "With God" box Himself? God is powerful enough to do it, but He let us choose. (3) Adam and Eve made the wrong choice and it made the "Without God" box. Now, we can make the choice to go to the "With God" box: this is **free will**. Free will means we get to make our own choices. If we didn't have free will, we would be like robots, and God didn't make robots, He made us. Which is better: when someone chooses to be your friend and spend time with you, or when their mom makes them be nice to you and spend time with you?

How do you explain free will?



Many Boxes

God gives us the choice to be in the “With God” box or the “Without God” box. Many people think there are lots of boxes, called **religions** (which are systems and rules of faith), and you can choose any of them and end up in the “With God” box. God says Jesus is the only way to get into the “With God” box. He made that way through redemption. (4) Some people think they can make their own box, and be in charge of their own life. But that isn’t how it works either. God says that you are always going to serve something: either Him, or sin. (5) In the “With God” box we do things His way and serve Him. In the “Without God” box, it doesn’t mean you get to do it your way, it means you end up serving sin, even when you don’t want to. (6)

How many boxes are there?

Chapter 4 Resources:

1. The triangle analogy, like the box analogy, was how it worked for me and my family. It may not work for you or yours. Feel free to come up with something better!
2. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
3. YouTube channel "Bible Project" video called "The New Humanity"
4. Romans 3:23-24
5. Romans 6: 11-14
6. Romans 7:21-25


Chapter 5: Belonging to God

Are we supposed to be **owned**?

How do we **move** from the
“Without God” box to the
“With God” box?

How do you **grow** up in the
“With God” box?

What is **being** in the “with
God” box like?

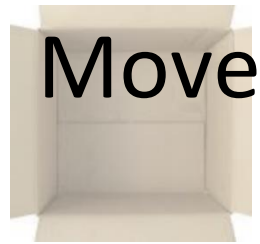


Ownership

It is really weird talking about serving someone else, or being a slave. We just talked about how bad and horrible it was to be a slave, and what horrible things it did to our family. From our history, we can see how dangerous it is to be a slave to sin, and how it will destroy us. It can make it hard to understand, at first, how being a slave to God could be a good thing. Instead of slavery, think of it as **ownership**. We are owned by sin, or owned by God. Being owned by God means He makes you part of his family: as our Father, not as our Owner.

(1)

Are we supposed to be owned?



God is the one who made a way to the “With God” box, and it cost Him everything: but it doesn’t cost us anything! We just have to let him take us to the “With God” box. But to do that, we give Him our life: so in a way, it does cost us everything. Lots of people try to explain this **paradox** (that is where it seems like two opposite things are true), but in the end, it is something we choose to believe, or not to believe. **Moving** from the “Without God” box to the “With God” box, we have to let go of how we think and do things, and do them God’s way. We choose to have God in charge instead of us. That’s how He makes us new. (2)

How do we move from the “Without God” box to the “With God” box?



The first part of redemption (going from the “Without God” box to the “With God” box) is salvation: but that’s just the beginning, like being born, not the end. To grow your body, you get lots of sleep, healthy food, and exercise. To **grow** up in God (which is called **sanctification**) (3), we need to learn about God with others (we call this church)(4) be with God (prayer and reading the Bible), (5) and obey Him (His big rule is to love God and others)(6). It doesn’t mean we aren’t saved if we *don’t* do these things, but it does mean we won’t grow.

How do you grow up in the “With God” box?



I have no doubt that there will be many parts of your culture, your history, your personality, and your habits that you will need to bring to God and invite Him to redeem. I know this because I've been doing it for over 30 years now, and I am still not done. I keep learning that the best part is just **being** with God. It is a really, really big **adventure** to find all the broken bits of yourself and of the world around you and to run and give it to God and ask Him: what is the awesome thing you want to do with this broken problem? How do you want to redeem it and make it new? How do we make it right?

What is being in the “with God” box like?

Chapter 5 Resources:

1. Romans 8:14-17
2. YouTube channel "Bible Project" video called "Heaven and Earth"
3. YouTube channel "Bible Project" video called "Holiness"
4. Hebrews 10:25
5. I really love the account of the early church, and what church/life looked like: Acts 2:42-47 This is what our Christian lives should look like
6. Matthew 22:36-40

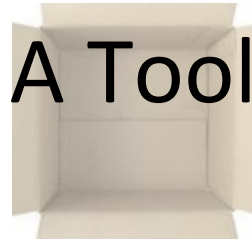
Chapter 6: Reconciliation

What is a **tool** to make things right?

What does it mean to **acknowledge** and **apologize**?

What does it mean to **make it right** and **recommit**?

What is the **hardest** part about fixing broken relationships?



I went to something called “**Supercamp**,”(1) and they taught me a **tool** to fix broken relationships. (2) Fixing broken relationships is another word for redemption. First, we need to fix the most important broken relationship: the one with God. He did that for us, because it was too big for us to do. (3) Once that is right, we can start working on all the broken relationships we have with other people. This tool to fix broken relationships is divided into four steps, and you can remember it by AAMR: Acknowledge, Apologize, Make it right, and Recommit.

What is a tool to make things right?



Acknowledge Apologize

When God saved us, He did all the work, but we had to ACKNOWLEDGE it: that means we had to believe that God's way was true, and admit it. (4) It can't just be in our thoughts: it has to be in our words too. Those words need to clearly say that we were wrong: and that is called APOLOGIZING. When you fight with someone and need to "Make it right," what is the first thing you need to do? You might think it is to say sorry, but actually, you have to believe you were wrong before you can say sorry and really mean it. First you **acknowledge** the problem, and then you can **apologize** for what you did.

What does it mean to acknowledge and apologize?



Make it Right Recommit

When God saved us, it wasn't just about bringing us to the "With God" box, it was also about making us back into a reflection of Him (or image). How do we go from a circle to a triangle? By growing up (church, prayer, reading the Bible, and obeying God) to be more like Jesus. The last two steps, after acknowledging and apologizing, are to **make it right and recommit**. Making it right is doing the actions needed to really change. But as people who still mess up a lot, we probably won't get it all right the first time, so we have to recommit to try again and keep trying. We do this in our life with God, as well with other people. (5)

What does it mean to make it right and recommit?



Fixing broken relationships, which is a big part of redemption, **always costs something to do**. For God, it cost His son. If someone takes your favorite toy and breaks it (on purpose or on accident), to make it right, they need to get you a new toy (or fix the toy). If they refuse to do that, would you feel hurt? It would be a break in your relationship. There are then two ways to fix the relationship: You forgive them (but it costs you the toy), or they get you a new toy (that costs them a toy): someone has to pay for the broken toy, and that is **hard** to do. If no one does anything, that doesn't mean it goes away, it just means the relationship continues to break more, and in different ways.

What is the hardest part about fixing broken relationships?

Chapter 7 Resources:

1. Supercamp.com
2. YouTube channel “Supercamp” video called “SuperCamp: The 4 Part Apology”
3. Romans 5:8
4. Romans 10:9-10
5. This is where I wrote 4 more chapters about Reparations, and then took them out. While I really feel led to this as something I feel is important and following God’s Word, it wasn’t a part of the story I was telling my girls at this time. I do recommend the book “Reparations: A Christian Call for Repentance and Repair” by Duke L. Kwon and Gregory Thompson, as well the Holy Post podcast episodes 360 & 467



Chapter 7: Responsibility

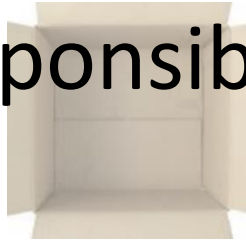
How do you explain taking **responsibility**?

Why might it be hard to **acknowledge** it when we are hurt?

How do you **make it known** when you've been hurt?

What if someone **hurts** you, and they don't want to fix it?

Responsibility



It takes two people to have a relationship, and when one person breaks it, that person is called the **offender**. The other person is called the **offended**. Sometimes both people are the offenders: breaking the relationship and offending each other all at the same time. To fix it, the offender has to take **responsibility** (that means choosing to do what it takes to do your part, or duty). But the offended person also has a responsibility, if the relationship is going to be fixed and redeemed. For the offended person to have a healthy heart, even if the relationship can't be fixed, they must work to redeem the situation.

How do you explain taking responsibility?

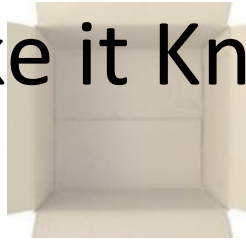
Acknowledge



The offended person (the person who got hurt) has the responsibility to do the same first thing as the offender: **acknowledge** it. Sometimes when people hurt us we don't want to think about. We want to ignore it, or hide it. We tell ourselves lies like "Oh, it didn't really matter," when we know it really does matter, and it really did hurt us. We might lie and say "I am stronger than that: it doesn't affect me." The first part of fixing what is broken is to be honest with yourself that it is broken.

Why might it be hard to acknowledge it when we are hurt?

Make it Known



The second responsibility of the offended person is to **make it known**. Most of the time, this means telling the offender how they hurt you. It is important to be honest and kind. Even if the other person wasn't kind to you: the one big rule God has for us is to love God and love others, because God loves us all. If God loves me, and He loves the person who hurt me, I need to be kind in my words, even if the person doesn't deserve it. People are valuable and important and deserve kind words just because they are people, made and loved by God.

How do you make it known when you've been hurt?



It won't take you very long to live and have someone **hurt** you. What if they never acknowledge it? They never apologize? Let alone make it right or recommit? That makes it really hard to fix. In fact, sometimes it means you can't fix it at all. But there is something you can do, whether the other person tries to fix it or not, and that is **forgiveness**. (1) Forgiveness is letting go of the anger and the hurt that the other person caused you. This is the third step of fixing things as the offended person. It doesn't always mean you can let go of, or change the consequences. Sometimes the consequences aren't yours to control, or it isn't safe or healthy to return to the relationship.

What if someone hurts you, and they don't want to fix it?

Chapter 7 Resources:

1. YouTube channel "Bible Project" video called "Grace."

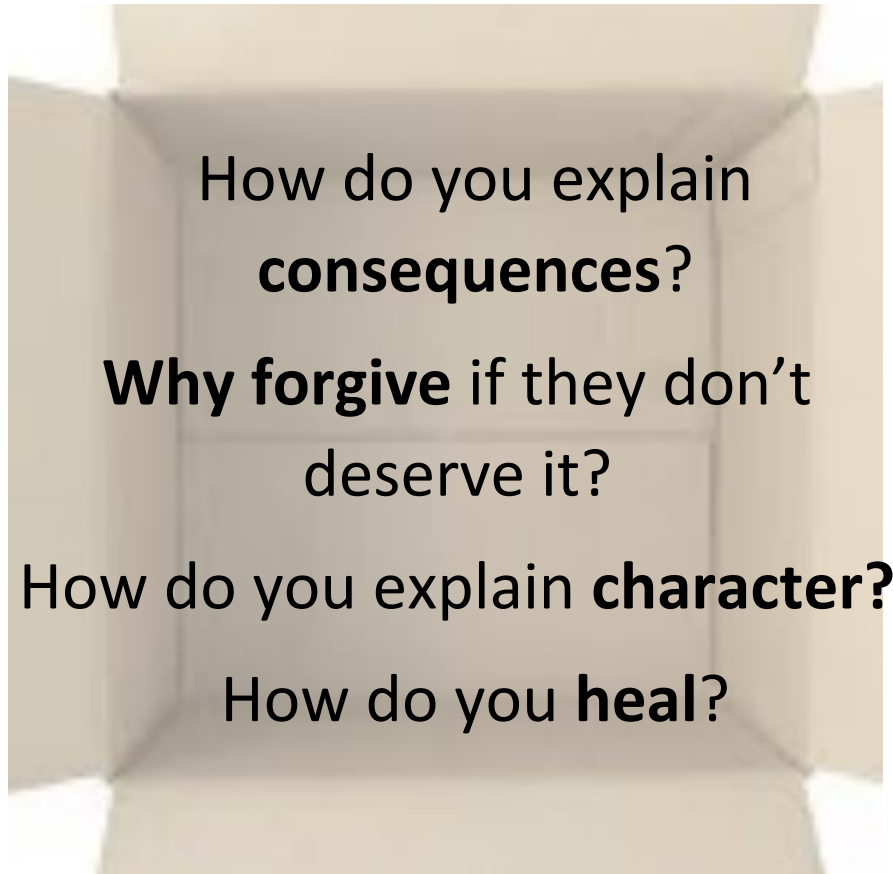
4 Steps to Fix Broken Relationships

When a relationship is broken, it always takes work to fix. Whether you are the offended, or the offender (or maybe both), there's responsibility to take if you want to REDEEM the relationship

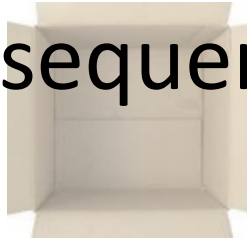
@2girlsncurls-Information learned from Supercamp

OFFENDER	OFFENDED
Acknowledge Have a change of mind. Understand you were wrong.	Acknowledge Be aware and honest with how you were hurt.
Apologize Clearly admit how and why you were wrong.	Make it known Clearly admit how and why you were hurt.
Make it Right Ask the offended HOW to make it right. Listen. Act on it.	Forgive Let it go because you want to heal.
Recommit Continue to ask and learn and do.	Heal Continue to ask and learn and do.

Chapter 8: Healing



Consequences



Consequences are the results of your actions. If you eat an apple, what is the consequence? Your tummy will have food in it. Consequences can be good or bad, depending on what happened first. Many times you choose what you do: but you cannot choose the consequences. Remember a time when you ate too much candy? You didn't like the consequence. When someone hurts you, you can choose to let go of your feelings about what they did or said, but you can't always let go of the consequences. If the person decides not to be your friend anymore, you can't change that, even if you want to.

How do you explain consequences?



Why Forgive

Forgiveness is really important. If someone hurts you, and doesn't want to fix it, you cannot control that. But you do get to control how it affects you. Holding on to hurt and anger will only make you hurt and angry. Is that the kind of person you want to be? Often times, you don't forgive the person because they are a good person, and deserve it: but because you want to be a **healthy person** who doesn't hold on to ugly feelings.

Why forgive if they don't deserve it?

Character



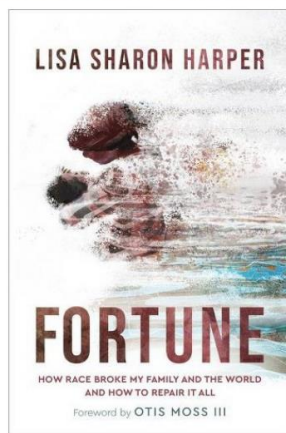
The more you forgive, the more it becomes a part of who you are: a part of your **character**. Your character is what you value and what you do, even when it is hard. You didn't choose your ethnicity, history, or even your family: but you do choose what you value (think is important) and what becomes your character. Your history is an important story, but even more important is the story you are writing right now. And just think: someday, what you are writing right now (by the choices you make) will become part of the history you tell your kids, just like I am telling you!

How do you explain character?



The last part of fixing a broken relationship, even if the person who hurt you doesn't want to, is to **heal**. Sometimes the hurt is so deep, you need to talk to someone who is wiser than you. We call this **counseling**, or **therapy**. Getting help doesn't mean you are weak, it means you are strong enough to realize that you can't do it alone: none of us can! *For us Fergies, your mom and dad LOVE getting help, and go to counseling and therapy a lot. We hope that you do too, because there is a lot of hurt and brokenness in the world.*

How do you heal?



“Forgiveness is pure power. It is choice—an act of agency by survivors most often brutalized through the erasure of agency. Forgiveness is the act of snatching back the mind and soul from the ties created by the oppressors’ lying teeth that often tell their victims, “You need me. You cannot win against me. You must deal with me. You must bow to me.”

Forgiveness cuts the ties between oppressed and oppressor. This may seem contrary to the goal of repair, which is connection. But forgiveness sees what is.

Forgiveness looks full into the unrepentant exploiter, enslaver, and abuser, and it rejects the lie that one’s future is dependent on the graces of the unrepentant individual or nation. Rather, forgiveness says, simply, “I have agency. I do not need you. I choose to cut the tie that binds us together in the spiritual realm. I release you from your debt to me. I have God. God will move heaven and earth to fill my need. You can go now. Forgiveness walks forward and lives and heals and loves and votes, understanding that one’s former oppressor is not god.

God is God. Flourishing is possible, because God is.”

Chapter 9:

A Letter to my Daughters

You are the descendant of Jamaican people who were enslaved and Swiss/Scottish people who immigrated to America. You were born in Brazil but grew up in America. I don't know how you will relate or respond to life as you grow up. I don't know who you will identify most with. I don't know if racial issues will be a big deal to you or not, or even if you will feel like you are connected to enslavers and are called to fixing those broken relationships, or to those who were enslaved, and are called to forgiving those broken relationships. Maybe, by the time you grow up, we will finally realize that we are all just in the people box.

My dream for you, my beautiful daughter, is for you to know who you are, your heritage, the good and bad of it, and to know you are loved, are special, and are unique. History helps us understand the world we are in. It doesn't make us stuck in old boxes of slavery mindsets. For many years there has been a fight against these

lies, and we are a part of that freedom and that fight. I hope with all my heart that you will see for yourself how good and amazing God is, and give your life to Him, joining God's family in the "With God" box. Once there, I hope you will grow to know God more and more and become more like Him as a little triangle.

I pray you will decide that God's plans are your plans and work to bring little redemption and fix broken relationships in all the areas of your life: from racial issues to bully issues to Jesus issues to political issues to all other issues. I pray you will be willing to pay the price it costs to bring redemption, just as Christ did for you, and may you be God's hands and feet in the world He has given us, whatever that might look like.

On your journey, something that was helpful for me to understand all of this was the "What's in the Bible?" series, "The Bible Project" YouTube channel, and lots of conversations with my brothers and sisters in Christ who remind me to always turn my eyes back on Jesus. I am so happy to be able to share with you these REALLY BIG THINGS and even if you figure them out differently, I am glad we were able to talk about it, and I hope we keep talking about it.

Here is a prayer for you, from Rich Villodoas' book "The Deeply Formed Life:"

"Lord Jesus, your kingdom is good news for a world caught in racial hostility. We ask that you give us grace for the deep challenges our country faces. We confess our anger, our deep sadness, and our collective sense of weakness to see this world healed through our own strength. We honestly confess that our country has a long history of racial oppression; that racism has been a strategy of evil powers and principalities infected by structural sin.

We confess that the gospel is good news for the oppressed and the oppressor. Both are raised up; both are liberated but in different ways. The oppressed are raised up from the harsh burden of inferiority, and oppressor from the destructive illusion of superiority. We confess that the gospel is your power to form a new people not identified by dominance and superiority but by unity in the Spirit.

We ask that you help us name our part in this country's story of racial oppression and hostility. Whether we have sinned against others by seeing them as inferior or have been silent in the face of evil, forgive us of our sin. We pray for our enemies—for those who have allowed satanic powers to work through them. Grant them deliverance through your mighty power. We ask that you form us to be peacemakers. May we be people who speak the truth in love as we work for a reconciled world. Oh Lord, only you can make all things new.



*Five Transformative Values
to Root Us in the Way of Jesus*



"This short list of questions might help you identify any subconscious perspectives you have of others:

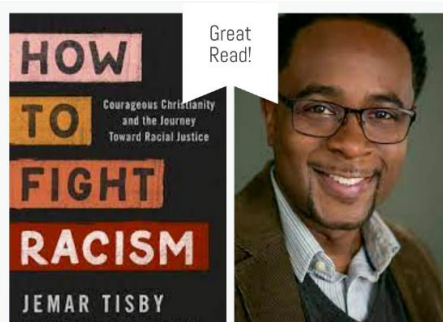
- Is there a particular people, ethnicity, or race that you don't trust? Why?
- Is there any particular people, ethnicity or race that you or your child cannot marry? Why?
- What types of people cause you to cross the street if you are walking alone? Why?
- What, if anything, happens inside you when you see interracial couples? Why?
- When was the last time you visited the residence of someone from a different culture or race, or invited the person to your residence?
- What type of person would you most trust to invest or steward your money? Why?

Seven Disciplines/Habits to form us:

1. Remember the past honestly
2. Listen to others incarnationally
3. Lament and be open to feelings
4. Prayer to balance and heal
5. Self-examination (see above)
6. Renouncing whiteness as it's been made
7. Confession and Forgiveness

Write about your racial identity

This is an idea taken from Jemar Tisby's book "How to Fight Racism," which is written for the church. Ask yourself, and write out the following:



1. What is my earliest memory of race?
2. Have I had any negative experiences associated with my racial identity or that of someone else?
3. When did I start growing racially conscious?
4. From whom or in what period of life did I learn the most about race and diversity?
5. Can I describe the different stages of racial identity development I've gone through and what made me aware of each?
6. What concerns me about my racial past?
7. What encourages me about my racial past?
8. Why do I "do" racial justice? What is its purpose for me?

Awareness: Learn the Image of God Theology

Relationships: Have race talks with your kids, Learn how to lament

Commitment: Seek to learn and promote those often seen as "other"

Appendix: Lament

Why is it so hard to believe you?

I remember my mom talking about one of the hardest parts of having fibromyalgia: so many people just didn't believe her. They didn't believe she was sick, or in pain, or that it was THAT BAD.

I remember hearing one woman after another come forward about someone taking advantage of her sexually, and how many times people commented, "That couldn't be true, could it?"

I remember a friend pointing out something that really hurt them, and another friend responding, "But that's not racism-they weren't racist, they were just dumb."

Why is it so hard for me to believe you sometimes?

Sometimes it is hard to believe someone because they disagree, or what they say disagrees with my beliefs, experiences, or opinions. If it doesn't fit into my way of thinking, it is hard to process.

Sometimes it is hard to believe someone because if what they say is true, my life, or way of doing life just got a lot more complicated. Maybe it means I have to change my thinking, or actions, or both.

Sometimes it is hard to believe someone because unless I simplify what they are saying, I can't help, or understand, or not feel guilty: and I really want to.

Sometimes it is hard to believe someone because I want to find a more controllable or fixable solution. If I believe them, I have to admit that it is so much more complicated and uncontrollable than I ever want to believe.

It is really hard to learn that I can believe you, and disagree. I can believe you, and come to a different conclusion. I can believe you, and not know what to do next.

**

It's important to understand that you can believe that what a person is feeling is real, and disagree on why they are feeling that or what to do about it.

And most of the time: we don't need to be the ones to tell them (especially not right then) if we disagree. There is a place in lament to just sit and wait. Sit and hold. Sit and believe that what they are feeling is real.

Even Job's friends got this right. They saw Job and his sorrow and they sat with him for 7 days without saying anything (Job 2:13). They believed him when he said he was hurting. They just didn't agree

with WHY he was hurting- and they certainly DIDN'T give us a good example of how to do that.

Whoever said, "But you have to tell them the truth!" Probably didn't follow through in their own marriage, parenting, or close relationships. Because eventually, there will be times when you see something someone isn't doing right: and it just ISN'T the time to tell them. Normally, there eventually IS a time: but it takes more wisdom than I normally have to do that right.

From what I can see, there is never a time to say: "No, you aren't hurting." Or "No, you aren't angry, or sad, or upset."

I would be very wary of ever saying: "You shouldn't be hurting because..." or "You shouldn't be angry, or sad, or upset, because..."

Maybe it is true, but it isn't going help anything. Perhaps, at the right time, you could say: "I see that you are hurting, and..." or "I see you are angry, or sad, or upset, and..." This is what I try to use in parenting. It isn't easy.

**

Believe that what they are feeling is real. Period.

Realize that most of the time there is a SPACE between believing a person is feeling what they are feeling and telling them if you disagree with why they believe they are feeling that feeling.

We could both go to the same event with the same things happening and feel two completely different things...and both be "right" in how we felt about it. The feelings were true- and different—for both of us.

Boundaries in relationships mean that we don't go charging in all the time with our answers, solutions, and truth-telling at all hours of the day. We wait to be invited in. We wait until the person is ready to hear us. And sometimes—that time may never come. Sometimes we realize we the ones who were wrong.

**

When my Black friend stiffens when a police officer comes by, and I do not- do I say my friend is wrong or the police officer is wrong? First, I can believe my friend that she is scared. I can believe that she has just cause to be scared because of past experiences she has had.

But I do not need to believe that the police officer is scary, or about to hurt me.

It isn't easy to listen, hear, and hold seemingly opposite beliefs, opinions, and experiences in your hands. But the other options are not acceptable: either denying the hurt and pain - because it isn't my hurt and pain- or condemning someone who is often unrelated or ignorant of the pain caused.

There are times when it is straight up racism or abuse or whatever else, and truth needs to be spoken into the situation immediately, with a clear victim and clear predator. But I think the line is often more blurry than most like to admit.

**

We are called to lament, to "Weep with those who weep."

It is a lesson I am still learning. It has taken me so long to listen, and not fix my husband. To believe him when he needs things I don't need. To wait until he asks me to help him "fix it."

You know what I have learned doesn't help? Telling him he is wrong to feel that. Telling him that no, he really doesn't need what he just said he needed. Explaining how I can do it better.

I hope we are brave enough to put our own solutions to the side for a minute, and just sit with others in their pain. I hope we are strong enough to believe them, and from there, wait until we are invited into further action. Maybe we will have time to learn something as we wait.

Lament Covers the Cracks

I remember coming home from the youth center in inner city Indianapolis, broken. Wondering how "the ghetto" existed. It didn't

fit into the rest of my life and how most everyone I grew up with thought and lived. I loved it, I hated it. I connected to it in ways I'd never fit anywhere else: but at the same time, I wasn't allowed all the way in, and some of it scared me. It wasn't that I felt physically unsafe: it was that there was a sleeping monster of pain and rage and sorrow in it, and I knew that one day, when I wasn't expecting it, the monster would wake.

When I wasn't in the inner city, I could forget it existed. That was how it seemed everyone else around me lived. I worked really hard to fix the ghetto for many years. I tried to bring my middle-class world into the ghetto. I tried to bring the ghetto into my middle-class world. Neither one stuck. I knew (and know) that Jesus is the answer, so I finally just held on to that: Running around loving on kids and asking them, "So how are you and God doing?" Because while I didn't have the answers, God did. I would mess up while trying to "fix," but God wouldn't.

Sharing Jesus didn't fix everything. It didn't reconcile the differences I felt so clearly. It didn't answer any of my questions. It didn't make the monster go away. But it did get me through each day. God's love got those kids I loved through each day. He was sufficient.

And then I fell in love.

I didn't fall in love with him because he was Black. But I was attracted to his skin, his story, his personality: who he was, and he was Black. It's hard to explain the dangers of colorblindness, because it is so close to the truth: there is a sense of being colorblind, of color not mattering. Most of the day I don't see color: I see a partner, cleaning up the mess next to me. I see a lover embracing me, I see a father teaching our daughter, I see a provider getting ready for another challenging day of work. But he is still all of who he is, and part of what has made him who he is IS his color. And I see how color is woven into the fabric of his personality, his history, his future. I value his sameness to me, and his differences.

I married a Black man. Now his story is mixed with mine. Now my last name is his. Now we have daughters that are all their own

selves, but mixed in and through with us. When I realized I would be sending my daughter to an American school where my protection didn't reach: I knew I needed to learn to tell the stories. To put words to the feelings. To work through whatever fog was around me to help my daughter's path be a bit more sure, a bit more clear, and powerfully revealed that Jesus is the answer.

And I found myself in a pit of pain. Maybe I poked the monster I met in the ghetto. Maybe I just understood what this monster really was: a collective, compounded wound, or trauma. I have started to sit with this pain and lament. I've read, I've listened, I've watched. I've learned that when my friends and family say they are hurting: to believe them. When they say something is hurting them: to believe them. I don't have to understand or agree to believe them and to weep with them.

I have followed my husband's family history through slavery, through the Atlantic slave trade, through 10 million people stolen from Africa. I have followed my husband's family history to all of the unknowns it holds because there is no written history. I have seen through those unknowns that my last name: the name I say or write every day is a reminder that a white man owned a black woman and raped her. Somehow her children got his last name, and that is the name we carry today.

And I, a white middle class woman, get angry. Because this is my history now. This is what my daughters will carry. And if I, who has never had to deal with this before, feel all of this FEELING: I can't imagine what those who have sat with this collective, compound wound, are dealing with. I have been blessed (shall I call it privileged?) with a completely different kind of history. One that never held slavery, or failed reconstruction, or Jim Crow, or even a million other personal stories that continue today.

I married a Black man and no one spoke against us. Interracial marriage has only been legal since 1967, but what is culturally acceptable has changed. I have two daughters that are Jamaican, Brazilian, American, and have never heard a racist word spoken

against them. And I am glad. I am glad that society around us consciously accepts us as normal and human: that is good and needed and right.

But what is hard is that when I tell many white people that I am lamenting, they think it is unnecessary. Or worse, they tell me I shouldn't be. Or sometimes, they tell me I am wrong. They tell me that there isn't any collective, compound trauma. They tell me that if someone is feeling that, they are wrong. They are playing the victim. They are reading into a political tale the media has spun-and it is a lie. Fake news. And it hurts. Because I just said, "I AM HURTING." Did they even hear me?

There has never been a time where our country collectively sought forgiveness (which is a Biblical foundational principle). Where retribution (which is a Biblical principle) was made. There was a war fought and won. There were many individuals who fought and gave their lives for reconciliation: and we are grateful. But the wound made, of being enslaved, of being seen and treated as less than human and less than equal: it didn't go away.

After the war, most of the people who had been enslaved were stuck in the same place, getting treated the same way: as less than human, and less than equal. As a country, the North largely abandoned or ignored them and the work of Reconstruction (the compromise of 1877), and the South wrote history and built monuments to glorify their mindset that whites were better than Blacks. This is collective, compound trauma. Separate but equal. Jim Crow. Lynching.

Imagine if after World War 2, we made all the surviving Jews stay in East Germany, without any help to rebuild or relocate. Imagine if instead of turning the concentration camps into memorials, we turned them into wedding venues (as many plantations are today). Imagine if instead of executing or imprisoning the leaders we honored them and they continued to be rich and influential community leaders. Imagine if the Jews had to go to schools called "Hitler Academy" and walk by statues that honored him.

Now look at the children I worked with in the inner city. The ones whose first experience with a police officer was to see them take their dad or uncle to jail. The ones who are stuck in a broken system of education and poverty that directly relates to different job, loan, housing, and prison policies that affects them more than those outside the ghetto. Food deserts that cause more health problems. The pain and bitterness of their parents, grandparents, and beyond.

This wound, this monster is out of control. The wound grows and engulfs more than just Black people: racism and classism are similar rivers that often cross.

It took me years to get here. It took deliberate education and listening and waiting and growing. It took being willing to hurt, and still hurt, and not just try to fix it. It took close relationships and late-night discussions. I understand completely why so many people don't see it. I understand completely why so many, many more people don't understand it.

Compound, collective trauma and open wounds fester. When you don't work to heal it, when you don't even know how to identify it, it comes out in other ways. It comes out in pain. It comes out in exhaustion. It comes out in being overwhelmed and giving up. It comes out in not caring. It comes out in ignoring and pretending everything is okay. It comes out in anger. It comes out in stress. It comes out a million different ways if it isn't being addressed and dealt with.

If you don't believe that there is a compound, collective trauma, you get surprised and shocked at current events. Where is this anger coming from? Why would you bring up something from that long ago? Why are you still stuck in the past? Our individualism doesn't see the collective part of this: it isn't you or your family—why do you care so much? Our personal feelings are hurt: I wasn't a part of slavery—why are you blaming me? I've never been racist—are you saying I am racist?

As a white person saying these things, I am often written off as one more “woke” person who has bought into the liberal narrative. A

Black person saying these things is written off as bitter, playing the victim. It is easier to write off people who are angry and bitter. It is easier to believe there is no collective, compound trauma: because if there is—then we are in trouble. If there is, as Christians, we are called to first lament that our brothers and sisters are in this pit of pain. And then- we are called to restoration, to redemption.

Our God is a God of redemption. He is a God that takes the broken and restores it: not the God that throws out the broken and starts over to make something new. If there is a collective, compound wound: then we are called to restoration. We are called to see how our sin of selective freedoms and equality created brokenness, and that brokenness directly led to this compound, collective wound. We are to lament. We are to repent and replace those wrong actions and mindsets. We are called to relationship, to healing and restoring.

This is what is needed for our country. But first, this is what is needed for our church.

Do you believe that if the church had properly taught the theology of the image of God that slavery would have been able to take root in America like it did? That it would have been able to continue and flourish? We got our theology wrong. We let our economics dictate our theology to provide a path forward that would be more financially beneficial. And so we, as the church, failed. We were wrong.

Has there ever been a time where we as a church specifically said: “This is what was taught wrong in our churches (explain in detail) that allowed slavery to flourish, and we apologize: HOW CAN WE MAKE IT RIGHT? Not only do we take the first step in eliminating and denouncing wrong theology: but we replace it with correct, Biblical theology. We say “This is the truth about what God says and why we can never allow slavery to flourish (and explain in detail).” We have to intentionally teach a correct theology of the image of God.

It has been said that the most segregated time in America is 10am on Sunday morning. How could we have allowed this to continue for

so long? We need to ask our Black brothers and sisters in Christ how we, as a church, can make it right and heal the brokenness that so clearly still lies between Black and white Christians. And then we stop and listen. Really listen. We won't get it right the first time, but we can consistently recommit to trying again. And again. God hasn't given up on us yet, so we still have time. Maybe this is why we still have time: to work on redemption in the church.

Please Don't Shut Down the Conversation

It has been really hard for me to put words to why I don't like the "All Lives Matter" response, even though I agree with the idea of it. When you react (and it is a reaction to the words "Black Lives Matter") with those words, you are saying to many people, whether you mean to or not, that "No, there is not a problem here." And "No, we do not need to have this conversation."

I know the words "Black Lives Matter" hold a million different meanings to a million different people (much like words like "Mother" and "Father"), for a million different reasons, but to me they mean "Hey guys- there is a problem with racism here."

To me, "Black Lives Matter" isn't explaining what I think the problem is, or why I think the problem is, or the solution: people add those definitions themselves. I agree with some, and disagree with some. I know there is an organization with its own agenda, which is another discussion. But for many people like me, the words "Black Lives Matter" point out that there have been many things that have happened where Black lives haven't mattered, and some things need to change.

As we moved our multicultural family back to the USA, I felt a difference. Race in Brazil is a thing- but it is a different thing. I am not saying it is better or worse- I am saying it is different. As most people who have lived abroad will tell you, you have to figure out how to hold two cultures in your hands with grace.

When I got to the USA and started talking about how I felt about cultural differences on race, the first question I was asked (by white

people only) was “Oh- are your daughters or husband being treated wrongly because of their race?” To which I honestly and openly replied “No, thank God!” To which they concluded “Then what is the problem?” And shut down the conversation.

They didn’t want me to try to explain (stumbling along, I’ll admit- it is taking me a long time to figure this out), they wanted me to justify them, their view, and say there wasn’t a problem. They wanted me to say “All Lives Matter” and move on with my life.

This hurt a lot. Because while I am not dealing with overt racism (thank God), there is something there- something real, something hurtful, something hard- that I keep pressing against. And to tell me it doesn’t exist is damaging. I get that they don’t see it: but I do. And to say it isn’t true calls me a liar. It is trying to push me into their story, which I am not a part of, and I can never return to- because I fell in love with a Black man, I gained a Black family, and I have children who are Black.

This doesn’t make me Black, it just means my reality will never **not** be connected with Black: and I am so glad.

What hurt the most is that the majority of the people who “All Lives Mattered” me (by this I mean they said that there is not a race problem that needs to be faced, fixed, or talked about, or that it wasn’t as important as other conversations) were Christians. My brothers and sisters in Christ, who I’d turned to for a million other problems and help in times past: they were now telling me to move on, because this wasn’t a problem: I was making it up.

I would be wrong to not add that there were key Christians (who were white, if that matters) who wept with me. Who pushed me forward in my journey. Who suggested resources and balanced my rants and listened. Because of them I gathered grace to intentionally forgive those who minimized or rejected my cries of pain. And because of them, I kept moving forward to the most important question in pain: “What does God want to do in this hard, horrible situation?” They encouraged me forward toward redemption and love and grace, and I am forever grateful.

It is hard to explain the mountain of difference between the questions “Then what is the problem?” And “What does God want to do with this problem?”

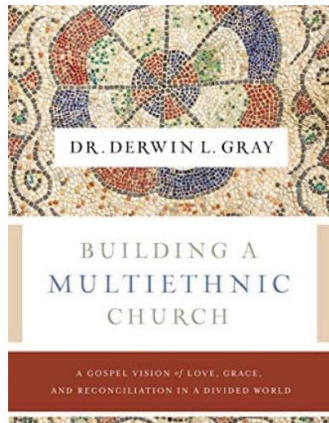
One is denying the problem, the other is accepting that it might not be their problem, but it is yours. The first question requires me to find the solution right then, right now (and make sure it is better than their idea of a solution) while the second question realizes that this is bigger than us and we need God- Oh heavens, we need our God!

One is assuming they come from a place of having answers, and the other realizes all true answers come from God.

Here is the crazy thing- you can think that “All Lives Matter” and still ask the second question instead of the first. You can believe “Black Lives Matter” and be asking the first question, as an accusation. How we relate to people matters, even if we disagree. And how we relate to people reveals our hearts more than we know. I won’t say love trumps truth. I won’t say truth trumps love. I will say God is both, and He calls us to be like Him. There are a lot more “ands” in the world (this is true **and** that is true) than we think.

Dear white Christians, please understand that that “All Lives Matter” is true, but if you say it in reaction to “Black Lives Matter” you are shutting down an important conversation about the problems our culture is facing about race.

We don’t have to agree about what the problems are, or what is wrong with “Black Lives Matter,” or why we have the problems, or what the solutions are. There is a time for all of those conversations: but not right here. Right now, we just have to be able to sit and talk and be listened to and loved. I need you to be able to understand that it might not be a problem to you- but it is to me. That doesn’t mean I hate you or think you are horrible. It does mean that there is work to do, and it will include you, because you are my brother or sister in Christ, and that’s what being family is.



“About his home continent of Africa, Celestin wrote: “Today, even in major cities that are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, we still have single-ethnicity congregations using tribal language for their Sunday services...this is not unlike the situation in many historically white and Black churches in North America.” Tribalism and ethnic hostility already existed in Africa, and then Christian missionaries from the West came to Africa and preached a reduced gospel that fostered tribalism and hostility by building monoethnic and tribal congregations. Celestin wrote: “The majority of Christians did not understand where their loyalty was. Many felt as though they were Hutu or Tutsi first, then Christian second.” Celestin said that Western missionaries emphasized getting conversions rather than making disciples. They preached about how to go to heaven rather than the gospel of grace that produces disciples who practice reconciliation, forgiveness, and unity. Therefore, the Hutus and Tutsis remained loyal to their tribal identity, and when war broke out, they cut each other apart with hatchets.” Sadly, it was this theology of segregation that was exported to Africa. Just as American Christians did not know, our Rwandan brothers and sister did not know that Jesus made Hutus and Tutsis into “one new man,” into a new tribe (see Ephesians 2:15). My primary identity is a child of God who happens to be Black. My blackness and cultural upbringing are not my primary identity, but being in Christ. If only we’d let the gospel truth of this sink into our DNA.”

Glossary

Abolished: stopped, or made illegal.

Acknowledge: to admit what happened (believe it and say it).

Apologize: to say clearly what you did wrong, and how you are sorry

Assume: to think things without having facts or asking.

Atlantic Slave Trade: the couple hundred years when Europeans bought, took, and forcibly moved around about 10 million people from Africa to North and South America.

Authority: who is in charge and has the power.

Bullying: talking or acting to someone in a mean way.

Chattel Slavery: Slavery based just on skin color, where everyone of that skin color is enslaved generationally with no hope of freedom.

Classism: thinking, acting, or the results of past actions of believing that rich people are better than poor people.

Colonization: a specific time period when people traveled and made colonies.

Color Blind: to think that having different color skin doesn't matter, or make a difference.

Colorism: thinking, acting, or the results of past actions of believing that lighter-skinner people are better than darker-skinned people.

Community: group(s) of people we are a part of like our church, our family, and our friends.

Consequences: the results of your actions.

Counseling/Therapy: talking to someone who is wiser than you about the situation.

Culture: the different rules our community runs on like what kind of holidays do we celebrate? What kind of food do we eat? Clothes we wear? But it is also unspoken things like how we raise our kids, how we can express our feelings, and many more things.

Ethnicity: from a specific country or culture.

First-generation immigrant: When you are born in one country, and then move to another country.

Forgiveness: letting go of the anger and the hurt that the other person caused you.

Free will: we get to make our own choices, we aren't robots.

Heritage: what your family's past gave you.

Hispanic: anyone south of North America.

Immigration: people moving from one country to another.

Lament: To complain and let it out, to clarify and put into words, and to connect with truth.

Make it right: doing the actions it takes to really change, according to you and the others involved.

Maternal History: your mom's side of the family history.

Mindset: a way of thinking.

Mixed: to be multiracial, having more than one culture or ethnicity.

New: One kind of new is like when you get a brand new toy you always wanted, and never had before. It is new. But there is also a kind of new when something that already was is made new: like that old painting that we painted over and made something so special and so NEW.

Offended: the person who was hurt, or received the action

Offender: the person who broken the relationship, or did the action

Oral history: history that is spoken.

Paradox: where it seems like two opposite things are true.

Paternal history: your dad's side of the family history.

Personality: your character, the way you do things and why you do them, and so much more.

Prejudice (or bias): thinking that one way of being or doing things is better than a different way.

Race: something made up as a way to organize, divide, and control people.

Racism: thinking, acting, or the results of past actions (of people or institutions) of believing that white people are better than Black people.

Recommit: continuing to do what you agreed to do, and figuring out how to do it the best way.

Reconstruction: a time of rebuilding in America after the Civil War.

Recorded history: history that is written down.

Redemption: Fixing something that was broken (we are talking specifically about relationships, especially our relationship with God).

Religions: systems and rules of faith.

Responsibility: choosing to do what it takes to do your duty.

Sanctification: to grow up in God, to look more like His image.

Scarcity mindset: thinking that if we treat everyone equally, there will be nothing left for me.

Segregation: Having rules and lifestyles that kept white and Black people apart, or separate.

Slavery: a person belonging to another person, not being free.

Stereotypes: the ways that someone thinks someone else with a particular characteristic is like.

Tool: something we use to get things done

Unique: different from everyone else: no one is just like you.

Value: you think it is really important, and act on that.

White privilege: Laws and systems made by white people for white people.

Whiten: to intermarry so that generally people would look "lighter."

Your Character: what you value and what you do, even when it is hard.

Reading List

1. The Bible: Matthew 22:36-40, John 14:6, Acts 2:42-47, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Ephesians 1:4-10, Hebrews 10:25, Revelation 21:5, Romans 3:23-24, 5:8, 5:12-17, 6:11-14, 7:21-25, 8: 14-17, 10:9-10
2. "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" by Ruby K. Payne
3. "Building a Multiethnic Church" by Derwin L. Gray
4. "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents" by Isabel Wilkerson
5. "Fortune" by Lisa Sharon Harper
6. "Futureville: Discover Your Purpose for Today by Reimagining Tomorrow" by Skye Jethani
7. "Hair Love" by Matthew A. Cherry (also a YouTube video)
8. "How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America" by Clint Smith
9. "How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice" by Jemar Tisby
10. "Let Justice Roll Down" by John Perkins
11. "Made by God: Celebrating God's gloriously diverse World" by Tony Evans
12. "Me and White Supremacy" Young Readers edition by Layla F. Saad
13. "One Drop: Shifting the Lens on Race" by Yaba Blay
14. "One Race, One Blood" by Answers in Genesis (.org)
15. "Reparations: A Christian Call for Repentance and Repair" by Duke L. Kwon and Gregory Thompson, as well the Holy Post podcast episodes 360 & 467
16. "Talking about Race" by Isaac Adams
17. "The 6 Needs of Every Child: Empowering Parents and Kids Through the Science of Connection" by Amy Elizabeth Olrick and Jeffrey Olrick
18. "The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism" by Jemar Tisby
19. "The Deeply Formed Life" by Rich Villodas
20. "The Locust Effect" by International Justice Mission founder (Ijm.org). A21 (a21.org), led by Christine Caine, is great

21. "The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together" by Heather McGhee
22. "The Vanishing Half: A Novel" by Brit Bennett
23. "When God Made You" by Matthew Paul Turner
24. "White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity" by Robert P. Jones

YouTube Channel List:

1. "BBC Three" video called "Things Not to Say to Someone of Mixed Race"
2. "Bible Project" video called "Grace", "Heaven and Earth", "Holiness", "Image of God", "Sacrifice and Atonement", "Sin", "The New Humanity"
3. "Channel 4" video called "Heartbreaking Moment When Kids Learn About White Privilege | The School That Tried to End Racism"
4. "Creative Technology & Design" video called "Colorism"
5. "Explaintychannel" video called "Colonies Explained."
6. "Fight Child Abuse" playlist called "Protect yourself Rules." They have them for k-3rd grade, and 4-6 grade.
7. "GlobalBlackHistory" video called "The role of Missionaries in the colonization of Africa"
8. "Holy Post" video called "Holy Post - Race in America" (part 2 is also really well done)
9. "HUB Scuola" video called "The history of segregation in the USA"
10. "Jabzy" video called "Haitian Slave Revolt | 3 Minute History"
11. "Kiratiana" video called "The Whitening of Brazil: Why Black Brazilians Marry White (Ad Junior)"
12. "MTV Impact" video called "Why Color Blindness Will NOT End Racism | Decoded | MTV News"
13. "NBC News Learn" video called "From Servitude to Slavery"
14. "NBC News" video called "'Slave Bible' Removed Passages to Instill Obedience and Uphold Slavery"

15. "NPR" video called "History of Policing in America | Throughline | NPR"
16. "Origin of Everything" video called "Why did Europeans Enslave Africans?"
17. "Prager U" video called "The Short History of Slavery", "Reconstruction: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly", "Was the Civil War about Slavery?"
18. "Storybooth" video called "I Did The Wrong Thing After Being Bullied", "I Stood Up to Racist Mean Girls" and "Standing Up to a Racist Bully", "It Wasn't Easy Growing Up As An Immigrant"
19. "Supercamp" video called "SuperCamp: The 4 Part Apology" (supercamp.com)
20. "TDC" video called "Modern Slavery: The Most-Afflicted Countries"
21. "Ted-ed" video called "Atlantic Slave Trade."
22. "Vagabrothers" video called "The Maroons | Jamaica's Forgotten Nation"
23. "Vox" video called "The racist history of US immigration policy", "What it means to be Black in Brazil"
24. "World Channel" video called "How America Outlawed Interracial Marriage | The History of White People in America"