



Everyone has an opinion about race relations, and most are willing to share it. Why shouldn't followers of Jesus join the conversation? God's Word, Jesus' example, the Spirit's leading—we have a lot to bring to the table. This series is intended to help Christians think, live, and speak a better word when the talk is about race.

**These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.**

**1** Rick mentioned that the subject of race is on many “let’s not talk about that” lists? Why is this? What makes the topic of race such a difficult conversation to have for so many? Why has it been hard at times for you?

**2** Why is the Christian perspective on the topic of race needed? How has that perspective been misrepresented by some? And how have Christians themselves misrepresented what God says about race?

**3** One core value all Christians should affirm is the **we all bear the image of God. Read Genesis 1:27 & 2:7.** What do you think it means to be made in the image of God? What are some of the current issues in the world that need to be addressed beginning with this understanding?

**4** The scriptures affirm in John 3:16 and many other places that **God loves the whole world.** This love is affirmed in both testaments. **Read Genesis 12:1-3, Psalm 117, & Isaiah 49:6.** Why did Israel fail to realize and affirm God's love for all peoples? How do we see this love lived out in the life of Jesus?

**5** **Read Mark 12:28-34.** Jesus intentionally tied the two great commandments together, implying that **we cannot love God if we do not love our neighbor.**

What causes religion to want to separate these two commands? And why did Jesus introduce the subject of race when defining “neighbor”? **See Luke 10:25-38.**

**6** John's vision shows that **God values and redeems all ethnicities. Read Revelation 5:9-10 and 7:9-10.** In heaven the beautiful uniqueness of every ethnicity will be celebrated. What are the implications for the church today, and what might that look like?

**7** Close by praying for enlightenment during this series. Ask God to give each one a revelation of how we can more fully embrace and embody His love.





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**1** Last week we prayed "God, what do you want to say to me?" during this series. Did you receive any specific revelation from the Lord you would care to share with the group?

**2** When describing the church of his youth, Rick said, "The problem was deeper than the presence of racism; it was the absence of the gospel." How do you interpret that assessment? Agree or disagree, and why?

**3** The NT bears witness to the multi-ethnic church. Rick contends that **God does not want separate but equal** churches, yet most churches in America are mono-racial. Why is that? Is that always a bad thing? When is it clearly a bad thing?

**4** Read **Ephesians 2:1-9**. Paul insists that **God's grace is the only way to be saved**. What does this truth have to do with the issue of racism?

**5** Read **Ephesians 2:10-22**. Paul argues that **the cross goes both ways**. Jesus' death has vertical and horizontal implications. On what basis does he make that claim? How is reconciliation more than integration? What "walls of hostility" does the church need to address today?

**6** Read **Ephesians 3:1-11**. **Our unity is the way God displays His wisdom**. How does the multi-ethnic church do this, and why does it matter?

**7** Read **Ephesians 3:14-21**. Satan will always oppose the church God wants to see. (See Ephesians 6:10f) The church **must choose the way of Spirit-empowered love**. What does this look like, and how do we receive the divine power to do it?

**8** Our prayer this week is to be a church that embraces the whole gospel. Spend some time asking God to help us be a church that preaches the cross.





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- 1 What has been your biggest takeaway or “aha” moment in this series so far? Has the Lord revealed anything to you that He wants you to deal with?
- 2 **Read John 17:20-24.** Why was unity such a priority in the prayer of Jesus? What does the visible unity of the body of Christ say to the world about who Jesus is? **Unity preaches!** Have you seen the impact of that kind of unity in your experience as a Christian?
- 3 Rick said “Racial unity is not the mission, but racial unity is critical to the mission.” How do you interpret that statement? Agree or disagree?
- 4 God chose the church in Antioch to be the launching pad for world missions. Their unity **was their witness. Read Acts 11:19-30 and 13:1-3.** How did this church display unity locally? How did it display unity globally? What values and practices of this church need to be embraced by every church?
- 5 Unity **is a process.** It's both a decision and a journey. **Read Galatians 2:11-14.** What do you think Peter was afraid of? On what basis did Paul confront him? What reasons today do Christians use for justifying bigotry or segregation? What can we learn from Paul's example about how to deal with it?
- 6 Unity in the body of Christ **has a basis.** We are all infected with sin, and we all need to be cured by the blood of Jesus. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.** How does the gospel change the way we look at everyone?
- 7 **Read Galatians 3:26-28.** Baptism **preaches unity!** In what way is baptism a rebuke of racism? Reflect on your own baptism. How has your own understanding of and appreciation for baptism grown since then?
- 8 Close your time together praying that our church's growth in unity will bring many who are far from God into a relationship with His Son Jesus Christ.





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**1** What has been the most helpful thing you have heard in this series to date? What new thought on this subject has the Lord revealed to you?

**2** Our guest speaker this week was one of our church planters in Harlem—Kenny Hart. He said, "People say, 'Race is real but it does not matter.' In reality, race is not real but it does matter." What did he mean by that? Do you agree or disagree?

**3** Kenny also noted that we often feel more connected to people who don't believe in the cross because of their skin color that we do with fellow believers of a different race. Why is that? How does our culture disciple us in division?

**4** **Read Acts 2:1-13.** In his sermon Kenny argues that Pentecost is the foundation for unity in the church. What do you see in this text that supports that idea?

**5** The reality is that the unity that we need cannot be achieved in our own strength. We need the power of the Holy Spirit. How does the Spirit of God help us overcome the things that divide us?

**6** **Read 1 Corinthians 9:20-22.** Contextualization means giving people the gospel in a form, manner, or language they can understand or feel. How does the Spirit help us do this? How has the Holy Spirit helped you speak in a "new language" to share the message of Jesus?

**7** Kenny said, "We all have a mission field because we all have a sphere of influence." What is your particular mission field? Share with your group where you think the Spirit wants to use you.

**8** Much of the New Testament deals with the first churches wrestling with the challenges created by ethnic diversity—circumcision, observing special days, meat offered to idols, etc. What do you think will be some of the challenges we will face at The Hills as we become more ethnically diverse? What fruit of the Spirit will we need to help us navigate those challenges?

**9** This week our prayer is that we will be a Spirit-filled people. Take some time to pray that our church will follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to be the church that God wants.





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- 1 What was your overall reaction after this sermon was over? Did it produce emotions of anger, guilt, joy? Why do you think that was?
- 2 Rick said that the idea that racism is only personal and intentional is a false narrative. How did you interpret that statement? Agree or disagree.
- 3 We need to know about the **legacy of slavery** in our nation. How do you see the effects still at work in our society today? What about the idea of repenting for sins of your fathers? **Read Nehemiah 9:5**. How does the gospel shape our understanding of communal guilt and forgiveness? (see Romans 5:12f, for example)
- 4 Racism is not just individual; it is institutional. It is built on the foundation of **systemic injustice**. Rick mentioned several examples of this. What are some examples that you have seen?
- 5 **Read Amos 2:6-7 & 5:21-24**. Justice is a huge theme in the Bible. Why does God care so much about it? **Read Micah 6:8**. What does it look like to "seek justice"?
- 6 The reality of **white privilege** is often met with denial and anger. Why do you think that is? What are examples of white privilege that you now see?
- 7 **Read Philippians 2:5-7**. Jesus did not use his privilege for his own benefit, but as a way to serve others. What might that look like for his disciples today?
- 8 What is the one thing you think God wants you to take away from this week's message? Close by asking God to reveal what He still wants us to know, and ask for hearts willing and ready to receive His revelation.





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- 1 As you think about The Hills becoming an intentionally more multi-ethnic church, what makes you the most nervous? What makes you the most excited?
- 2 What are some of the ways that we see the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts moving the church in the direction of its multi-ethnic destiny?
- 3 Rick mentioned three things we can do to, beginning with **listening to instead of just hearing about**. What are ways in which our culture tries to get us to embrace false narratives about one another? **Read James 1:19**. What are the hard requirements of being a good listener? Share a time when really listening to another person's story changed your perspective.
- 4 Becoming a multi-ethnic church will demand **getting comfortable being uncomfortable**. Rick mentioned three areas where this will be especially necessary: accepting inter-racial relationships, embracing diverse worship styles, and submitting to diversity in leadership. Take some time in your group to talk about all three challenges. What will be hard, what can we do to make it work, and how does the gospel address our response to each one?
- 5 Combatting racism will mean **speaking up when it is easier to shut up**. Give some examples of that in the Bible. What are ways we can speak up today as individual Christians and as a church? Share a time when you or someone you know "spoke up."
- 6 Rick said "The gospel is the hope of the world." Agree or disagree? Why?
- 7 What has been the most important thing God has taught you in this series?
- 8 Close by praying that The Hills will truly embrace God's multi-ethnic dream for the church. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead us into that future.

