

# LIGHT

## IN THE DARKNESS

*Philippians 2:12-18*

### **BIG IDEA**

While we are living in a culture that is engulfed in the darkness of racial tension, political division and a pandemic we have the high calling to be a bright and beautiful light to all people.

### **ICE BREAKER**

In our current culture complaining is at an all time high. Has grumbling and complaining ever accomplished anything? Our job as a church is to be light and not add to the darkness. With racial tension, the pandemic, and divisive politics the need for people to see light has never been greater. We are that light. Reflect together as a group how someone has been a “light” in your life. It may be someone who brought you to Christ or someone who mentored you or supported you in a dark time in your life. As you reflect together on your stories allow gratitude to arise from within. The light of Christ extended toward us is a beautiful thing!

### **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. We live in a culture that is growing in greater darkness. People desperately need our light. How is God calling you to shine your light in the context of racism, political division, and the covid pandemic? Share as a group some ways you are shining your light. Try to cover each of the 3 areas listed above. We can get ideas from one another and we can be encouraged to be active in bringing light to others.
2. There are three responses to racism: the first response is repentance. We are not speaking of repenting for “the sins of the white church”; there is no “white church”. Rather, we are the church of Christ. The second response is lament where we feel the brokenness of the world. Even though we were not living when slavery existed in the U.S. we can lament the injustice of it. **Lament makes room for other people’s stories.**

The third response to racism is “move”. A great example of Christ moving in regard to both racism and the kingdom of darkness is his heart toward the Samaritan woman. Jews despise the Samaritans-- the cultural injustice was palpable. Jesus, a Jew, moved toward her and offered her inclusion into both His love and the very Kingdom of God. Christ has also pursued you--an outsider and a Gentile. This humbling reality softens our hearts toward others.

Take some time as a group to reflect on these three responses quietly. Ask the Spirit to show you any attitudes of racism or division that are in need of repentance. Then ask the Spirit to make you aware of how you can lament with others’ stories of racism or exclusion. Finally, ask the Spirit to lead you to “move”. What kind of movement do we need to think about? Consider a time of group prayer. As you pray, remember that we are tremendous light in this dark culture. People need hope, love, and healing and we know the ONE who offers all three in abundance. Also, consider serving as a group or as an individual with one of our many outreaches. Contact Sylvia Veal or Carol Gates as they can help you coordinate.

## **NOTES AND QUOTES**

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing. That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,”

Philippians 2:14-15

In Colossians 3 God tells us that anything that separates in relationship with others simply does not belong. In Christ’s kingdom division cannot stand.

But, in our flesh we are pulled to feel better about ourselves so we dehumanize others.

In our flesh we can divide based on the following: skin color, race, income, intelligence, geography, age, vocation.

Important perspective for us regarding racism: it’s real, it’s long(a very long history) and it’s complicated.

Sin is complex therefore racism is complex

Things to remember about racial reconciliation:

- Fragmented: don't' think white church and black church
- Cost of not moving is greater than a clumsy move

- Any move will be criticized.
- Expect roadblocks: the enemy won't let healing occur easily
- Don't miss home: don't be a social warrior out there and be a jerk at home. Don't ignore family relationships for a "higher call".
- Beware of pride: pride waits to swallow us whole. Well, I am doing something but all these people are doing nothing. I roll my eyes because I am doing better than others. Pride in what I am doing is my biggest problem.
- Keep moving: move to unity in Christ. Unity in Christ overcomes all divisions!