

HOW

TO

Courageous Christianity  
and the Journey  
toward Racial Justice

FIGHT

RACISM

JEMAR TISBY

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE COLOR OF COMPROMISE*

WITH BETH GRAYBILL

**HOW  
TO  
FIGHT  
RACISM**

**STUDY GUIDE**



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TEN SESSIONS

**Courageous Christianity and the  
Journey toward Racial Justice**

**JEMAR TISBY**

WITH BETH GRAYBILL

 **ZONDERVAN  
REFLECTIVE**

ZONDERVAN REFLECTIVE

*How to Fight Racism Study Guide*

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# INTRODUCTION

Hello, friend! Welcome to the *How to Fight Racism Study Guide*. This guide, which includes ten teaching sessions and a conclusion, is meant to be a companion learning experience to my book, *How to Fight Racism*, and its video study. There is a growing swell of people who recognize the fierce sense of urgency when it comes to fighting racism. The pages of the book contain my answer to the most frequent question I receive about fighting racism: “*What do we do?*” This study guide and accompanying video study are designed to prioritize practical ways to answer that question.

This journey toward racial justice is for those who realize racism is a problem nationwide and worldwide and want to be a part of the solution, but also need guidance about what exactly you could be doing as an individual, a church, a community, or an organization to push back against racism. While I believe the journey is open to all, I am convinced that Christians must show up in this fight against racism. This is what I call *courageous Christianity*. From my point of view, *courageous Christianity* contrasts with the *complicit Christianity* that has led so many religious people to perpetuate racism and cooperate with bigotry instead of challenging it. But racial justice comes from the struggle of those who choose to stand against racism courageously rather than to compromise with it. And now is the time for our fellow Christians to be courageous, to dare to love through action, and to risk everything for the sake of justice.

Here’s how I propose we live out courageous Christianity in the face of racial injustice. The book and this study are structured around an important model I created called the ARC of Racial Justice. ARC is an acronym that stands for:

1. Awareness
2. Relationships
3. Commitment



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In this study, you will learn ways to increase your *awareness* by studying history, exploring your personal narrative, and grasping what God says about the dignity of the human person. You will also learn to see that you cannot have true racial justice without developing authentic *relationships* with people who are different from you. And you will learn that building awareness and developing relationships is what enables you to make a *commitment* to dismantle racist attitudes, structures, laws, and policies—starting with your heart and moving out to the systems and structures of our nation and our world. This model is grounded in the head-hands-heart metaphor with *awareness* as the head, *relationships* as the heart, and *commitment* as the hands. If we're honest, many of us gravitate toward one part of this model more than the whole. Some of us love to devour information to increase our knowledge and awareness through books, articles, and documentaries. Others forge admirable relationships with people from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and experiences. Still others are activists on the front lines of protests and leading campaigns for radical change. While each response is noble, a holistic response to racial justice *must* include all three aspects: *awareness*, *relationships*, and *commitment*.

The ARC of Racial Justice provides helpful shorthand for a comprehensive approach to racial justice and race reforms. But the point of the model is not to keep all actions equal in number; rather, the goal is to keep all three areas of *awareness*, *relationships*, and *commitment* in conversation and tension with one another. This ensures that no person or organization focuses on one area to the exclusion of the other areas. But the three categories interact in a dance that changes cadence and rhythm according to the music of the moment. This model is not linear, meaning you will not progress from *awareness* to *relationships* to *commitment*—that sounds more like a recipe than a dance. My hope is you will grow in each area, knowing at times that one racial justice practice will build your capacity to fight racism in multiple areas of life.

Here is the truth: the process of growing in *awareness*, *relationships*, and *commitment* never ends. Racial justice is a journey without a finish line, and fighting racism is an ongoing series of steps and stops along the way. Not all of us will have the same starting point or the same speed on this journey. But the eventual destination is crucial: *racial equity and justice for all people of every racial and ethnic background*. This is where harmony and unity will prevail in the midst of diversity. And I believe success on this journey is defined by the actions we take rather than the results we achieve. Let's begin this journey together.

*Jemar Tisby*

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

**T**he *How to Fight Racism Video Study* is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any small group gathering. Each session begins with a welcome section, two questions or reading suggestions to get you thinking about the topic. You will then watch a video with Jemar Tisby and engage in some small-group discussion. You will close each session with a time of prayer as a group.

Each person in the group should have his or her own copy of this study guide and a Bible. Multiple translations will be used throughout the study, so whatever translation you have is fine. You are also encouraged to have a copy of the *How to Fight Racism* book, as reading the book alongside the curriculum will provide you with deeper insights and make the journey more meaningful, especially for your community context. (See the “For Next Week” section at the end of each between-studies section for the chapters in the book that correspond to material you and your group are discussing.)

To get the most out of your group experience, keep the following points in mind. First, the real growth in this study will happen during your small-group time. This is where you will process the content of the teaching for the week, ask questions, and learn from others as you hear what God is doing in their lives as they journey toward racial justice. For this reason, it is important for you to be fully committed to the group and attend each session so you can build trust and rapport with the other members. If you choose to only go through the motions, or if you refrain from participating, there is less of a chance you will find what you’re looking for during this study.

Second, remember the goal of your small group is to serve as a place where people can share, learn about God and racial justice, build intimacy and friendship, and make a commitment to live as courageous Christians. For this reason, seek to make your group a safe place. This means being honest about your thoughts and feelings and listening carefully to everyone else’s opinion.

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(If you are a group leader, there are additional instructions and resources in the back of the book for leading a productive discussion group.)

Third, resist the temptation to fix a problem someone might be having or to correct his or her theology, as that's not the purpose of your small-group time. Also, keep everything your group shares confidential. This will foster a rewarding sense of community in your group and create a place where people can heal, be challenged, and grow spiritually.

Following your group time, reflect on the material you've covered by engaging in a between-sessions activity that includes additional *essential understandings* and *racial justice practices*. For each session, you may wish to complete the personal study all in one sitting or spread it out over a few days (for example, working on it for fifteen minutes a day on different days that week). Note that if you are unable to finish (or even start!) your between-sessions personal study, you should still participate in the group study teaching session. You are still wanted and welcomed in the conversation even if you don't have your "homework" done.

Keep in mind that the videos, discussion questions, and activities are meant to kick-start your journey so you are not only open to what God wants you to hear about racial justice but also how to apply the practices to your life. As you go through this study, be open and listen to what God is saying to you as you discover a healthy, courageous perspective on *How to Fight Racism*.

**Note:** If you are a group leader, there are additional resources provided in the back of this guide to help you lead your group members through the study.

## Session 1

# HOW TO FIGHT RACISM

*Civil rights is often seen in social and political terms.  
We often fail to recognize this movement as one of the most  
significant faith-based campaigns in American history.*

—SOON-CHAN RAH

## Welcome

Welcome to session 1 of *How to Fight Racism*. The fact that you are here, listening to this teaching, meeting online or in-person as a group, and answering these questions means you're willing to be part of this movement as we journey toward racial justice. The goal of this journey is for all of us to be better equipped in the fight against racism and take the necessary next steps toward equity and justice. I often hear people asking if racism is mostly a matter of personal attitudes and actions or if it's the result of systemic structures and institutional policies. And my answer is, *it's both*. Just look around and read the news. Racial justice must occur at both the individual and institutional levels. W. E. B. DuBois once said, "The cost of liberty is less than the price of repression," and when that becomes true for you, then you will be ready to take the next steps toward racial justice. Now, only time will tell if the grassroots efforts to fight racism during the uprisings and protests of 2020 will lead to lasting transformation. But what is clear is that racial progress does not occur apart from the sustained efforts of people who dedicate themselves to fighting racism in all its forms. That's why we're here today. We need another generation of people willing to fight for freedom. We need a movement of people who will not back away in the face of racism and the lie of white supremacy. And I believe the key

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to fighting racism is by participating in a model I developed and refer to as the *ARC of Racial Justice*. The ARC of Racial Justice includes increasing your *awareness* by studying history, exploring your personal narrative and grasping what God says about the dignity of the human person. It includes learning to see that you cannot have true racial justice without developing authentic *relationships* with people who are different from you. And it is by building awareness and developing relationships that the ARC includes enabling you to make a *commitment* to dismantle racist attitudes, structures, laws, and policies—starting with your heart and moving out to the systems and structures of our nation and our world. As history demonstrates, we can find creative solutions to society’s most pressing problems—including racism—when people of goodwill get together and have *hope*. I’m guessing each one of you is carrying a spirit of *hope* today since you decided to show up for this conversation and take a good hard look at racial justice, so let’s get started.

### Share

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to kick things off, briefly discuss one of the following statements:

- What sparks the desire for people to see change?  
—*or*—
- How does someone develop a burden to combat racism?

### Watch

Play the video segment for session 1. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

### Notes

#### ***Something Is Different***

- George Floyd
- Breonna Taylor

- Ahmaud Arbery
- Christian Cooper

### ***Signs of Change***

#### ***Racial Justice***

*When people of goodwill get together, they can find creative solutions to society's most pressing problems.*

—JEMAR TISBY

#### ***What Do We Do?***

*How to Fight Racism* provides the practical aspects of how to fight for racial justice.

#### ***The ARC of Racial Justice***

- **Awareness:** building our knowledge and understanding about race and racism
- **Relationships:** all racial justice is relational and requires healthy friendships and collaboration in order to be on this journey *together*
- **Commitment:** it is a commitment to dismantle racist policies and promote policies that provide equity and justice

*At some point we need to act on a systemic and institutional level to change racist patterns and practices.*

—JEMAR TISBY

#### ***Considerations about the Arc of Racial Justice***

- It's not a linear process.
- It's a never-ending process.

It's not about perfect balance; it's about a dynamic dance.

#### ***Racial Justice Is a Journey, Not a Destination***

And the goals are:

- racial harmony
- equity
- justice

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*It's about the people we become  
along the way and others who  
we meet along this path.*

—JEMAR TISBY

### *The Progress of Racial Justice*

#### *Courageous Christianity*

Christians are part of the problem and part of the solution.

Scripture provides a framework for the need and motivation of racial justice.

*Prophetic Imagination* (Walter Brueggemann) is about imagining ways we can work against racism to promote a future we can all embrace.

#### *The Practices of Racial Justice*

- an invitation to dream
- an invitation to imagine possibilities and alternatives beyond what we see
- an invitation to reflect and evaluate before offering criticism

#### *The Structure of the How to Fight Racism Study*

- ARC: Awareness, Relationships, Commitment
- Essential Understandings
- Racial Justice Practices

**Exemplars:** As we get started, consider examples of particular individuals who have been fighting racism and taken steps toward racial justice.

*If I fall, I'll fall five feet and four  
inches forward in the fight for  
freedom. I'm not backing off.*

—FANNIE LOU HAMER

## Discuss

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

## How to Fight Racism

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1. What stood out to you from Jemar's teaching on how to fight racism?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Provide a specific example of how you have experienced racism or have witnessed racism in the life of someone close to you.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Consider Jemar's ARC of Racial Justice. How do you think we can increase our *awareness* of racial justice?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How can we foster *relationships* in a way that promotes racial justice?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. How can we improve our *commitment* to racial justice?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Jemar said Christians have been part of the *problem* and part of the *solution* for racial justice. How have you known this to be true in seeing the response to racism from the Christian community around you?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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- 7. What responsibility do you think Christians have in the fight against racism, and why?

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- 8. What hopes and expectations do you have for yourself, for your group, and for your faith community as you dive into this study over the next ten weeks on *How to Fight Racism*?

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**Pray**

Pray as a group before you close your time together. Ask God to open your hearts and minds and allow you to see the racism around you, maybe even *within* you. Ask God to give you hope and passion in your pursuit of racial justice. Use this space to keep track of prayer requests and group updates.

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## Session 1

# BETWEEN-SESSIONS PERSONAL STUDY

### Weekly Reflection

Before you begin this between-sessions exercise, briefly review your notes for video session 1. In the space below, write down the *most significant point* you took away from this session.

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### Diving Deeper: Essential Understandings

As we move forward in this study, we will use this section to explore the essential understandings Jemar brings to our attention in each session, as well as the additional essential understandings found in each chapter of *How to Fight Racism*.

For session 1, the ARC of Racial Justice *is* our essential understanding, in addition to the exemplars we find carrying out justice and fighting racism long before the racial unrest of 2020. Take a few minutes to reflect on these understandings and the corresponding questions.

### The ARC of Racial Justice

How essential is the Arc of Racial Justice to your understanding of the need to fight racism?

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Using a scale from 1 (least effective) to 10 (most effective), how would you rate yourself in the following areas regarding racism and racial justice:

*Awareness: I am aware of racism and the need for racial justice because I frequently study history, explore my own personal narrative, and read the Bible to understand what God says about the dignity of humanity.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**How are you specifically doing this?**

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*Relationships: I regularly surround myself and build authentic relationships with people who are different from me.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**How are you specifically doing this?**

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## How to Fight Racism

*Commitment: I am committed to dismantling racism—the attitudes, structures, laws, and policies—within me, in the systems and structures of my community, and in our nation.*

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**How are you specifically doing this?**

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*Now go back and think about how the people around you would rate you according to the ARC of Racial Justice.*

**Do your aspirations to fight racism line up with your actions? If no, why not? If yes, where are there areas for improvement?**

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### Taking Action: Racial Justice Practices

As we move forward in this study, we will use this section to explore the racial justice practices Jemar brings to our attention in each session, as well as the additional practices found in each chapter of *How to Fight Racism*.

For session 1, our racial justice practice is to consider the exemplars we find carrying out justice and fighting racism long before the racial unrest of 2020. Take a few minutes to reflect on this practice and the corresponding questions:

**Exemplars:** Who are the individuals that come to mind when you consider courageous Christianity and the long journey of racial justice/ How have they taken courageous steps, informed by faith, to fight racism? Why are these particular individuals meaningful to you?

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1. \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

The courageous steps of faith this person has taken to fight racism:

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Why this individual is meaningful to me:

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2. \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

The courageous steps of faith this person has taken to fight racism:

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Why this individual is meaningful to me:

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

The courageous steps of faith this person has taken to fight racism:

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## How to Fight Racism

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Why this individual is meaningful to me:

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4. \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

The courageous steps of faith this person has taken to fight racism:

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Why this individual is meaningful to me:

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5. \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

The courageous steps of faith this person has taken to fight racism:

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Why this individual is meaningful to me:

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## Be Specific: Your Next Step

*What specific step will you take this week as a result of what you've learned and explored today?* Pay attention to the areas where you felt most convicted as you moved through this material. Perhaps there's a specific next step you need to take to lean into the areas of conviction or sensitivity you experienced today. Give yourself a specific due date for your next step. Then take it one step further and share your action step and due date with a friend or colleague. It helps to have accountability in taking the next step.

As a result of what I learned in this session, I will:

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And I will do this by:

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Pray

Take a few moments to reflect on what you've learned today and over the course of session 1. Invite God to give you a clear perspective of his love and truth on the journey of racial justice. Ask God if there's a truth he wants you to lean into as you consider the way you model the ARC of Racial Justice and the courageous, faith-filled ways you show up in the world. Use this space to write out your prayer or journal your thoughts.

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## Session 2

# HOW TO EXPLAIN RACE AND THE IMAGE OF GOD

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

—1 PETER 2:9 ESV

## Welcome

Welcome to session 2 of *How to Fight Racism*. In order to fight racism, we must begin by acknowledging that race is an invented category—one that offers certain privileges and advantages to a particular group of people to the detriment of all those who are excluded from that group. In the US context, this means white people have privileges and advantages at the exclusion of “nonwhite” people, or people of color. Race is what we call a “social construct” because it is based on a set of customs and practices—a caste system—that keeps white people in a superior position to people of color through oppression and exploitation. Race has no basis in biological or spiritual reality because it is socially determined. In fact, in the US, race has largely been defined in terms of physical appearance. Yes, you read that right: *race is largely defined by physical appearance in the US*. And while the concept of race has changed over time, the ideology of race remains a potent force in our world today. White people of European descent enjoy greater access to professional opportunities, high-quality education, more financial wealth, the presumption of innocence, and normality. That is why no matter their level of achievement, people of color are situated on the outermost rings of American social circles. But how do we reconcile this reality with the wisdom of Scripture and

the dignity given to *all* of humanity by God? Scripture tells us that we do not simply *have* the image of God; we *are* the image of God, thoroughly and holistically, as human beings. This means *all people* equally bear the likeness of God. To get specific, the image of God extends to Black *and* white people, men *and* women, rich *and* poor, incarcerated *and* free, queer *and* straight, documented *and* undocumented, abled *and* disabled, powerful *and* oppressed. God's fingerprints rest upon every single person without restriction. Each and every one of us bear incalculable and inviolable value, which makes race a problematic issue. In order to fight for racial justice, racism must not be lightly dismissed. It must be treated as the evil offense against God and human beings that it is. So my hope today is that this session expands our awareness of race from a Christian perspective, and that you walk away understanding the foundational beliefs on which many of the racial justice practices are built.

### Share

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to kick things off, briefly discuss one of the following statements:

- What does it mean to be an *image bearer of God*?  
—or—
- How are race and ethnicity similar or different?

### Watch

Play the video segment for session 2. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

### Notes

*The Story of Kip and Alice Rhinelanders (1924)*

*Race Is:*

*Essential Understandings*

1. *Race as a Social Construct*

*Race is technically the amount of melanin (tone) in one's skin.*

Race is built on three main ideas:

- Race is elastic.
- Race is built on physical appearance.
- Race has social meaning.

2. *Race and the Bible*

A. The human race

*And he said to the human race,  
“The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom,  
and to shun evil is understanding.”*

—JOB 28:28

B. Race as “genos”: a spiritual designation

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation, God's special possession, that you  
may declare the excellencies of him who called you  
out of darkness. and into his marvelous light.*

—1 PETER 2:9 NASB

C. Ethnicity (Acts 2)

*The term ethnicity is flexible enough to encompass  
language, nation of origin and religion.*

—J. DANIEL HAYS, *FROM EVERY PEOPLE AND  
NATION: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF RACE* (2003)

Ethnicity includes differences among various people groups:

- physical appearance
- language
- nation of origin
- religion

3. *A Biblical Theology of Race*

The unfolding story of race, or in biblical terms, *ethnicity*.

*Diversity wasn't God's plan B. It was  
there right from the beginning.*

—JEMAR TISBY

Genesis 3: The first gospel or the first announcement of good news.

*And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will crush your head  
and you will strike his heel.*

—GENESIS 3:15

Deliverance and salvation for *all*.

*I will make you into a great nation,  
and I will bless you;  
I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.  
I will bless those who bless you,  
and whoever curses you I will curse;  
and all peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you.*

—GENESIS 12:2-3

Salvation is not limited to just one group of people.

*The mountain of the LORD's temple will be established  
as the highest of the mountains;  
it will be exalted above the hills,  
and all nations will stream to it.*

—ISAIAH 2:2

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We all have the opportunity to hear the good news be proclaimed.

*For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel.*

—LUKE 2:30-32

Simeon says that salvation goes to Gentiles, non-Jewish people.

*But you will receive power when the Holy  
Spirit comes on you; and you will be my  
witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea  
and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

—ACTS 1:8

The parting command of Jesus is to spread the good news to *all* people.

*And they sang a new song, saying:*

*“You are worthy to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
because you were slain,  
and with your blood you purchased for God  
persons from every tribe and language  
and people and nation.”*

—REVELATION 5:9

*After this I looked, and there before me was a great  
multitude that no one could count, from every nation,  
tribe, people and language, standing there before the  
throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white  
robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.*

—REVELATION 7:9

Eternity will be multiethnic. *If that’s going to be true then, how do we make it true now?*

## How to Explain Race and the Image of God

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COLE AND WALKER, MEMPHIS 1968: THE SANITATION STRIKE

*I Am a Man.*

—SANITATION WORKERS' SIGNS, 1968

THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE

*Black is Beautiful*

*I am Somebody*

*Black Lives Matter*

*All of these words and phrases are meant  
to communicate the humanity and equality  
of black people in a society that is built  
and rife with white supremacy.*

—JEMAR TISBY

### 4. Imago Dei: *The Image of God*

*Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our  
image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over  
the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over  
the livestock and all the wild animals, and over  
all the creatures that move along the ground."*

*So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.*

—GENESIS 1:26-27

THE COHERENT NARRATIVE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

The invaluable existence of all of humanity, made in the image of God.

Being made in the image of God:

- **doesn't** mean we *are* God
- **does** mean we reflect characteristics of God
- **doesn't** mean we are *like* the image of God
- **does** mean we *are* the image of God

## How to Fight Racism Study Guide

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- **does** mean we are *all* worthy of dignity and respect in our very being, regardless of our color
- **does** mean we bear the image of God individually *and* collectively

### DEFACING THE IMAGE OF GOD ACCORDING TO ETHNICITY

- Printed resources
- Tropes
- Social issues

*The image of God is a foundational  
Christian belief for understanding how  
we should interact with one another.*

—JEMAR TISBY

### ***Racial Justice Practices***

#### *1. Teach What the Bible Says about Race and Ethnicity*

Don't assume you already know how the Bible teaches on these topics.

Tips for teaching:

- Give people lead-up time.
- Do this in groups whenever possible.

#### *2. Learn Theology from the Disinherited*

**Exercise:** Close your eyes and think of five theologians who have shaped your thinking about religion. Now, close your eyes and think about five theologians of color who have shaped your thinking.

Learn from faith communities that aren't in the majority racial group.

*Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman (1996)

Consider how the gospel is “good news” for the marginalized and the oppressed by:

- diversifying your bookshelf
- listening to different pastors and sources
- learning from people who come from marginalized and oppressed groups

#### *3. Treat Racism as It Should Be Considered, a Sin*

Do this both inside and outside the church.

**Every being has inherent dignity, value, and worth because we are *all* made in the image and likeness of God.**

**Discuss**

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. What stood out to you from Jemar’s teaching on how to explain race and the image of God?

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2. According to Jemar, what is the difference between race and ethnicity?

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3. Provide a specific example of how you experienced or witnessed the Black struggle for freedom.

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4. How does your faith inform your view of racial justice and the practices you participate in regarding “liberty and justice for all”?

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5. Review the verses Jemar mentioned in his teaching. Which verse speaks to you most about the inherent value of *all* humans, and why?

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6. How do you engage with fellow Christians who deny the inherent worth and value of other human beings because of the color of their skin or because of their past actions?

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7. Who are the theologians who have shaped your thinking about religion? How many of these theologians are women and/or people of color? Who will you specifically seek to learn from them as a result of this realization?

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8. Jemar challenged us to consider how the gospel is “good news” for those who have been marginalized and oppressed. What steps will you take to diversify your bookshelf, listen to different pastors and different sources, and learn from marginalized and oppressed groups of people? Be specific on where you will go to find new voices and new sources.

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### Pray

Pray as a group before you close your time together. Ask God to show you how you’ve participated in the oppression or exploitation of others, especially people of color, because of your understanding of race. Ask God to help you see your brothers and sisters and fellow humans the way God does—as *image bearers*. Use this space to keep track of prayer requests and group updates.

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# BETWEEN-SESSIONS PERSONAL STUDY

## Weekly Reflection

Before you begin the between-sessions exercises, briefly review your video notes for session 2. In the space below, write down the *most significant point* you took away from this session.

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## Diving Deeper: Essential Understandings

Reflect on the essential understandings Jemar provided in the video teaching, as well as the additional content for each of these essential understandings found in chapter 2 of *How to Fight Racism*. You may want to review the notes you took during the teaching session regarding each essential understanding as you read the corresponding questions.

### 1. Race as a Social Construct

This means race is a socially determined category, and it has no basis in spiritual or biological reality. Race is merely an indication of the amount of melanin in one's skin. And the slight variance of melanin found between

## How to Fight Racism Study Guide

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people of color and white people does not set inherent limits on intelligence, cultural creativity, or social location. Instead, limits have been enacted by one group of people (mostly white people) over another (mostly Black people and other people of color) as individuals and communities make deliberate decisions to hold up one group over others.

**What else stood out to you about this essential understanding from Jemar’s teaching in the video and from this chapter in *How to Fight Racism*?**

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**How does this understanding change your view of the world around you?**

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### **2. Race and the Bible**

The Bible translates the word *race* generally in two ways. The first is in reference to the “human race,” and this is usually used to emphasize the unified origins of our common humanity. The Bible also uses the term *race* to indicate the difference between those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and those who do not. In this last instance, the term *race* comes from the Greek word *genos* and does not refer to a person’s skin color or other physical features. The word simply designates people who are part of God’s new holy nation—the church—through faith in Jesus.

**What else stood out to you about this essential understanding from Jemar’s teaching in the video and from this chapter in *How to Fight Racism*?**

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**How does this understanding change your view of the world around you?**

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### **3. A Biblical Theology of Race**

Throughout Scripture God reveals an unfolding plan for ethnic diversity that expands in scope from Genesis to Revelation. God’s plan for salvation is built on the presumption of human equality and dignity and always assumes a multiethnic character. Diversity is God’s “plan A” for the church. The Christian picture of eternity is multihued, multilingual, multinational, multiethnic fellowship with others in never-ending worship of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). From beginning to end, God has planned for an ethnically diverse church.

**What else stood out to you about this essential understanding from Jemar’s teaching in the video and from this chapter in *How to Fight Racism*?**

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How does this understanding change your view of the world around you?

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#### 4. *Imago Dei*: The Image of God

In the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, God communicates the essential unity and equality of all people: “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.’ . . . So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:26–27). Being made in the image and likeness of God means that human beings hold certain similarities with God. And as God’s image bearers, all people have innate dignity and worth. We simply do not *have* the image of God—we *are* the image of God.

What else stood out to you about this essential understanding from Jemar’s teaching in the video and from this chapter in *How to Fight Racism*?

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How does this understanding change your view of the world around you?

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## Taking Action: Racial Justice Practices

Now reflect on the racial justice practices Jemar provided in the video teaching, as well as the additional content for each of these practices found in chapter 2 of *How to Fight Racism*. You may want to review the notes you took during the teaching session regarding each racial justice practice as you read the corresponding questions.

### 1. Teach What the Bible Says about Race and Ethnicity

It is a good idea in the fight against racism to start by teaching what the Bible has to say on the topic. It is not safe to assume all Christians know what the Bible says about race and ethnicity. Even Christians who have had the privilege of attending graduate school or seminary encounter few discussions of race and ethnicity from a Christian perspective, and the ones who do may have had a very general conversation about “equality” but little understanding in how to apply biblical teachings on racial justice. So a great place to start in the fight against racism is to teach what the Bible has to say on the topic. Here are some guidelines for doing so:

- *Give plenty of lead-up time for whatever course of study you decide to use.*
- *Remember to focus on community building and trust.*
- *Lay out what you’ve studied.*

**What else stood out to you about this racial justice practice from Jemar’s teaching in the video and from this chapter in *How to Fight Racism*?**

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**How will you put this practice into action in your own life?**

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## **2. Learn Theology from the Disinherited**

Any reformation in the way people think about race and ethnicity from a Christian perspective must include learning from people who have experienced marginalization and oppression. The presumed theological and intellectual superiority of European and white sources is itself an example of white supremacy and should be confronted whenever you teach about biblical ideas of race and ethnicity. Theologies developed by people of color should not receive any more or less scrutiny than those devised by European and white people. In fact, theologies developed by people of color provide a helpful context from the perspective of the poor and the politically oppressed as they looked to their faith to both explain and change their circumstances.

**What else stood out to you about this racial justice practice from Jemar's teaching in the video and from this chapter in *How to Fight Racism*?**

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**How will you put this practice into action in your own life?**

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### 3. Treat Racism as It Should Be Treated: Like a Sin

While few churches would argue against the idea that racism is a sin, most will not deal with it as such. Too often racism is treated like an unlikable personality trait—something unsavory but not sinful. But in order to truly raise awareness about the threat of racism, white Christians should be prepared to bring charges against those who practice racism in word and deed. Churches should also educate their congregation about race and ethnicity from a biblical perspective and the idea of how applying the biblical teaching of the image of God is crucial for the journey toward racial justice.

**What else stood out to you about this racial justice practice from Jemar’s teaching in the video and from this chapter in *How to Fight Racism*?**

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**How will you put this practice into action in your own life?**

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#### **Be Specific: Your Next Step**

*What specific step will you take this week as a result of what you’ve learned and explored today?* Pay attention to the areas where you felt most convicted as you moved through this material. Perhaps there’s a specific next step you need to take to lean into the areas of conviction or sensitivity you experienced today. Then give yourself a specific due date for your next step. Take it one step further and share your action step and your due date with a friend or colleague. It helps to have accountability in taking the next step.



**Consider this:** If you're struggling to think of something on your own, *consider the following biblical model for discipline to confront racism in your home, church, organization, or community.*

**Read Matthew 18:15–20**

If someone has committed a sin such as racism or racist acts against you or someone in your care, you can:

1. *Address the offender one-on-one—ideally this comes from the one who was offended.*
2. *If they refuse to admit their fault, then lovingly confront the person with an additional witness or two.*
3. *If the offender still refuses to listen, then take the matter to the leadership of your congregation or the organization.*
4. *If the offender continues in their denial, then they are to be treated as someone hostile to the faith or to the community; in this case, boundaries are required so no further harm can be done until the offender is willing to confess their wrong.*

As a result of what I learned in this session, I will:

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And I will do this by:

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**Pray**

Take a few moments to reflect on what you've learned today and over the course of session 2. Invite God into your racial justice journey. Ask God to show you areas in your life where you need to confess the ways you've treated others by denying them as image bearers of God. Thank God for his love,

## How to Explain Race and the Image of God

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grace, and forgiveness for you and for all of humanity. Use this space to write out your prayer or journal your thoughts.

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***For Next Week:*** Read chapter 3 in *How to Fight Racism* and use the space below to write any insights or questions from your personal study that you want to discuss at the next group meeting.

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### Journal, Reflections, and Notes

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