



# Sermon Discussion Guide

## God's Grace Is For Every Race How The Church Is To Be The Answer To Racism

Rick Warren  
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*"God has revealed his grace to save the whole human race." Titus 2:11 (NJB)*

God hates racial prejudice because it: (1) questions God's creation, (2) is a sign of ignorance, (3) it disobeys the Great Commandment, and (4) is a serious sin. Racism is a problem of SIN, not SKIN. If we're to wipe out racial prejudice in our lives, three steps that we can take are to: (1) see people as God does, (2) listen to everyone with respect, and (3) love everybody the way Jesus does. God's plan to bring people together is by understanding that we're one church and that our primary identity is that we all belong to God's family. Let's *Talk It Over*.

**OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.**

*"So why do you judge your brother? And why do you think that you are better than he is? We will all stand before God one day, and he will judge us all." Romans 14:10 (ICB)*

1. Take a moment to ponder Romans 14:10 above. Share your thoughts about the questions asked.

*"If you treat people according to their outward appearance, you are guilty of sin, and God's Law condemns you as a lawbreaker." James 2:9 (TEV)*

2. In every nation and in every people, you find one group putting down another group. Why is this a commonality among humans? Why do we despise others in our midst who are perceived to not be like ourselves? What can we do to guard against this sin?

*"Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish." Proverbs 18:13 (LB)*

3. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:17a (LB) that we must "show respect for everyone." What does the verse above say about how we are to listen to everyone with respect? How might interpreting someone's anger as hurt rather than anger help us be a more sympathetic listener?

*"Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Human anger does not achieve God's righteous purpose!" James 1:19-20 (TEV)*

4. Discuss what James 1:19-20 above says about God's views with regard to listening and speaking. How might just listening more be helpful? How might saying "tell me more" be a helpful response?

*"In this new life one's nationality or race or education or social position is unimportant; such things mean nothing. Whether a person has Christ is what matters, and he is equally available to all." Colossians 3:11 (LB)*

5. Read the verse above. Think of a time that you struggled to find your own identity in the wrong area (race, gender, nationality, language, economic status, etc.). Discuss in your group how this struggle would have been avoided if you had started from your identity in Christ. What specific steps can you take to stay grounded as a member of God's family?
6. Think of a time that you judged someone because of their outward appearance. Then take out your Bible and read Galatians 3:26-28. Discuss how applying these verses to that situation would have changed your relationship with this person. How can you be a change agent in the future and bring people together as one in Christ Jesus regardless of race?

### Diving Deeper (optional)

1 Samuel 16:7b (NIV) says, *"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* Amazing Grace is a familiar hymn written by John Newton who spent a portion of his life looking at the outward appearance of man as a slave trader. He later received God's salvation and became a pastor penning Amazing Grace. Listen to Amazing Grace (<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=CDdvReNKKuk>). What does John Newton's life and his song, Amazing Grace, teach us about how God's grace is for every race. Look up more about John Newton to share at your next meeting.

**REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.**

## Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

### Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- **Icebreaker:** Imagine waking up as the person sitting next to you. What is the first thing that you would do when you got out of bed?
- **Goals:** To know that God’s grace is for every race – that the Church is the answer to racism. To understand that racial prejudice questions God’s creation, is a sign of ignorance, disobeys the Great Commandment, and is a serious sin. To wipe out racial prejudice in our lives by seeing people as God does, listening to everyone with respect, and loving everybody the way Jesus does. To have faith that our primary identity is as a member of God’s family.
- **Final Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that you have created each one of us uniquely and differently. Lord, we pray that we can put our fear of differences aside and that we can value diversity as much as you do, so that we can fulfill the role you have in mind for us in the body of Christ. We pray that we can bring all people together in your church, and that we can stay grounded in our primary identity: belonging to your family. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

### Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.