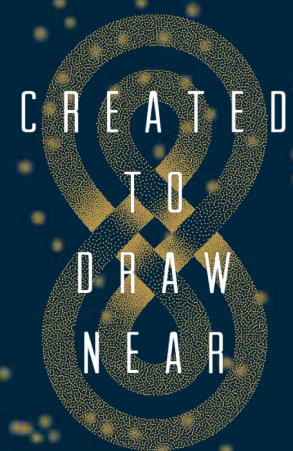


Racism and Drawing Near: How the Gospel Speaks into a Broken World

Ron Jones & Julie Lowe



Drawing near to those affected

- Learn the historical story
 - Don't be quick to defend your innocence at the cost of marginalizing the reality of racism, inequality, and social injustice
- Listen to their story
 - Julie's story
 - Ron's story
- Use wisdom in your response
- Be a voice in your community and the community of others

Racism

- A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race
- Individual sin of racism

“They come naturally to hate other cultural styles and other races in order to bolster their own security and discharge their suppressed anger...they fix upon their race, their membership in a party...and their culture as means of self recommendation. The culture is put on as though it were armor against self-doubt, but it becomes a mental straitjacket which cleaves to the flesh and can never be removed except through comprehensive faith in the saving work of Christ”

- (Richard Lovelace – Dynamics of Spiritual Life)

- Corporate sin of racism

“Racism looms large in our national consciousness because there has been no sin in our history that was perpetuated by as many people over as many years with as much destructive force.”

(Kevin DeYoung)

“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd...” Exodus 23:2

Consequences of Racism

1934: Federal Housing Administration (FHA) is created to boost home ownership during The Great Depression. The FHA insures home mortgages, but only for houses well inside the boundaries of white neighborhoods. This leads to the industry standard practice of **redlining**, which systematically withholds credit from homebuyers in black neighborhoods. In addition, the FHA favors loans for new suburban construction over older urban properties, thus simultaneously contributing to urban decay and the growth of white suburbia.

Sources: (1) **Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America**,” page 64, 4th paragraph;

Exodus 23:6 “Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits...”

Leviticus 19:15 “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

Consequences of living in a broken world

Although much has changed for the better, the effects of discrimination and injustice are still being felt.

A distinction needs to be made between a “law” that is unjust or racist, and a “person” that is unjust or racist.

Broad categorizing needs to be avoided.

So things are better now... Right?



Isaiah 58:6, 7:

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

A framework in Scripture: themes that play into racism

- John 4:9 (different ethnicities divided)
- Matthew 15:17-2 (evil thoughts, murder, slander)
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (arrogant, abusive, not loving)
- Galatians 5:19-21(enmity, strife, jealousy, divisions, dissensions)
- Galatians 2:14-16 (wrong understanding of the gospel)
- Proverbs 24:23 (partiality in judging)
- 1 Samuel 16:7 (judging based on appearances)
- Exodus 22:21 (mistreating foreigners)
- 1 John 3:15-16 (hatred)
- Proverbs 22:2 (failure to recognize we all bear God's image)

The significance of being in God's image

Genesis 1:26

[26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

God's image

- **Every person has intrinsic value and worth**
 - Intrinsic value is based on God's image not our image or ethnic makeup
 - Intrinsic value is given to the whole human race / the only race that exists
- **Every person has moral responsibility**
 - We are moral beings and are held responsible for our moral choices
 - Our responsibility is a personal responsibility
- **Every person needs reconciliation with God (2 Cor 5:20)**
 - Our reconciliation to God should be the catalyst for being reconciled to one another
 - Our reconciliation to God should be the catalyst for drawing near to others

Our image...redeemed

We can't draw near to a holy God with our marred images

Colossians 1:21–23

[21] And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, [22] he has now reconciled in his flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, [23] if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

We can draw near to others after we have drawn near to God

Matthew 22:35–40

[35] And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. [36] “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” [37] And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Mistakes the church at large makes:

- Remaining silent
- Dismissing the long-term impact of racism or the very existence of it
- Basing the validity of it on your own experience (or lack of)
- Minimizing the marginalized
- Being unclear what biblical justice looks like
- Embracing (jumping on the bandwagon) social causes that appear to represent justice, but often become corrupted by other values and ideals
- Allowing your actions to be driven by societal values over biblical values

Drawing near to those who are different

1. Do I recognize my need to draw near to God through Christ?
2. Am I judging others through marred eyes or as image bearers of God?
3. Am I speaking out against racism? What should my involvement look like?
 - Benefits of being involved in movements (causes vs. solutions)
 - Cautions of being involved in movements (approving what God approves while inadvertently approving what God disapproves).
All justice must be driven by biblical principles and doctrine. If not, justice is shaped by our own value system/perspective

We can practically draw near to others:

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act." Prov. 3:27

The mission of the church

- Speaking out publicly against injustice
- Missional mindset in our hostiles, political climate
- Sending people out into areas that face racism and injustice – serving & embracing them
- Creating a culture in your church that welcomes and celebrates all cultures
- Don't embrace a cultural narrative, but a distinctively biblical narrative

The individual disciple of Christ

- Willingness to be vulnerable
- When you reach out, be willing to be misunderstood and not accepted
- Value cultural differences and individuality in others
- Live it out in your relationships. You draw near to those who are different because they are image bearers.

“I fear that in the months and years ahead we will see Christians and churches and gospel movements reshuffling their associations based upon a unity not in shared Christological and soteriological truths but in the sameness of our cultural instincts.”

Kevin DeYoung: *Thinking Theologically about Racial Tensions:
Life Together in the Church*

Micah 6:8

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and
to walk humbly with your God.”

Resources

- DeYoung, Kevin, and Kevin DeYoung (PhD). “Thinking Theologically About Racial Tensions: Life Together in the Church.” The Gospel Coalition, 29 July 2020, www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/thinking-theologically-about-racial-tensions-life-together-in-the-church/.
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- Ince, Irwyn L. *The Beautiful Community: Unity, Diversity, and the Church at Its Best*. IVP, an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2020.
- Life, Gospel in, et al. “Tim Keller on The Sin of Racism.” *Life in the Gospel*, 13 Aug. 2020, quarterly.gospelinlife.com/the-sin-of-racism/.