

Leader's Guide

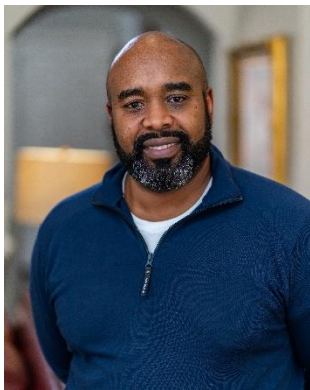
Episode 22

Race Relations: Crossing the Divide

Summary

There are great advantages to serving the Lord alongside others of different ethnicities who have different life experiences and different perspectives than we have. Jesus prayed in John 17 for His followers, “that they may all be one... so that the world may believe that You have sent Me” (John 17:21, NASB). How can we overcome our unconscious biases and celebrate the brotherhood we enjoy when walking with Jesus in unity?

Speaker



Dr. Omari Hodge is the Program Director for a family medicine residency in Tampa, FL. He and his wife Kiera have been married for 25 years and have four children. Currently he serves on the CMDA Board of Trustees. Additionally, he chairs CMDA's R²ED Committee and advisory panel to the board on issues of race and reconciliation. He and his wife enjoy traveling, doing missionary work, and experiencing different cultures. In their spare time, you can find them hiking, biking, or checking out local eateries around the Tampa area. For further information or to contact Dr. Omari Hodge, email him at Omsyki@gmail.com.

Discussion Questions

1. What from this video inspired, edified or challenged you?
2. In seeking better race relations, Dr. Hodge exhorts us to seek not just diversity but also cross-cultural dependency.
 - a. How does this second step accomplish more than just the first?

Diversity can be a good step toward better race relations, but it does not necessarily guarantee interaction between diverse individuals. However, cross-cultural dependency includes both interaction and an awareness that we can be a blessing to each other and that we are better together.

b. Is cross-cultural dependency a biblical goal? (Hint: see 1 Corinthians 12:12-21.)

Paul's metaphor of the parts of the human body as representative of the various parts of Christ's church should resonate strongly with those in healthcare. When we fail to realize our dependence on those different from us, we miss out on how the Lord can make up for our weaknesses through the compensatory strengths of others.

3. Jaime Saint says, "We believe that God has gifted every Christ follower in unique ways for meaningful participation in His Great Commission." How does this reality inspire us toward pursuing diversity and cross-cultural dependency?

Unity in Christ can empower us to overcome the prejudices and apprehensions related to serving with those who are different from us. Mission trips are a great example of how a common cause (communicating the love of Christ) can enable us to bond together and realize that what unites us is greater than that which might otherwise separate us.

4. Dr. Hodge says, "You really can't appreciate the fullness of Christ until you begin to see Him through the lens of other people."

a. Why might this be so?

Our understanding and appreciation of the glory of Christ is limited by two things: we are not omniscient (all-knowing), and we have somewhat distorted views of reality because of our fallenness. Both of these limitations can be somewhat offset through regular interaction with those having a different perspective than we do.

b. Any examples of things you have learned about Christ or the gospel from people ethnically or culturally different from yourself?

Following is one example from Dr. William Griffin:

"My wife Linda and I were worshiping on a Sunday morning in Togo, West Africa and it was time to receive the offering. There was a barrel up front, and the worship musicians began playing lively praise music while church members danced their way up to the barrel to make their contributions. Something inside me said, 'This isn't right.' Then the Lord brought to mind 2 Corinthians 9:7: '...for God loves a cheerful giver' (NIV). This simple event revealed to me a cultural bias that was corrected by the biblical exercise of cheerful giving!"

5. Revelation 7:9-10 says, "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (ESV). How might this passage inspire you to pursue better race relations in your community?

If we are going to spend eternity with people "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" then perhaps we should begin to get to know them now. God's grace affects each of His people in different ways, and sharing stories of His kindness in our lives is a perfect way to prepare for our eternity together.

6. Dr. Hodge states, “Loving cross-culturally can be one of the biggest evangelistic tools that we have at our disposal.” Why might this be? Relate this to John 17:20-23.

There are at least two ways that cross-cultural love, and the unity it produces, can be a powerful evangelistic tool. First, as we reach out with the gospel to others despite obvious physical or cultural differences, they could realize that their value in our eyes is based on the commonality of us all being created in God’s image, and the fact that we are all equally in need of the forgiveness that is in Jesus Christ. Secondly, when we are united as part of a multicultural team in the proclamation of the gospel, those we seek to reach could recognize how the power of the gospel has created unity among us. This is a strong testimony to God having answered the prayer of Jesus in John 17:20-23.

7. How might the following Bible passages move us toward greater solidarity with those who are different from us?

a. “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (James 1:19-20, ESV).

We have more to learn from others by listening than by talking. James’ advice is powerful when it comes to the establishment of profound friendships with those different from us.

b. “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart’” (1 Samuel 16:7, ESV).

Our tendency to be overly affected by outward appearance stands in the way of becoming close with those whose outward appearance is different from ours. If we can imitate God in this respect, it will make us more aware of the transforming power of God within every culture.

c. “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28, NIV).

The cross levels the playing field, as described in this radical statement by Paul. The culture of Paul’s day treated Jews and Gentiles in radically different ways. Likewise, slaves and free individuals had vastly different roles to play in society. Similarly, males and females were viewed as having widely divergent places in their communities. If the power of the gospel can rectify such inequitable situations as these, then we have strong reason to believe that in Jesus Christ we can overcome whatever prejudices might be hiding in our hearts.

d. “All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit” (Proverbs 16:2, ESV).

It is evidence of wisdom to realize that sinful attitudes can escape our awareness. Such wisdom is illustrated when David prays in Psalm 19:13a, “Keep back thy servant also

from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me” (KJV). The prayer of our hearts should be for the discernment to reveal for us any attitudes that deny the respect every human deserves as having been created in God’s image.

8. Dr. Regina Frost is transparent in admitting that we all have subtle conscious and subconscious prejudices toward our patients and others. What are some ways in which a fuller experience of the gospel can help us alleviate prejudicial attitudes?

a. We are all sinners (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23, etc.), equally in need of the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf, and this should prevent us from condescending toward others because of their moral deficiencies.

b. God did not wait for us to clean ourselves up before loving us (Romans 5:8); rather, His love transforms us. Our efforts to love the unlovely is in imitation of how the Lord has treated us.

c. Even as Christians, God is still at work in us to conform us to the image of Christ. Remaining sin in our lives should remind us that we should not be shocked or repelled when we discover sin in the lives of others.

9. What is one take-home item from today’s session that you hope to implement?

Additional Resources

1. *Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask About Social Justice* by Thaddeus J. Williams and John M. Perkins