

Week Thirteen

Freedom: Racial Reconciliation

This week, you will be watching the **Third Option Sermon Video** with your group. The video is available for streaming or download at <https://hopecity.com/freedom>.

Overview

Racial division is a topic many individuals shy away from for fear of asking the wrong questions or saying the wrong thing. Some are oblivious to the impact racism has, while others pretend it doesn't exist. Even the church has been affected by racial division with Sunday now being the most segregated day of the week. Christians, who are called to love and honor their neighbors, have fallen into culture's trap by siding with one group against another: us vs. them. Cops vs. protestors. Blacks vs. whites. The lure of choosing one option over another threatens God's plan for unity among His people.

Instead of going along with the culture, Pastor Miles McPherson directs us to choose the Third Option: honoring the priceless value of God's image in every person we meet. In the video, he exposes common misconceptions that keep people from engaging with those of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and he identifies the privileges and pitfalls that we all face. In considering the Third Option, we are challenged to fully embrace God's creativity and beauty as expressed in the diversity of His people. By understanding God's design and plan for humanity, we can all become leaders in unifying our communities, our churches, and the nation.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

– **Joshua 5:13-15**

Video Notes

In-group/Out-group:

The way we sort people into groups that are either _____ or “not like me,” creating _____.

In-group Bias:

The tendency to give _____ treatment to people considered “like me.”

1. I am more _____ with those “like me.”
2. I am more inclined to _____ with those “like me.”
3. I am more _____ with those “like me.”
4. I give _____ quicker to those “like me.”
5. I express more _____ when _____ are made by those “like me.”
6. It is _____ to communicate with those “like me.”
7. I assume that I will _____ easier with those “like me.”
8. I am more willing to go out of my way to _____ those “like me.”
9. I possess more _____ about those “like me.”

Out-group Discrimination:

1. I am _____ comfortable with those “not like me.”
2. I am less inclined to _____ socially with those “not like me.”
3. I am less _____ with those “not like me.”
4. I give the _____ less to those “not like me.”
5. I express less _____ when _____ are made by those “not like me.”
6. It is more _____ to communicate with those “not like me.”
7. I don't assume I will _____ with those “not like me.”
8. I am less willing to go _____ to _____ those “not like me.”
9. I possess less _____ about those “not like me.”

Discussion

- How can we redirect our anger towards the appropriate action needed?
- How can you love others better this week?
- In what areas of your life can you identify that you've been carrying an “us” vs “them” culture?
- Do you find more “in-group” or “out-group” discriminations in your life?
- What blind spots in your heart do you feel you need to acknowledge?
- How can you have a “neighbor” mentality rather than an “us-them” mentality?

FREEDOM



Prayer Focus

This week, focus on praying that the Word of God would draw you into a more vibrant relationship with the Father.

Next Steps

- Pray that your participants take a bold step to commit to a journey of better understanding and celebrating the fact that we are all more similar than different.
- Pray that God opens their eyes to see the beauty of His image in others and to give them the courage to not only celebrate it but live out its potential in their own lives.