



WHAT IS... WHITE SUPREMACY



DEFINITION:

THE SYSTEM IN WHICH, either explicitly or implicitly, white people are societally favored to maintain inequities of wealth, power, and privilege. This includes, but is not limited to, political, economic, employment, legal, educational, and health care systems.

While white supremacy can mean the overt belief that white people are a naturally superior race, it also includes the holding of a similar belief on a subconscious level. Moreover, aside from individual and group prejudices, white supremacy also describes the ongoing societal condition of benefiting, upholding, and empowering white people.



BIBLICAL/SPIRITUAL/THEOLOGICAL FRAMING OR REFERENCES:

AMERICAN AND NORTHERN EUROPEAN WHITE SUPREMACY is rooted in the Christian misuse and misinterpretation of the Bible to assert God-ordained white superiority (e.g. the mark of Cain, "slaves obey your masters"). American and Northern European Christianity and white supremacy have often shared a joint heritage in which power, influence, dominion, and wealth are consolidated through white Christian influence, beginning in the 1600s, continuing through displacement of indigenous people around the world, slavery, Jim Crow, the War on Drugs, and Trump-era politics.

In contrast, scripture repeatedly calls us to love, care for, and honor those that are different from ourselves, even to the point of humbly relinquishing power and wealth for the sake of others (e.g., Genesis 18:1-15, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 3:10-11, Acts 5:1-11, Matthew 19:21).



EXAMPLE(S):

EXAMPLES OF WHITE SUPREMACY INCLUDE:

White supremacy functions by allowing individuals and society to assume that white people with more wealth, power, or privilege obtained their status due to their own skill or merit, rather than because of ongoing systemic advantage. Conversely, when Black, Indigenous, and People of Color meet with disadvantage and oppression (e.g., disproportionate jailing and police violence), white supremacy ascribes these disparities to the moral, intellectual, or spiritual inferiority of their racial group.

White supremacy suggests that it is naturally more common for white people to hold leadership positions and/or accumulate wealth than for other races to do so. When non-white people fill these roles, it is either seen as an anomaly, or an outright affront to proper societal order.

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REFLECTION:

QUESTION #1

What has your understanding of white supremacy been to this point? Who have you considered to be “white supremacists”?



QUESTION #2

What aspects of your life have been affected by white supremacy?



QUESTION #3

What must happen to upend white supremacy and undo its effects? What actions can you take beginning today?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF WHITE SUPREMACY (FROM UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY)

youtube.com/watch?v=YOr-7-cFlbs

WHAT IS WHITE SUPREMACY? (FROM ELIZABETH 'BETITA' MARTINEZ)

pym.org/annual-sessions/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/06/What_Is_White_Supremacy_Martinez.pdf

THE LANGUAGE OF WHITE SUPREMACY (FROM VANN R. NEWKIRK II)

theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/10/the-language-of-white-supremacy/542148/

**These videos & articles also informed the content of this resource.*