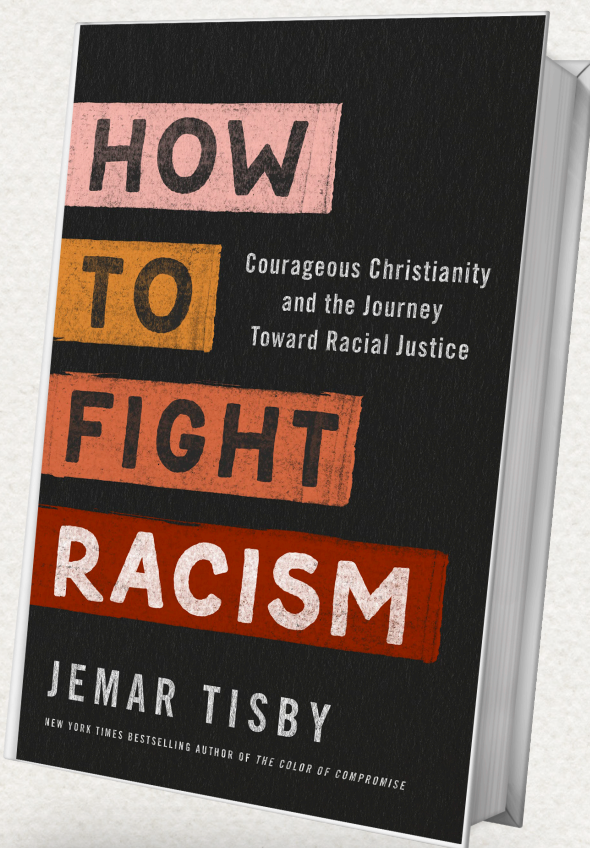


GCORR Book Study Guide

How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice by Jemar Tisby

FOR SMALL GROUP & INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION



RELIGION & RACE

The United Methodist Church

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This book study guide follows the structure of the book:

Session 1:

Chapter 1- How to Fight Racism and Part 1: Awareness, Chapter 2 – How to Explain Race and the Image of God

Session 2:

Part 1: Awareness, Chapter 3
How to Explore Your Racial Identity

Session 3:

Part 1: Awareness, Chapter 4
How to Study the History of Race

Session 4:

Part 2: Relationships, Chapter 5
How to Do Reconciliation Right

Session 5:

Part 2: Relationships, Chapter 6
How to Make Friends

Session 6:

Part 2: Relationships, Chapter 7
How to Build Diverse Communities

Session 7:

Part 3: Commitment, Chapter 8
How to Work for Racial Justice

Session 8:

Part 3: Commitment, Chapter 9
How to Fight Systemic Racism

Session 9:

Part 3: Commitment, Chapter 10
How to Orient Your Life to Racial Justice

Sessions may be completed each week for a 9-week study.

Participants will read the chapter individually. Individuals are asked to sit with the information that makes them uncomfortable. Review the questions.

In the group study, participants may share what they learned, what impacted them, and discuss the questions.

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Tisby shares historical facts about church and racism for the reader to understand and learn what has happened in the past and how it affects how people live and see today. Tisby offers practical ways for people to move forward in fighting racism – for learning, growth, and reconciliation with one another.

KEY THEMES

Tisby divides the book into three sections:

Part 1 – Awareness (History and information)

Part 2 – Relationships (Interactions with others)

Part 3 – Commitment (Next steps and actions)

There is also a companion guide to the book, which can be bought separately.

KEY TERMS

Below are the terms used in the chapters. Definitions of the terms can be found in the chapters.

- Chapter 2 - race, white supremacy
- Chapter 3 – racial identity, colorblind
- Chapter 4 – ad Fontes
- Chapter 5 – reconciliation
- Chapter 7 – culture, cultural intelligence
- Chapter 8 – beloved community
- Chapter 9 – systemic racism, not intent but impact
- Chapter 10 - humility

SESSION 1: PART 1 – AWARENESS – CHAPTERS 1 & 2

HOW TO FIGHT RACISM, EXPLAIN RACE, & THE IMAGE OF GOD

01

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us to open our hearts and minds to understand the different perspectives and lives of your creation. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

"It is the knowledge, information, and data required to fight racism." Page 5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 1)

1. Why is engaging in racial justice a journey?
2. Why do we need courageous Christianity to fight racism?
3. What are the expectations in the book Tisby sets forth to readers?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 2)

1. Page 22 – Tisby writes about a white-centered society. Do you notice when you put an ethnic adjective before a word you describe? When and why do you do that?
2. What did you learn about the Bible in this chapter that is different from what you understood before reading this chapter?
3. All human beings are created in the image of God. How does that affect your understanding of neighbors and others? What about how we treat others, such as refugees, immigrants, and those with less?
4. Describe how your understanding of racism and the Bible has changed after reading this chapter.

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us increase our awareness to see one another by learning the history and understanding what God envisions as the beloved community. Amen.

SESSION 2: PART 1 – AWARENESS, CHAPTER 3

HOW TO EXPLORE YOUR RACIAL IDENTITY

02

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us to open our hearts and minds to understand the different perspectives and lives of your creation. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

"It takes support, reflection, and resilience to unpack your racial history, but doing so will make you a more effective advocate for racial justice." Page 62

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 3)

1. Describe how you felt as you went through the stages of racial identity development. How can you know if you are accurate in how you rated yourself?
2. Describe how it feels when you discuss race or ethnicity within a mixed race/ethnicity group.
3. Do you think about your race and ethnicity regularly – why?
4. How has this chapter impacted your understanding of racial identity?
5. How does your identity as a child of God affect how you see your own racial and ethnic identity?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us increase our awareness to see one another by learning the history and understanding what God envisions as the beloved community. Amen.

SESSION 3: PART 1 – AWARENESS, CHAPTER 4

HOW TO STUDY THE HISTORY OF RACE

03

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us to open our hearts and minds to understand the different perspectives and lives of your creation. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

“History tells us who and where we come from, how the people and events before us have shaped who we are now, and what kind of actions we need to take in order to pursue a more racially just future.” Page 65

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 4)

1. What are the different ways to study history? Why is it important to learn history through different methods?
2. Why do we study history?
3. Why must we examine what we have learned in history – especially regarding race?
4. Was the information in this chapter different from your previous understanding? If so, how are you processing the conflicting information?
5. What did you learn from this chapter that will impact your future understanding of race and ethnicity?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all Creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us increase our awareness to see one another by learning the history and understanding what God envisions as the beloved community. Amen.

SESSION 4: PART 2 – RELATIONSHIPS, CHAPTER 5

HOW TO DO RECONCILIATION RIGHT

04

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us open our hearts and minds to be in loving relationships. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

“There is a divine morality that compels us to build or restore relationships with one another...” Page 87

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 5)

1. When you hear how people of different racial experiences live differently from you, how does that impact your understanding of others?
2. In your experience, why is racial reconciliation so challenging to achieve? What can you personally do to move it forward?
3. Why does racial reconciliation begin with relationships?
4. According to Tisby, how can churches change their worship to acknowledge and corporately reckon with our racial history?
5. Did you know the historical information in this chapter before reading it? How do you include this new information as you understand history and church structure?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us reflect on restoring and building relationships with our neighbors. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us open our hearts and minds and be in loving relationships with one another. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

“Not giving up on the power of relationships offers a powerful testimony to the value of fighting racism and the unity such efforts bring.” Page 119

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 6)

1. When you meet someone from a different race/ethnic group, what dialogue goes through your head? After reading this chapter, what new dialogue will go through your head?
2. Many people will say they have friends from different ethnic or racial groups. Name the closest five friends you have – do they look like you?
3. What did you learn about having interracial friends in this chapter that you did not think about before?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us to reflect on how we restore or build relationships with our neighbors. Amen.

SESSION 6: PART 2 – RELATIONSHIPS, CHAPTER 7

HOW TO BUILD DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

06

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us open our hearts and minds and be in loving relationships with one another. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

"We must acknowledge that the mere presence of racial variety does not produce racial justice." Page 121

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 7)

1. What essential understandings does Tisby list in this chapter and why are they important?
2. Is racial justice part of your church's view of discipleship? If not, how can you change that within your church?
3. What did you learn from this chapter and how will you implement it?
4. Who are the people missing from your congregation – race/ethnicity, gender, orientation, class, language, ability?
5. What practices does Tisby list as ways for us to build authentic friendships with those from different racial and ethnic backgrounds?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us to reflect on how we restore or build relationships with our neighbors. Amen.

SESSION 7: PART 3 – COMMITMENT, CHAPTER 8

HOW TO WORK FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

07

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help me to commit to reconciling with others and create a world where all your creation thrives. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

"In a beloved community, love is an action that uses the levers of power to bring about justice." Page 142

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 8)

1. What does "love your neighbor" mean to you? How do you put that into action?
2. How does your church love its neighbors? How does the church put that into action?
3. Do you (and the church) show love by deciding for yourself what you think is needed, or do you ask the recipients what they need? How can you show love to others different from you in a more equitable way?
4. Why is it important to build diverse communities as the Church?
5. How can the Church make God's kingdom more equitable? (Hint: Tisby lists several ways.)

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us to sustain our commitment to creating a world where all your children thrive. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help me to commit to reconciling with others and create a world where all your creation thrives. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

“The reason we face widespread racial inequality today is due to systems – political, educational, cultural, economic – that have been set up to support it.” Page 158

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 9)

1. Page 158 – Cornel West said, “Justice is what love looks like in public.” Describe your opinion on that statement and how that intersects with your faith.
2. What is the difference between intent and impact? Why is it important to understand the difference in fighting racism?
3. Which policies do you agree with and which ones did you have challenges with?
4. How will you incorporate the information you read into your understanding of those policies?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, help us ponder our discussion this week. Help us to sustain our commitment to creating a world where all your children thrive. Amen.

SESSION 9: PART 3 – COMMITMENT, CHAPTER 10

HOW TO ORIENT YOUR LIFE TO RACIAL JUSTICE

09

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, help me to commit to reconciling with others and create a world where all your creation thrives. Amen.

OPENING THOUGHT

“Fighting racism does not consist of a set of isolated actions that you take; rather these actions must flow from an entire disposition that is oriented toward racial justice.” Page 181

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CHAPTER 10)

1. Tisby states that “fighting for racial justice entails a daily compact with yourself and others who do this work never to quit when it gets hard or inconvenient.” What steps will you take to keep your commitment?
2. Why is acknowledging that one can act in racist ways so difficult?
3. What did you learn in this chapter that will alter your practices?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all creation, we give thanks to you for: *(ask participants to share what they are thankful for with this study)*. We ask you to help us with: *(ask participants to share what they want help with regarding this work)*. Remind us daily to use our voices, hands, and actions to create a beloved community for all your children. Amen.



Give GCORR your feedback on this resource here:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/howtofightracismbookstudy

You can find more book study guides written by GCORR here:

www.r2hub.org/book-studies