

An Introduction: Developing Sustainable Spiritual and Relational Antiracism Practices

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It is not enough to intellectually or theoretically be antiracist, because that only serves as egotistical, self-soothing. We must be antiracist in our hearts, in our relationships, words, actions, institutions, and systems, which takes ongoing, sustainable spiritual and relational practice. Learning to love ourselves and our neighbors as ourselves is revolutionary, let's be students of Christ's revolution.

"Love must not be a matter of theory or talk; it must be true love which shows itself in action." 1 John 3:18

As you continue reading, we invite you to start creating sustainable spiritual and relational antiracism practices by thinking specifically about how you can take action, with whom you can take action, when you will take action, and why you will take action.

How can you engage these antiracism resources in your life? Personally, with friends and family, as a household, with your congregation, with your neighbors, with your social group (book club, sewing circle, game night, etc.), with your co-workers, or by forming a new group of people from across multiple communities in your life.

So many people want to know what they can do. Figure it out together; you don't have to do it alone. Remember, there are a lot of powerful organizations and individuals who are doing amazing antiracism work—many of them are highlighted in this newsletter. Join them, support them, donate to them, invite them to work with your congregation, and amplify their work!

To help get you started, here are a few ideas for cultivating sustainable spiritual and relational antiracism practices:

- Learn and talk about politics, religion, and money in "polite company," and any company. "Polite company" means socially superior people, that's code for White Supremacy, and avoiding the topics of politics, religion, and money only serves structural and systemic white supremacy. Jesus almost exclusively preached, taught, and engaged one-to-one on the topics of politics, religion (faith), and money—follow Jesus and spread the good news!
- Build loving, real, meaningful, trustworthy relationships.
- Check-in with your BIPOC friends, colleagues, family, pastor, and parishioners when racism rears its evilness in our communities and world. Then check-in again when it happens two days later or the next week. Show up and be present. This goes for anyone whose identity is systemically oppressed and discriminated against too.
- Listen to the lived experiences of BIPOC and hear their words as truth. Notice if your mind or body starts to resist, judge, or question their truth, withhold judgement, and interrogate the root of this inner resistance. If their experience doesn't fit your narrative of how the world works, respond with trust, curiosity, and love. It is a blessing to share and receive one another's truths, an opportunity for empathy, wisdom, and expansion of the heart, mind, and spirit. Make more room, not less.

- Offer regular prayers that lift up the names and lives of those who have died from police violence and racism, and those living and dead saints who fight for racial justice. Learn how to say their names correctly and from the memory of your heart, learn about their lives so that they become real to you like family, and then pray so that God would know you are praying for God's beloved children. Pray together as family, friends, neighbors, small groups, and congregations.
- Respond to petitions and participate in letter writing and phone calling campaigns to legislators and others in power demanding they take action to create antiracist policies and put people before profit. Invite others to join you, there is power in relationships.
- Read one article or watch one video a day, one book a week/month, and then share with others what you learned and make a personal recommendation to someone else who could benefit from this shared wisdom.
- Support BIPOC-led organizations and businesses. Make your money and investments work in support of racial justice.
- Examine all-white institutional leadership and create BIPOC-inclusive leadership. If the leadership of your church, organization, business, or social and civic groups do not include BIPOC, work to uncover and understand what internal cultural ideas, values, narratives, histories, relationships, structures, and systems are functioning to maintain white supremacy in institutional leadership. Then work to dismantle and co-create new ways of being together that include BIPOC leadership.
- Host an antiracist movie/documentary night or an online watch party each week with your family, church, and/or community. Discuss how you felt, what you learned, what new understanding is emerging, what questions you have and what additional resources you need, and how you are motivated to action. Pay attention to how BIPOC are represented in media, and make sure to intentionally include media that centers BIPOC in their fullness, power, wisdom, culture, beauty, and life. Challenge media narratives that dehumanize and/or victimize BIPOC.
- Amplify BIPOC voices by following and sharing BIPOC leaders on social media, listen to their podcasts, read their research and theology, listen to their preaching, know them as experts, and support their ministries. Always cite BIPOC if you integrate their intellectual and spiritual wisdom into your preaching, writing, research, and conversations with others.