

WWJU wk 1: Spiritual "MEH-ness". We'd rather hurt with a purpose than exist without one.

WWJU wk 2: Hypocrisy: Hypocrisy is the gap between who we appear to be and who we really are. Take off the mask.

WWJU wk 3: Spiritual pride.

Confession time:

I'm a white male, and there is nothing I can do about that. I am the son of a second generation immigrant from Sweden. I don't completely understand that racial divide... I know it exists, but I don't appreciate it to its fullest capacity. I don't truly understand what it means for America.

It doesn't take a long time to grasp that we have a racial divide among us in America.

I grew up in a town that was predominantly white... with a small community of Hispanic people. I grew up on the 'wrong side of the tracks' in the Hispanic neighborhood. I wasn't aware of this divide until April 1992. News coverage of the LA Riots flooded TV channels, and it was the only thing on the TV for several days. I distinctly remember watching the news that evening as the trial against the 4 Police Officers and Rodney King was given. I'm not going to get into the actual trial or causes of that, but I was shocked as a 10-year old that there was a racial divide... I remember thinking that it was horrible, but at least I get to go to sleep in my own bed not having to worry about violence I saw on TV. I woke up the next morning turned on the TV to Good Morning America as Bryant Gumbel and Katie Couric started... I remember it was strange that the upbeat music was playing as the first video footage of the riots ran.... And Bryant Gumbel saying something to the effect of Good Morning, but as we cast on the west coast especially in LA there's nothing to be thankful for.... or to feel good about.

It was one of my first memories of the issue of the racial divide.

I may not have all the answers or the ability to emphasize with everyone, but I want to take us through a journey God has been taking me on the past few months.

If we believe there isn't a racial divide in America we're foolish. If we buy into the lie that the racial divide is only between white and black races we're foolish.



I'm not Racist video... 93 million views.
The producers of this moving video only portray 2 races. 2 out of 6 that the American Census lists.

There are more options.

2 options for most things.... We seemingly think there are only 2 options ever.

**Joshua 5: Joshua and the angel of the Lord near Jericho.
Are you for us or against us? Either....
it's tempting to take a side, but it's not the only way to live.
There's another option.**

Remember the Titans scene: Petey = He didn't want to know....

I hope it's never said of us, that we didn't want to know. No matter if it's a racial thing, social, economic issue, or anything, I hope we're willing to know.

Sociologist describes IN group and OUT groups.

We all find common ground with people and tend to stick with them.

These IN Groups are people that we'd describe 'like me.' Outgroup is made up of people that aren't like me.

It could be NFL teams NY Giants or Dallas Cowboys, Bears / Packers fans. Washing / Philadelphia. It could be Brewers / Cubs or south side/ north side issues. We all tend to find people that are like me by things we have in common. It could be New Girl/ Mindy Project.

Or DC Comics/ Marvel.... Xbox / Playstation... we tend to look for people we have commonalities with and create IN Groups.

Leaders of societies create systems and structures that help theirs IN groups.

I have a brother who is left-handed, it never bothered me in middle school or high school to sit at a desk, because I am right handed, but my brother had issues.... Why school desks are designed with right-handed people in mind.

A company I worked for all of the 1st shift people at Oil Coolers were right-handed, we were losing so much ground in production rates, and I couldn't figure it out. I hired 4 new associates in 1 month and assumed it was because of that. I didn't even realize I hired 4 left-handed people. Not only was I losing ground because of training, but we were losing production rates because all the workstations were designed with right-handed people in mind. So we had to solve that issue as well.

There is a reality of IN Group bias, and if we aren't aware of it, it will keep us from moving forward.

Like the rest of these messages in this series, it's easy to spot spiritual indifference, hypocrisy or spiritual pride in others, but difficult to detect in ourselves.

Matthew 7: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?4How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?5You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Today we are going to discuss how to remove the plank out of our own eyes, and how we can work together to remove specks of sawdust in each other's eyes as well.

I’m going to ask a series of questions that will be on the screen behind me, and I’d like for us to be honest as we answer these... this will help us realize if we have an IN Group Bias or not:

In Group:

I am more comfortable with those like me.

I am more inclined to spend time socially with those more like me...

I am more patient with those like me.

I give the benefit of the doubt quicker to those like me.

I express more grace when mistakes are made by those like me.

It is easier to communicate with those ‘like me.’

I assume I’ll get along easier with those like me.

I am more willing to go out of my way to help those like me.

I possess more positive assumptions about those like me.

Out-Group Biases:

I am less comfortable with those not like me.

I am less inclined to spend time socially with those not like me.

I am less patient with those not like me.

I am less inclined to give the benefit of the doubt quicker to those, not like me.

I express less grace when mistakes are made by those, not like me.

It is more difficult to communicate with those not like me.

I don't assume I'll get along easier with those not like me.

I am less willing to go out of my way to help those not like me.

I possess less positive assumptions about those not like me.

It's easy to spot issues in others, but difficult to spot in ourselves.

I attended a conference in 2015 in Memphis.... A middle eastern man stood up to speak wearing a keffiyeh around his neck. He started very confidently saying that he was a Christian and his family had been Christians longer than we had I immediately doubted him. I automatically put in him my "out-group". He then went on to say how Americans think we are God's answer to all the world's problems. He went on to ask the question, what part of the world did the majority of the New Testament take place in? Where did Christianity start to spread? He said he was able to go back through the genealogy of his family to the point where his ancestor first heard about Jesus.

We all have IN Group / Out Group Biases.

Great so now what?

Treat everyone we meet as a brother/sister.

1 John 4:20

It's easier to think of anyone less than ourselves when they stay those people savages, barbarian.

Doll Test.

71% of all the kids surveyed all races preferred the white doll.

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Think through most of the movies; white western world people appear to be civilized while people of darker color are protracted to be savages, barbarians. As If Americans or European people were the only groups of people to figure out civilization.... And order.

But when we label people with titles, we tend to avoid seeing people in our out-group as a brother or sister.

Three levels of racism, individual, systemic and internal racism.

Individual racism:

Systemic racism: 1581 slave trade open Florida by the Spanish until 1865.
Dec. 6th, 1865 abolishing slavery

1875 post Civil War. Separate but equal

1909 NAACP was formed

1964 Freedom Summer

July 2, 1964, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Acts of 1964.

March 1965 Selma ton Montgomery Marches.

March 7th, 1965 Bloody Sunday:

Police attack peaceful demonstrators

We have over 400 years of systemic racism and the racial divide in our history as a country. This isn't going to simply go away, but if we ignore it won't get better.

Each of us is responsible for creating a better tomorrow for our kids and grandkids, based on how we live this life now.

Internal Racism: when someone starts believing the words said against me. Growing up I was called, dumb ignorant cracker.... why? I'm dyslexic, so I struggled in school. I came across as ignorant because I asked questions....

4th Grade Mrs. V

I'm ignorant, dumb and being white was a bad thing. Like God made a mistake.

Earl

1. Where did you grow up?

What was it like growing up there?

2. Is there anything that might shock some people about you (going for the fact that your part Spanish).

3. When did you first experience any racial tension?

4. In your opinion what could we do to help solve the racial divide?

"Paul encourages all Christians to 'carry each other's burdens' how could someone like me a white male carry a burden like racism for a Christian of different skin color?"

When we love others like our brother or sister, we remove the ranking system culture portrays. When we place labels other than brother or sister on people we give ourselves permission not to love them. When we don't see who each person is as God created them to be.

Stop thinking we have all the answers. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking my IN GROUP has all the answers and not listening to our out group. Of if we do interact with our OUT Groups to act as if we did them a favor by showing up.

Jesus interacted with all kinds of people in his IN Group and Out Group. He listened and gave value, dignity and worth no matter what.

Several years ago I served as a mission pastor meaning that I managed the budget of the local church that supported missionaries around the world. I noticed the disproportion amount of the funding going overseas compared to staying in our community. As I started to ask questions something started to bother me... we were sending people on short-term missions trips, meaning people were going somewhere to spend a few weeks in another part of the world to help others know Jesus.

I started to ask questions to the missions board at that church. Can you explain to me why we spend so much \$ out of the city we live in? Why are we sending so many teams overseas and not encouraging people to serve in our city?

To be fair we were doing both, but I thought we could make a larger impact in the city we lived in if we didn't have a list of 200 missionaries we support and didn't have a close relationship/ partnership with.

I showed up to an Urban Church League meeting around this same time.

I was welcomed, but one older black pastor sat up in his chair... I was the only white person in that room. He asked why I bothered coming? I told him I was new to my position in a church, and his response shook me. Oh, you're from 'blank church'.... You guys are known for sending your people across the world to serve poor black people, but you won't drive across the city to do the same...

I didn't have an answer.

3. Love people in our out-group like we would like our in-group. Treat them the same.

Scientists have discovered that all the human race has 99% of the same DNA. We are genetically 99% the same.

In a culture that continually offers us 2 options, **we need to look for a third option.**

Are you a racist? That questions itself reveals the fracturedness of our human condition.

Yes or no.... But we all have In Group and Out group biases.

What if we learned to say, "I'm human still working through my preconceived ideas so I can love my "out" group like I love my "in" group.

God's not colored blind, neither should we be. We should see each other's color we should see each other's race and genealogy.

Ancient Japanese art: ***Kintsugi*** take the broken fractured pieces of potters and binds them back together with gold. These art pieces are more valuable than their original pieces.

We live in a broken, fractured culture I think it's time we allow the love of God to bind us all together and be more valuable together. We are better together.

Humanity might have caused the racial divide, but the harsh reality we can't solve it on our own. The only way to truly solve it is through Jesus.

Jesus offers all humans the blood that covers our sins. He sent Holy Spirit to empower all the followers of Jesus, not just my in group or your in-group. All.

This empowerment from the Holy Spirit allows us to love the way Jesus loves, treat others the way Jesus treats others. To look in the mirror and love the person you see in the reflection, not because of your strength, but because of Jesus.

I think it's time we offer our broken, fractured selves to a loving God who wants to make us whole and see what happens.

I think it's time we offer our fractured, culture and see others the way God sees others. To break the chains of systematic individual and internal racism. We're better together!