



The Third Option

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Focus Believing God's Word is the key to resisting racial bias. The Bible reveals that we are not in a battle against flesh and blood, black or white, but we are in a battle against the ruler of darkness, Satan. We need to embrace one another, ready to learn. Seek ways to love your neighbor because according to the gospel we are all neighbors.

Fun Play two truths and a lie. Take turns going around the group, and allow each person to tell two truths and one lie about themselves. Everyone must then guess what they think the lie is. If they are right, they get a point. Do this until everyone has taken a turn. Whoever has the most points at the end wins!

Review Key Scriptures: Joshua 5:13–14; Mark 12:31

1. Satan's strategy is to create an "us" versus "them" mentality.

God has made each person unique and special in His image. God is multifaceted and creative and has made people of all ethnicities, colors, shapes, and sizes. He loves the variety. Rather than celebrate what we have in common as humans, Satan's plan is to bring division. The enemy attempts to divide by causing people to have an "us" and "them" mentality. In Judges 5, when Joshua asks the captain of the Lord's army if he is for them or for their enemies, he responds by saying, "No" and that he's on the Lord's side. Human tendency is to think in terms of "us" versus "them," but God has a different perspective. God wants us to celebrate what we have in common, not be divided over our differences.

2. In-Group Bias

Whether we intend to or not, each of us have a natural tendency to see others

through the lens of our own worldview. This causes us to have an “in-group” bias. This bias causes us to feel comfortable with, spend time with, be more patient with, and give more grace to those who are like us. We tend to have more positive assumptions about people in our own group than those in our “out-group.” It is important to be aware of this tendency so we don’t fall prey to the schemes of the enemy. God’s heart is for us to live with understanding for people who are not like us. When we take the time to see things from the perspective of others, we can build bridges of understanding.

3. Give in-group love to your out-group.

We need to acknowledge that we give more favor to people who are like us—people in our in-group. Through honesty, we can intentionally include those who are not in our group. We should be looking for people to include in our group who are different than we are. The Bible tells us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. This is the gospel. We must acknowledge that we have more in common with each other than we realize. There is a great deal about people and ethnic groups that we don’t understand. Intentionally take the position of an anthropologist when you meet someone. Seek to understand them and not to be understood.

Group Dynamics Idea Gateway Church is partnering with Samaritan’s Purse for the Operation Christmas Child shoebox program. Consider participating in this exciting outreach as a group! Be creative. Make it a fun night of fellowship, filling shoeboxes, listening to Christmas music, and sharing favorite treats! For more information, visit shoebox.gatewaypeople.com.

Discuss

1. Have you ever felt prejudged without people getting to know you? How did that feel?
2. Pastor Miles shared that we are all part of a group of some kind and that we are more comfortable with those in our same group. Do you agree or disagree with this statement and why? And what do you think Pastor Miles meant by the term in-group bias?
3. Which in-group do you feel like you identify with and why? Is this a positive or negative experience for you? Explain.

4. Read Mark 12:31 and 1 Peter 3:8. Who are the neighbors in these passages? Who are *your* neighbors? Are we required to love all neighbors or just the ones we like? Explain.
5. What would loving your neighbor look in your life? What are some of the biggest challenges you face in loving your neighbor?
6. Are there any areas of your life where you can be unified with someone who is not in your in-group? What would this look like daily?
7. How can we intentionally build bridges of understanding for those in our out-group?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- God wants us on His side, not Him on our side.
- We all are part of an in-group.
- We need to intentionally include others who are in our out-group.

Prayer Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Help us to give our hearts to those who are not like us. Please help us to daily be *ready* to include those who are not part of our in-group. Give us strength and wisdom to stand on Your promises and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Periodically get together with group members, individually or in small groups, outside the regular meeting times. Or call them during the week to see how their week is going and what prayer requests they have.