

Hi Parents!

I don't know if you were able to hear Shawn's message Sunday, but I love how he spoke to the heart of Sherwood Oaks and how – in the midst of everything going on in our nation – we want to be a church community that is dedicated to being a representation of the heart of Christ. I also love his wisdom in pointing out that we need to be a church that always responds in a way that is rooted in the righteousness of Christ and not a self-righteousness based on our own experiences and opinions. Pursuing this often requires time to filter through all the additional voices at work within our minds. God warns us to test the spirits (1 John 4:1).

With that said, we don't want to say nothing. We want to be leaders in all this. Our church and student ministry want's to be on the frontline as God's vessel in bringing racial reconciliation to our community and the world. We ask that you partner with us in this as we listen, process, pray and strive to educate ourselves in a way that will bring God's Kingdom to Bloomington through our ministry. In the meantime, we want to communicate and offer beneficial resources that will hopefully help bless your family. A couple thoughts for this week include:

- I was reading an article by an African American youth minister who made several great points but one that really stuck out to me was, **"Keep speaking to your own kids once you have some basic understanding."** He elaborates on this by saying:

"It can't be a once-every-few-years conversation. They will value what you value. We talk about what we value. We wouldn't have a single conversation with our students about sex and dating then close our eyes, look the other way, and hope they got it! The same goes for race in our country. Lots of races interacted in scripture. Most interesting was how Jesus broke so many stereotypes with the woman at the well (John 4) and the parable of the good Samaritan. As a parent, your voice matters (more than anyone else when it comes to your kids). You are the trendsetter. Set the trend."

I thought this was a great point; we need to be talking to our kids about racism, biases and the like. So we encourage you as parents to be initiating and lovingly guiding these conversations with your kid(s) based on the truth of Jesus Christ. But like he said at the beginning of the article we must also have some basic understanding. Our ministry team is still in this phase of wanting to grow our understanding but here are some steps we're taking and ways we hope it blesses our student ministry moving forward.

- A couple of us are reading the following books:

*White Awake: An Honest Look at what It means to be White* by Daniel Hill

<https://www.amazon.com/White-Awake-Honest-Look-Means/dp/0830843930>

*The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* by Jemar Tisby

[https://www.amazon.com/Color-Compromise-American-Churchs-Complicity/dp/0310113601/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?dchild=1&keywords=the+color+of+compromise&qid=1591702284&s=books&sr=1-2](https://www.amazon.com/Color-Compromise-American-Churchs-Complicity/dp/0310113601/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=the+color+of+compromise&qid=1591702284&s=books&sr=1-2)

We hope that some small group opportunities for our student ministry will stem from these book studies. So please be keeping an eye out for announcements regarding that in the future.

- In his message Shawn referenced the organization “BE the BRIDGE” which is doing incredible work in the world of racial reconciliation. There is a branch within Be the Bridge that is specifically for youth. Our student ministry is currently exploring potential ways to best partner with this ministry. I’ve included a link to their youth site and their book recommendations below. **If you have a child(ren) who would be interested in pursuing this ministry option please let us know so we can work together to make it happen!**

<https://bethebridge.com/youth/>

<https://bethebridge.com/btby-booklist/>

In Christ,

Student Ministry Team