

The Color of Compromise

Week 2 | Chapters 1 and 2

- I. Key Terms and Definitions from Ch. 1 & 2
 - A. Racism: A system of oppression based on race.
 - B. Complicity: Silence and passivity instead of confrontation and/or action.
 - C. Contingency: The ability to choose differently.
 - D. The scramble: The rush of white buyers to claim as many enslaved human beings as possible.
 - E. Seasoning: Training African people in customs, language and work to prepare them for life as someone enslaved.
 - F. Slave Codes: Sets of laws that categorized enslaved Africans as property and outlined the rules governing the enslaved and the slaveholder.

- II. Personal reflection
 - A. When was the first time you realized America had a race problem, or that the American church has a race problem?
 - B. How have conversations about race shaped your life?
 - C. Conversations about Race make us exceedingly uncomfortable. On a scale of 1-10, with ten being unbearable and one not at all, how uncomfortable does talking about race make you feel? What are the reasons for that?

- III. Chapter 1
 - A. The author highlights two (close) definitions of racism. The first is racism as a system of oppression based on race, with an emphasis on system (p. 16). The second is “prejudice plus power” – it is not just personal bigotry toward someone, but is specifically the imposition of bigoted ideas on groups of people. Do you view racism as a systemic issue or a personal issue? What influenced your thoughts?

 - B. The central idea of this book is that the American church has been complicit in racism, choosing silence over solidarity with the oppressed. In what ways has that been evident?

 - C. Considering the reputation of the American church, list a few reasons why you believe we are not experiencing racial harmony and justice today.

 - D. The Cross of Jesus is the center for us as Christians in discussions about reconciliation through His sacrifice. Why is this necessary for us to keep at the center of our conversations about racism?

- E. The principle of contingency tells us that throughout history, individuals and groups made choices, but they could have made different choices. Can you think of some examples in the world? Your own life?
 - F. Many Christians choose silence and passivity instead of confronting systems of racial injustice. Can you think of one or two specific consequences of complicity? Or, what would be the stakes in confronting it?
- IV. Biblical reflections on Ch. 1
- A. Mark 12:30-31
What insight does this give us in life? Around racial justice?
 - B. 1 John 4:19-21
What insight do we gain from a commandment to love others consistently? How does that affect how we approach racial justice?
 - C. Genesis 1:26
What insight do we have about our human dignity from God? Does this speak to racial justice?
- V. Chapter 2
- A. “Just because race is based on a myth doesn’t mean it doesn’t have real consequences. It becomes a determining factor in who receives advantages and disadvantages.” How has racism shaped the way you view yourself? What does racism affect both the receiver and the giver?
 - B. What do you believe those in power had to gain by advancing the idea of race?
 - C. What is hardest to hear about the way in which slavery was enacted?
 - D. The baptismal vow for slaves essentially said, “God can have your soul, but we keep your body.” In what ways do you see this sentiment continue to play out in the world?
 - E. How does theology that values souls but not bodies affect your understanding of how Christians should approach issues of racial justice?
- VI. Bible reflections on Ch. 2
- A. Matthew 23:23
What insight do we gain from Jesus’ criticism of the Pharisee’s misplaced attention? What insight is there for racial justice?
 - B. Galatians 3:28
What insight is there about the equality that every person has in Christ? How would that influence our approach to racial justice?
 - C. James 2:9
Insight about preferential treatment is heavy in James. How does this help guide us?
- VII. Closing