

8/16/20 - The Isms vs. I AM Study Guide

The definition of racism from Webster's Dictionary sharpens the focus for us.

Racism [is the] abuse of power by a racial group that is more powerful than another group and the abuse of that advantage to exclude, demean, damage, control or destroy the less powerful group; a belief that some races are by nature superior to others; racial discrimination based on such belief. Racism confers benefits upon the dominant group that include psychological feelings of superiority, social privilege, economic position, or political power.

- **Racism**-- the systematic oppression of one race over another. It occurs at the personal and institutional level.
- **Prejudice**-- a judgment or opinion about others, made before one has the facts.
- **Bigotry**-- is a more intensive form of prejudice and carries the negative side of pre-judgment. The bigot is usually conscious of his/her feelings, nurtures them, and is often defined by them.
- **Discrimination**-- is the act or practice of according negative differential treatment to individuals or groups on the basis of group, class, or affiliation such as race, religion, and gender.
- **Scapegoating**--is the act or practice of assigning blame or failure to persons or groups instead of placing it directly on the person(s) to whom the blame or failure actually belongs.
- **Stereotyping**-- is attributing characteristics to a group simplistically and uncritically. Often, there is the assumption that those characteristics are rooted in significant biological differences.

Message Notes

Sin of Partiality = showing favoritism & bias toward some people, and showing prejudice & bias against other people. Read James 2:1-13 in your Bible.

Talk It Over

"God never shows partiality and he cannot be corrupted." Deuteronomy 10:17

"The Lord our God does not tolerate injustice, partiality or corruption." 2 Chronicles 19:7

Question #1

The sin of partiality includes favoring someone based on superficial factors such as a person's appearance or social status. What does James 2:1-9 say about a faith that shows respect to everyone? What example did James use to illustrate how favoritism was practiced in the church? Share a time when God blessed you through someone not like yourself. – The rich man and the poor man show up at church.

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Question #2

Our prejudices are rarely pronounced in our lives; they are often hidden in the corners of our hearts. Why do we consider what we are accustomed to as normal, or consider different cultures that are foreign to us as weird? How might this be stemming from a subtle prejudice in our lives?

Why Does God Hate Prejudice?

1. **Prejudice questions God's creation**

Talk It Over

"From one man (Adam) God made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live." Acts 17:26 (NIV)

"Who says you are better than others? And what do you have that was not given to you by God? And if it was given to you, why do you brag as if you did not receive it as a gift?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

Question #3

Acts 17:26 teaches that the diversity we see is a direct result of God's creativity and wisdom. How does boasting about our God-given abilities, traits, or achievements reveal misplaced pride according to 1 Corinthians 4:7? Are there hidden attitudes in your heart that need to change? Ask God to reveal hidden prejudices and help you change.

Why Does God Hate Prejudice? (continued)

2. **Prejudice Is a sign of our own ignorance**

Talk It Over

"Whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him." 1 John 2:11 (NIV)

"True wisdom from above is pure, peaceful, gentle, friendly, full of compassion and is free from prejudice and hypocrisy." James 3:17 (TEV)

Question #4

How does 1 John 2:11 show us that we can be blind to our own partiality? It is especially difficult to avoid making judgements based on misinformation online. Recall a time you "googled" and later needed to change an opinion? Discuss how this global pandemic has underscored the existence of racial and cultural prejudices.

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Why Does God Hate Prejudice? (continued)

3. **Prejudice disobeys the Great Commandment**

Talk It Over

"The entire law is summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself!' But if, instead of showing love, you attack and tear each other apart, watch out! You will destroy yourselves!" Galatians 5:14-15 (NLT)

"You will be doing the right thing if you obey the law of the Kingdom, which is 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'" James 2:8-9 (TEV)

Question #5

Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV), "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment."

How can loving God with all of our hearts lead us to view others the way God sees them?

Why is it hard to love your neighbor as yourself? When you search your heart, what makes these people harder for you to love?

Why Does God Hate Prejudice? (continued)

4. **Prejudice is a serious sin**

Racism is a problem of sin, not skin

Talk It Over

"If you treat people according to their outward appearance, you are guilty of sin, and God's Law condemns you as a lawbreaker." James 2:9 (TEV)

"So why do you judge your brother? And why do you think that you are better than he is? We will all stand before God one day, and he will judge us all." Romans 14:10 (ICB)

Question #6

Labels aren't just found on soup cans; we put them on people: Funny, dull, smart, stupid, athletic, klutz, friendly, cold, or by race instead of using their name. Discuss how categorizing people may have a profound influence on the way we treat them.

How Do We Root Out Prejudice from Our Lives?

- **The first step: learn to see people as God does**

Talk It Over

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

Jesus: "Stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment." John 7:24 (NIV)

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"Then Peter said to Cornelius' household, 'You know, Jewish law forbids us from associating with people of another race. But God has shown me that no race is inferior or unclean.'" Acts 10:28
"I now realize that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." Acts 10:34-35

Question #7

In Acts 10, Peter said that "God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him." God showed Peter through a vision that "no race is inferior or unclean." Discuss the boldness and obedience of Peter, a Jew, in opening the door of the Kingdom of God to Cornelius, a Gentile, and by extension to all non-Jews. How can the Church see people more as God does?

God's Plan to Bring People Together Is the Church!

- **My primary identity is: I belong to God's family**

Talk It Over

"Some of us are Jews, and some of us are Gentiles. Some of us have been slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body through one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit!... Now all of you together are Christ's Body, and each of you is a necessary part of it."
1 Corinthians 12:13,27

"So now you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like him. So there is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians - one in Christ Jesus!" Galatians 3:26-28 (NLT)

Question #8

1 Corinthians 12:13,27 above teaches that because we've received one Spirit, we're one body in Christ--God has made us one family. The one description of ourselves which we will carry into eternity is not based on nationality, socio-economic status, or even gender but on our relationship to God. How can the fact that any nonbeliever may in fact become a member of God's family affect your interactions with that person? We know that proximity breeds intimacy; reach out to someone of a different culture and ask them out to coffee or lunch.

Talk It Over

¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.