

## How Should Christians Respond to Racism? (Part II)

**Colossians 4:5-6: (NASB)** *<sup>5</sup>Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*

**Special Guest: Ken Cobbs**



Racism does not happen by accident. It can be taught and exemplified to young and unknowing hearts and minds, and that is troubling. Even more troubling are the maladies of ignorance, prejudice and bigotry that must be present and flourishing to feed and sustain racist thinking and actions. As Christians, the mere thought of any of these things having a home in our hearts or minds should send shivers of distress and fear through our very souls. In Part I, Episode 1132, we dissected ignorance, prejudice, bigotry and racism with the eyes of knowledge and the mind of understanding. Today we seek to look at them with godly wisdom and our highest godly intentions.

While we are focusing on the racial tensions currently happening in the United States, the principles apply worldwide to every culture with race or class conflicts.

Our objective today is NOT to solve the ills of our world regarding the mounting racial and social issues we face because that is beyond our capabilities.



We had a lot of response to Part I. Many appreciated the lessons but made strong suggestions on what they hope to hear now in Part II, depending on which side of the issue they were on. Everyone wants us to tell the other side how it should be. We might be an “equal opportunity disappointment,” but stay with us! We believe we have a call to action for all sincere Christians who find themselves troubled by this issue, no matter what their perspectives and conclusions might be.

Last week we looked at racial issues in a very personal way by following the experiences of two African American women.



We began by saying, **WORDS MATTER**, to stimulate our understanding of how to label the racial tensions we experience accurately. We focused on four words:

## **IGNORANCE, PREJUDICE, BIGOTRY AND RACISM**

This week we begin by saying:

**OUR PERCEPTION, OUR LISTENING, OUR WORDS AND OUR ACTIONS MATTER!**

We will follow the experiences of an African American man who has been on the wrong side of circumstances through no fault of his own.

Julie: I am happy to introduce my friend, Ken Cobbs. He is 60 years old. We meet with the same church group and he was baptized with and my husband and me back in 2001. I very much respect him as a great Christian example. He is always transparent with his life experiences and how the Lord has led him. Rick and I asked him several questions to get his perspective as a Christian man who is also African American.

*Interview commentary has been edited for brevity and clarity.*



Ken: I'm from Chicago and mainly been in Chicago mostly all my life. I was actually born in the South. I was born in Arkansas and so my parents are both from that area. By the time I was school age, we moved to Chicago, and I've been in Chicago ever since. I grew up in a really, really tough neighborhood in the inner city of Chicago. Actually, I lived in the neighborhood where Martin Luther King decided to come to Chicago and live there for a little bit. I lived right there, maybe no more than about three or four blocks away.

**RICK:** So how old were you when he lived there?

Ken: I had to have been maybe five or six years old. I just recall I was about seven years old when Martin Luther King was killed. It was a Friday night. So, that night it was almost like the sky was orange and smoke. We couldn't go back to school. I just recall that Sunday we would always go to church and then we would go to a restaurant after church. As we went to church, the National Guard was everywhere. They were all in jeeps and there was all this heavy artillery around. Being a seven-year-old kid, we thought it was the end of the world. We wound up going to church in the place where I just loved to sit there and fellowship, and it was all burned down. That whole entire area was burned to the ground, including the school - it wasn't burned to the ground, but it was burned pretty badly. It was just a really tough time and I just recall all the stores in the area were all burned down so there was nowhere for us to go to shop or buy goods. The area never recovered and that was a bad thing. So that's what happened with a lot of these urban areas. It was that way with the riots in 1968. It was April 4th, 1968, when it happened on the Friday night. They never recovered; they never rebuilt those areas. I was going to Catholic school, and some of the gang members would come around the schools. We had nuns that would protect us but one day someone



was shooting in the back of our Catholic school and police came. When I saw the police, I ran, and the police grabbed me - I was a little kid - I had to be about nine or ten. He said, "Why were you running?" And I said that I heard that the police kill people and I didn't want you to do anything to harm me and then that officer said, "No, we're not all like that." That made me have a different view at an early age.

Julie: There's a lot in his story that made me cringe. I hate the idea of a seven-year-old seeing his church burning. And it is very telling that at a young age he already feared the police. That is not the expected response from kids in white neighborhoods. Ken was imprinted early with serious racial divides.

In Part I, we introduced two territories:

**1** Knowledge is the first territory we must pass through! To the best of our ability, we need to have the facts correct.

**2** Territory 2: Understanding! To the best of our ability, we need to assimilate those correct facts.

Today we will discuss Territory 3.

**3** Territory 3: Wisdom. To the best of our ability, we need to APPLY those correct facts to godly action.

These three terms came from Proverbs:

Proverbs 2:6: (NIV) *For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

To know what godly action is, we need to try and see through God's eyes:

**PROVERBS 6:16-19: (NASB) THERE ARE SIX THINGS WHICH THE LORD HATES, YES, SEVEN WHICH ARE AN ABOMINATION TO HIM:**



If you are a person of color and you hear these things, who do you think about? If you are a white individual and you hear these things, who do you think about? STOP! Ask yourself, what about me? Am I following guidance, input and even subtle suggestions that foster ANY of these seven things God hates?



## Guidance for avoiding the seven things God hates:

**Proverbs 6:20-23:** (NASB) <sup>20</sup>My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; <sup>21</sup>bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. <sup>22</sup>When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. <sup>23</sup>For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.

Solomon was advising to heed the godly counsel of parents who lived according to God's Law! We need to examine ourselves and hold fast to God's principles.



Ken: My boss was really involved in the food business, and he was of a Turkish-Mexican background. He ran Motorola Food Service worldwide. He knew so many people. So, one day he approached me and said that the guy that ran ServSafe (ServSafe® is a food and beverage safety training and certificate program administered by the U.S. National Restaurant Association) said, "Hey, I want you to go down to the public schools on the Southside. I want you to go down and speak to the 8th graders. There's a stigma in the Black community that hospitality jobs are not good jobs, and so we want you to go down there." He gave me some booklets and literature and I'd go down there and have this chef bake some cookies and pastries. I would just go down there and talk to these kids and I would tell them about the hospitality business. This is maybe 1991. I wound up being a Burger King franchisee, so I actually had a managing interest in the Burger King, and a lot of them were in the areas in the inner city. We did well. I would always take the road of trying to be a resource. We built a ton of loyalty because of our approach. We understood the environment that we were in and we understood the people. So, I would just do little things, like volunteer and go down into the school systems. They had a program called *Room and Read*, and I would go down and read to 7th graders. I would do this religiously about once a month. I had to pick a book and I'd go in, because they needed role models to go down and read to these kids, so I did that for about maybe three or four years.



Ken was helping by being a resource. He was being the light. Our presence, with God's light, can brighten the world around us and make it better. Our call to action is to BE the light.

***Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think. — Martin Luther King Jr.***



## Working Towards Wisdom:

True wisdom from above can only be received into a humble and willing heart. This heart understands what is pleasing to God and what is an abomination to Him.



Three points to consider:

- ⇒ We know we are going to make everyone uncomfortable. We have made ourselves uncomfortable in our preparation for this episode.
- ⇒ Do we have it figured out? Everyone thinks they are right. We are ALL wrong.
- ⇒ As a Christian, how do we make a positive impact? How do I handle the racial issue in “MY” life if I am wrong?

God’s wisdom is not emotionally-based nor is it socially-based. It is based on God’s justice, love and power!

**How do we apply God’s wisdom to our present social issues?  
What should our thinking be based on?**

Jesus said that knowing the truth can set you free. While he was specifically speaking about the freedom of becoming a disciple, the principle of knowing the truth is always important. A major part of our racial tensions today is based on people on two sides of an issue speaking *perceptions of truth* to substantiate their claims.

Theme for Segment Two: Wise Perception



**Wise Perception:** Perception is greater than reality because it is based on personal experience and conclusions. Godly perception requires us to be engaged in the work of truth-seeking.

2 Timothy 2:15: (NASB) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

We must WORK at understanding truth.



**The struggle:** The natural human inclination when involved in difficult issues is to be focused on our perceptions of truth and to see those with other perspectives as needing to wake up and change.

Just in reading the responses we have received on this topic shows us this is true: *We all know for certain what the problems are and how this could be solved. Now we just have to convince the OTHER side to see things like we do!*

We need to ask ourselves: Does that apply to me? We do not all know the answers. There is incomplete thinking on both sides of the issue.

Mark 9:50: (NASB) *Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.*

Christian call to action: Godly character is life-preserving. Be a preservative for the world around you.



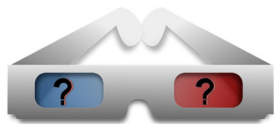


Let's return to Ken as he talks about making a difference.



Ken: I wanted to be a part of the solution. We would raise money for just selling coupon booklets and people would come in and support it. So, we wound up doing different things like bringing the schools in. They would do "King for a Day." Since it was Burger King, you say King for a Day. It gave them an opportunity to raise money in our restaurants just by coming there a couple hours. They had to do some footwork. They had to let the parents know to come to the restaurant. We also let some of the other teachers come and whatever sales that they brought in, we let them keep 10-15 percent. We wound up putting the certificates all over our restaurants throughout the entire city where we recognized A-level and B-level students. We went to talk to all the principles and all the churches around these restaurants. I would just put a PowerPoint certificate with Burger King's logo. The teachers would give me a list of the names of everybody that was on the honor roll, and we also did perfect attendance, and then we would just honor these kids. Then I started to hire some of these kids because in the high schools I wound up going to do "Whopper" contests. I wanted to really engage these kids. Circling back and going in and talking to these kids in 8th grade, 20 years later I hired a lot of these kids. Well, as young adults, a lot of them went on to become managers - some of them are district managers now.

Ken made a difference and was a great example. What a great feeling, to hire one of those young people 20 years later and watch them succeed. That is the power of engaging in our environment. He did what he could within his own sphere of influence. This is a lesson for us on how we can reflect God's light.



**Perception question:** Did Martin Luther King Jr. succeed or fail? We believe he succeeded, but his assassination at age 39 severely stifled the breadth of his success.

It is important to look at history and see some of the things Martin Luther King Jr. accomplished.

(Source: <https://biography.yourdictionary.com/articles/martin-luther-king-progress-civil-rights-movement.html>) Excerpt: Notable legislation during this time included the:

- Civil Rights Act of 1964 - This banned discrimination in employment and public accommodations based on "race, color, religion or national origin."

Based on this legislation, he received a Nobel Peace Prize. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave legal recourse for discrimination. This built a good foundation. We must acknowledge all of the steps it takes to deal with racial issues. It did not completely fix the problem, but it made the problem illegal.

- Voting Rights Act of 1965 - This law prohibited racial discrimination in voting.
- Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965 - This allows immigration from groups other than those from the traditional European countries.
- Fair Housing Act of 1968 - This banned housing discrimination in both sales and rentals.

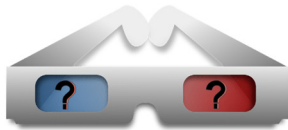


The Federal Housing Administration or FHA was legally allowed to “redline” - literally draw a red line on a map around lower-income neighborhoods and refuse to issue loans on those properties. Some banks would not lend to a black person seeking to buy in a white neighborhood or vice versa. Ninety-eight percent of FHA-insured loans between 1934 and 1962 went to white borrowers.

The administration encouraged clauses in property deeds and leases prohibiting certain groups from buying or renting property, often Black people. A 1938 manual for the FHA encouraged officials to avoid mixing “inharmonious racial or nationality groups” and “the occupancy of properties except by the race for which they were intended.” This segregated the neighborhoods. Black and white were both penalized by trying to even rent a home outside of their own neighborhood.

Black veterans could not purchase homes using the GI Bill, which provides lower interest rates for veterans. They would not underwrite loans that would bring “incompatible” racial groups into the newly-created white suburbs after World War II.

Is it perfect now? No, but we have come very far and should acknowledge the progress as a foundation.



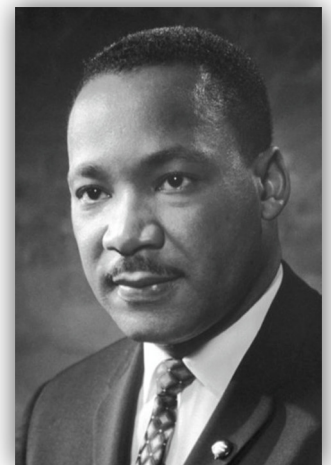
**Perception question:** Why can't African Americans just pull themselves up by their bootstraps? Why can't they change their environment?

We have heard this question asked from white Americans. Mike Wallace asked Martin Luther King Jr. this same question in a 1966 *60 Minutes* interview. Let's take a look at his answer.



### Getting out of the ghetto, *60 Minutes* 1966 MLK Interview

- (Mike Wallace) *Even Senator Jacob Javits asked the question recently. He said that he was a slum resident but he and some of his fellow Jews were able to make it out of the ghetto in the Lower East Side. The same thing is true with lots of Irish Italians and he asked the question why the Negro finds it so difficult to make his way up out of the ghetto.*
- (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) *Number one: no other racial group has been a slave on American soil. It's nice to say other people were down and they got up. They were not slaves on American soil. The other thing is that the Negro has had high visibility and because of the prejudices existing in this country, his color has been against him and they've used this to keep him from moving up. In the final analysis, when you say to a man that you are in this position because of your race or because of your color, you say to that man that he can never get out of it. Other racial groups have been able maybe to change accents or to change the names, but the Negro can't.*





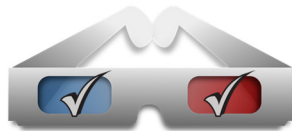
The comparison was made to the Jewish people who, of course, also have a horrific history of abuse and murder in the Holocaust and consistent anti-Semitism around the globe.

1. How does leadership play into the success or failure of a community?

Leadership plays an enormous role in what gets accomplished. Martin Luther King's leadership was second to none. In 13 years, he changed the face of this country.

2. We have heard the argument that in the Old Testament, God clearly required the Israelites to stay separate from the surrounding communities - have limited dealings with them and to not intermarry - is that not an argument for, if not racism, then at least segregation?

The Jews were instructed by God to be separate. He was separating them from the idol-worshipping nations around them. His focus for the Jews was for them to bless the families of the earth in the kingdom. Before the Jewish nation started, God told Abraham, *in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*



**Perception confirmation:**

**Galatians 3:26,28:** (NASB) <sup>26</sup>*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.* <sup>28</sup>*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians tells us there is no difference between Jewish or Gentile Christians.

**Perception question:** Did Martin Luther King Jr. leave room for violence?

One of the protest signs recently said, "Violence is the language of the unheard..." stating it was a quote from Martin Luther King Jr. We need to understand the context of the statement so we can understand its intention. Due to its length, we have included the context of this quote in the Bonus Material.

An excerpt from King's Nobel Prize profound acceptance speech:

(Source: [www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/lecture/](http://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/lecture/)) "But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones. Violence is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends up defeating itself."

It has been over 50 years since Martin Luther King Jr. died, and it is amazing how many people do not understand the impact he had on the changes made in this country. The present generation loses the impact. We are an "instant generation." Even if we go back as far as 9/11 in 2001, people who are in college now were toddlers or not even born in 2001. Many do not know what





the world was like. Generations do not always engage in what the previous generation knew.

Let's go back to Ken Cobbs as he tells the next part of his story.



Ken: Every young Black man has to be told, with a young Black person and even some of your young Black women, you have to tell them how to handle themselves and others because hey, look, if police stop you, don't ever get upset. Always show your hands. Always say, "Yes, Sir." Do exactly as they tell you. And so, it's different. I have to be that way for my kids because if I'm bitter and I'm angry based on what transpired with my ancestors, then my son wouldn't have any future. So, you have to talk with them. You let them know that these things are probably going to happen so that they're not shocked when they do happen.

What profound wisdom! Ken said, if he is angry and bitter with what transpired with his ancestors, then he is taking his son's future away. He is showing us what "wise perception" is in a difficult circumstance.

Proverbs 17:24: (NASB) *Wisdom is in the presence of the one who has understanding, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.*

Reminder: Let's not be foolish in dealing with the issues of racism. As Christians, this is a call to action in terms of our own perception.



### Working Towards Wisdom:

As Christians, our perceptions must be truth based, seasoned with the salt of godly character, and be fueled by our highest godly intentions.

As a Christian, it is not enough to think about things - we need to instead focus on proving what is true.

**As we seek to purify our perceptions, how do we go about the task of listening to dissenting voices?**

The early church had this very issue, and had they not dealt with it, the pure ideals of Christianity would have been forever soiled. We can learn much from their example of bringing two opposing sides together to honestly and passionately discuss, understand and set a forward course.

Theme for Segment Three: Wise Listening





## Ken Cobbs with the voice of Christian reason:



Ken: I never forget where I come from. But I think as a Christian, it's doing with what you can. Because the Scripture says *we are in this world but we are not of this world*. So, we have to let our light shine no matter where we go. I've always had a voice of calmness and humility. I try to be as meek as possible because you never know who you run into. So many have come to me with this, "What do you do, where do you go to church?" And I tell them and it's like, "Wow, I've never heard of that, but they must be doing something right over there because of the way you carry yourself, the way you go about things." Being a Christian has helped me. You could have a lot of bitterness and anger inside you, I mean, what does bitterness beget? That pride, what does it do? It just bears fruit. It's just wonderful having the spirit of God where you can bear the peaceable fruits - if you have the gift of the holy spirit. I think it's in Luke chapter 6 where it says, "*...give, it will be given unto you...pressed down, shaken together.*" So, the way I take that Scripture is that if you have a gift you can keep giving it. It will never run out, and I'm talking about the spiritual gifts. The more you give the more it's going to come.

**Luke 6:36-38:** (NASB) <sup>36</sup>*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. <sup>37</sup>Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. <sup>38</sup>Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.*

Jesus used the picture of measuring grain in a basket and getting the full amount. You press it down, shake it and it runs over. That is the full amount. Ken is saying, if you have a gift (spiritual gift) you can keep giving it and it will never run out. He practices what he preaches.



Listening with wisdom is about listening intently to hear the truth in the midst of issues. To be a wise listener, we need godly intentions, perceptions, and filters and the courage to use them.



**The Struggle:** As human beings, we are sometimes comfortable in our discomfort. It is far too easy to rest in our own perspective, rather than challenge it with external input.

What does that mean? We rest in our assumptions, stereotypes, social media comments, passing around questionable posts, memes or jokes, allowing others to make racially insensitive or outright racist comments and we say nothing.

To be able to connect with others and understand the other side, we need to be able to listen with wisdom.



PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEW

Ken: I recall an experience with my son when he got of driving age, and he was stopped in a town. They stopped him. He was so nervous. I had told him to be calm, but they were asking for his insurance and different things like that. He was just so shaken that he didn't know where it was. The officer wrote two tickets which got him to court. Then when we did go to the court the vehicle was in my name so the judge would not even listen to me. The judge fined him. Now I have to go and get a lawyer. I was there, and I wanted to talk to the judge. The judge told me, "You can't." He wouldn't allow me to talk. It took me one lawyer in DuPage County. Then my son actually missed the stop sign in Will County, so that exacerbated the problem right in between this. Now I have to go and pay for a lawyer in DuPage County, pay for one in Will County because they represent different counties and the laws are different. It cost me several thousand dollars to prove that he had his insurance when it could have easily been done a different way. But those experiences that you have, you can't let those things get the best of you. My son saw it at a young age, and now he understands. I would only hope that he would have that same type of way of carrying himself and teach his son the same thing.

Ken is a victim, but he is not acting like a victim.

Can TV influence the way we get our prejudice? Can we be influenced without knowing we are influenced? Have you ever had a prejudiced thought pop into your head and think, where did that come from?

TV, radio, social media, YouTube - all can influence. Watch and listen wisely!

Proverbs 4:5-6: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>*Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth.* <sup>6</sup>*Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; love her, and she will watch over you.*

Now, let's listen for Ken's wise Christian principles.



PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEW

Ken: This was 1999. I was actually working for this company in human resources/staffing. It was actually a couple days after my 39th birthday. I recall this because I had to go and renew my license. So, I go down to the DMV and get my license. A day or two later I'm driving to drop off this bill to a client. I am in a suit and tie because that's the way I had to dress because I was talking to HR people, going in to try to acquire new business. I am also managing existing business. I'm driving north, I see another guy speeding in front of me. I see the police coming south. He's driving like he's going to catch this guy. So, he turns around, comes north and he comes to me. The other guy just kept going. He was a white driver. I'm not doing anything, so he just ran my plates. Next thing you know, he directs me into the parking lot. The parking lot I was in was the client's that I was trying to service. Before I could get out of the car, he had called for back-up. There was maybe four or five police, and I remember there was this female cop and she had a gun on me.



They threw me to the car. I said, “Well what’s going on?” They said, “Well, your emissions - you didn’t do your emissions test.” I said, “I just went to the DMV and got my license the other day. I wouldn’t be able to get the license had I not taken my emission.” They told me to shut up. I said, “I got a client here inside.” The client comes out and she’s seeing this and says, “Well he’s coming here to deliver - I just was on the phone with him.” They took me in, fingerprinted me and arrested me. I am in the back of the squad car in handcuffs and I started asking him, “What church do you go to?” He said he hadn’t been to church in a while. I started to share different Scriptures with him. As soon as I got to the station, he fingerprinted me and said he was sorry. They let me go, but then I had to go to court. So, I had to pay like a \$60 fine.

Julie: Do you see why I love Ken and his example so much? This story is mortifying. There is so much wrong with what happened. He had a gun drawn on him because of his emissions test. This helps me, as a white woman, to understand why people say many Black men are profiled without cause.

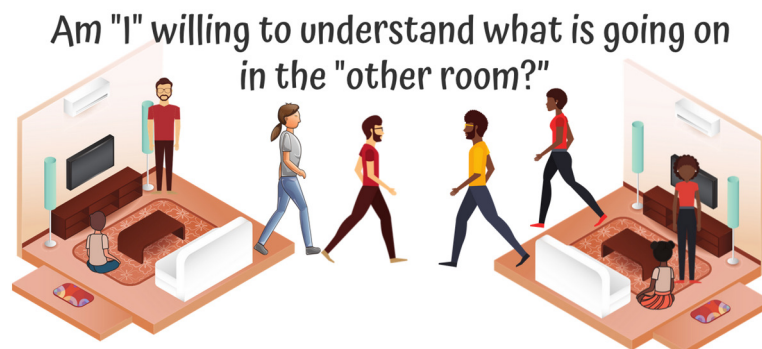
***The reason so many people misunderstand so many issues is not that these issues are so complex, but that people do not want a factual or analytical explanation that leaves them emotionally unsatisfied. — Thomas Sowell***

**Looking through the wide-open eyes of racial tension; Acts 15 has taken on a whole different look:**

**Acts 15:1-2:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, *Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.* <sup>2</sup>And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

Their disunity could not be fixed locally. It was too big of an issue, so Paul, Barnabas and some others put their witnessing on hold and went back to Jerusalem to debate their concerns with the other apostles and leaders. They were going to the “other room.”

What do we mean by the “other room”? When we are faced with an issue like racism, we are in “our own room.” We are in a room where we see and feel the same input of those who agree with us. There are people in the “other room” who do exactly the same thing. The input, conversations and tone in each room are different, and yet the same. It is different in that it is based on different pieces of truth, different perceptions and experiences. It is the same because they all think they have it right.





Let's take a look at wise spiritual listening:

**Wise Listening:** Peter, the formerly impetuous one, applies his **FACTUAL** experience to the matter:

Acts 15:6-10: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. <sup>7</sup>After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.

Before the facts were portrayed (facts they already knew) there were many clashing factual pieces but no factual continuity.

**The apostles and elders needed to hear the facts while debating and they needed Peter to tell them the bottom line:**

<sup>8</sup>And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the holy spirit, just as He also did to us; <sup>9</sup>and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup>Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

Peter listened first and then spoke. That was wise listening.

**Wise Listening:** Even though all opinions were not in complete agreement, they found common ground:

Acts 15:28-29: (NASB) <sup>28</sup>For it seemed good to the holy spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: <sup>29</sup>that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.

**Wise Listening:** The result was received by Gentile Christians in the spirit that the decision was made - to build each other up in Christ:

Acts 15:30-31: (NASB) <sup>30</sup>So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. <sup>31</sup>When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

This compromise was made because the two sides came from their "separate rooms" and their communication worked.

⇒ Dissension and debate were important tools. They were not done in writing or by message, but IN PERSON.



Seeing Ken every week on Sunday helped me formulate what a Christian Black man looks like. We want to try to see this issue from each other's eyes, but what if we are Black and do not interact with many white people or vice versa? Are we supposed to randomly go up to someone of a different race at the grocery store and strike up an emotionally-charged conversation?

No, we should first build a relationship with someone and then have an emotionally-charged conversation.

⇒ Adequate and intentional listening gave all present the security and satisfaction of being heard.

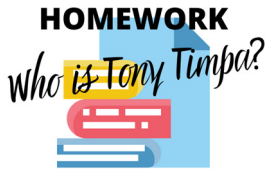
Paul and the Gentiles were, as we said, in the "other room" and they were respected because they were heard.





We need to question our newsfeed to see what we are allowing ourselves to be fed.

⇒ Once the facts were verified by the original source, all were open to moving forward. There are many sources out there today.



We are all focused on the horrendous killing of George Floyd. Have you ever heard of a white man named Tony Timpa who was also killed by police in a similar way? Here is the important question for all to research: *How come nobody knows about Tony Timpa?* Why is his name not familiar? We are NOT minimizing the cause, but we are trying to focus on the cause by seeing the broader picture.

⇒ The compromise was NOT perfect, but it paved the road for walking together in Christ.

We need to get out of our room and be willing to see what is in the other room so we can pave that road to unity.



### Working Towards Wisdom:

Wise listening is a decision to rise above our own emotional comfort for the sake of finding truth.

Wise listening is patient, observant and respectful.

Listening makes us vulnerable and that makes us uncomfortable, but if we want the truth, we need to do it anyway.

**To listen is always a theme of importance!**  
**How should we address those with opposing opinions?**

Words matter! This goes back to Part I of our series when we talked about seeing through another's eyes and establishing personal trust. Now we focus on dealing with the issues at hand in a straightforward and still compassionate Christian way. And yes, this is as difficult as it sounds.

## Theme for Segment Four: Wise Words



Ken grew up in an influential time of change in America. He is going to talk about "Jim Crow Laws." Jim Crow was not a real person; he was a character played by a white man in blackface. What was known as "Jim Crow Laws" segregated Blacks from whites.

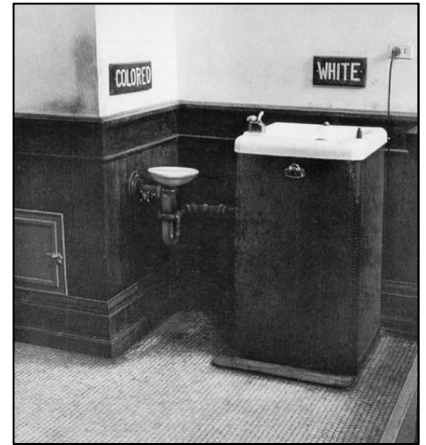
(Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim\\_Crow\\_laws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Crow_laws)) "...Jim Crow Laws were state and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States. These laws were enacted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by white Democratic-dominated state legislatures to disenfranchise and remove political and economic gains made by Blacks during the Reconstruction period (after the Civil War). The Jim Crow Laws were enforced until 1965.



For example, these laws gave the authority to have what was a separate public “colored” drinking fountain and a “white” drinking fountain.



Ken: Being a brother in Christ, I would get invited to spend time with brethren. A lot of times I decline because of the time of day. And then there's some Bible Study meetings, the weeknight meetings, that I don't feel comfortable going to because I can't tell you how many times I've been stopped by the police. How many times I've had a gun to my head. You become used to it because you've had “the talk.” You had the talk that these things were going happen. I came up right during the Jim Crow Laws. I was in second grade; I was about to end second grade when this all happened. ...She (the teacher) would take us on field trips. I remember going to the Museum of Science and Industry, and I couldn't use certain bathrooms. I couldn't drink out of certain fountains. The fountains were marked. Lincoln Park Zoo - the same thing. Seriously, it was just the way it was coming up. I caught the tail end of that. I grew up and saw all different types of things. The fortunate thing, I was a kid, by the time I got to maybe 12 or so, it was more or less that the civil rights movement had started pretty strongly.



### Wise Words:



To speak with wisdom always begins with first attempting to fully align our heart and mind with godly principles and intentions.

Wise words are rarely rushed and firmly focused.



**The Struggle:** Our emotions are often the default driver for our words. When we have been unjustly treated or have been accused of racism without cause, our words tend to lash out in retribution. This lashing out can be overtly or passively aggressive.

We are not trying to start a new movement or a new social media approach. Our call to action has to be based on being Christian.

Do not underestimate the destructive power of passive-aggressive talk or behavior! From the comfort of the “room” we are in, it is easy to lash out, but should we be doing that?



Ken: Now I've been stopped a lot of times where it was a really nice policeman, but I've been stopped at times where it was just really tough. It was tough. And I'm glad that my son had the experience at an early age because he started to get to that stage of, “I know how to handle myself.”



You don't have to treat me like a kid," but having that experience after I told him that, it just really opened up his eyes.

I know that there are different places in the United States that I can't go to comfortably and would always have to be aware of my surroundings, where I go because you just never know. It's just one thing that you are always mindful of. A lot of times I'm going on business. Now I've become an instructor for Burger King Corporate, so I teach all over North America. A lot of times I'm driving, so I've driven all way up to the Upper Peninsula ([Michigan](#)) almost to Canada to teach courses at some universities, at some hotels. I get there, I tell him who I am and sometimes they're like, "You're Ken Cobbs?" Yeah, that's me.

When there are uncomfortable experiences ahead of us, we need to think, "If I am righteous, loving and kind, I should not fear. I should step out and have faith that I can be a blessing, by God's grace."

This applies to both sides of the issue - whether we are on one side saying, "I do not understand why 'they' are having such a problem," or on the other side saying, "I do not understand why 'they' cannot see there is a problem."

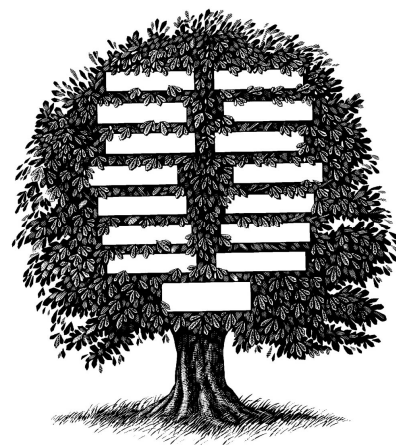
### Wise words are thoughtful words, even towards those who are NOT Christian:

Colossians 4:5-6: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Do what Jesus said: *Bless those who persecute you...bless and do not curse.* There is strength in the Christian call to action to be that blessing, that light, around everyone else.



Ken: If you told me that you can trace your family history, "...My mom is Sicilian/Italian, and my dad is from this country and here's a picture of my great-great grandfather..." A lot of African Americans don't have that. We are a race that doesn't have - our history was taken from us. A lot of African Americans, they don't really study the history because it's so painful that when they started to, it's almost like you opened up a wound. They would rather not even talk about it. They would rather not even know the history. I was talking to my daughter, and she's very bright. She went through the history and she got A's in it, but it just hurt her to talk about history when you started to open up these wounds.



There have been many people who have lost their histories - the intent of the holocaust was to wipe Jewish people off the face of the earth, and many genealogies hit the end with entire families wiped out.



Many of us take the blessing of a clear sight line of genealogy for granted. To start thinking of the pain your ancestors went through with something like slavery must be very hard. The history of being in this country, which stood for freedom, is significant. Here is how we do some wise listening for those of us who cannot relate to it, so our words can be wise. Check out who is in the “other room.”

***People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other. — Martin Luther King Jr.***

In Acts 15, we saw the principle of acceptable compromise on a Christianity-wide scale. Next we will see the same principle on a one-to-one scale.

**It is even harder to follow through on being different from your brethren:**

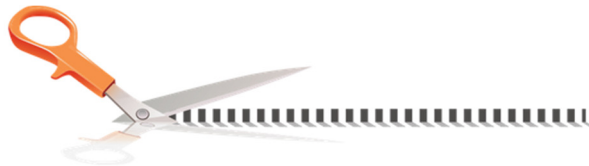
Romans 14:1-4: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. <sup>2</sup>One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. <sup>3</sup>The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand...

One of our CQ Volunteers, Becca wrote: What is your personal responsibility when everyone else is making racist jokes and feel comfortable saying them around you? It is our responsibility to other human beings that we stand up for righteousness' sake and tell them those things are wrong; they won't be allowed around you.



There is a subtle thing I hear from white people that I've just started realizing in the last few years. White people might say something like this: “I was at the grocery store looking for olives and this Black guy pointed me to the right aisle.”

The next response in that conversation *should* be, “...And does the color of his skin have anything to do with the story?” It's shocking to me how often this comes out of the mouths of white people, identifying others as Black, even though it has nothing to do with the story and a physical description is unnecessary. We never say, “Oh, that Caucasian man showed me where the olives are.” It is a subtle way of dividing, separating and calling attention to a person as the “other” implying they don't belong in that setting because it is unusual in some way.



Wise words to a brother or sister are based on confidence in that brother or sister.

Wise words can be corrective. Am I in the spiritually-mature position to speak those words?





**Proverbs 17:10:** (NASB) *A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.*

We should not be correcting others unless we are spiritually sound and mature.

**Wise words are sometimes those words that we do not even utter:**

**Proverbs 9:7-10:** (NASB) *<sup>7</sup>He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, and he who reproves a wicked man gets insults for himself. <sup>8</sup>Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, reprove a wise man and he will love you. <sup>9</sup>Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser, teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning. <sup>10</sup>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

*Do not reprove a scoffer - it is a waste of our dedicated Christian time! How much time are we spending making a case for racial understanding with those who present themselves as angry, closed-minded or vengeful? This is not what following Jesus looks like. Jesus did not seek out those who were angry.*



### Working Towards Wisdom:

Wise words are carefully chosen to represent the light of God's word. They are to be spoken in an appropriate fashion and at appropriate times.

**To represent Christ is to take action.  
What actions should we take regarding these racial issues?**

This can be a tricky question. On the one hand, if our characters truly represent Jesus, we are greatly suited to help people. Jesus also said his kingdom is not of this world and to *let the dead bury the dead*. How do we balance these two things out? Do we get involved or do we stay out of it?

Theme for Segment Five: Wise Actions



### Wise Actions:

To act wisely is to act with our highest priority always in mind. This does not mean only doing spiritual things. But it does mean doing everything while **WALKING IN JESUS' FOOTSTEPS.**

**Proverbs 16:3:** (NASB) *Commit your works to the LORD and your plans will be established.*



**The Struggle:** We hurt as a result of cruelty and injustices in the world, and sometimes want to dig in and fix these injustices here and now. Other times we completely avoid it, thinking that God's got it all in hand and "What can I do anyway?"





Our producer, Jakim, said: I appreciate how Ken just plowed through all the roadblocks with hard work to become a corporate consultant. Ken understands that he will be profiled by the police and certain individuals in the work world his entire life. He has learned how to smartly navigate it, rather than banging his head against the same wall over and over.



This does not mean Ken rolled over and did nothing to help his situation or that of other African Americans. He does everything he can within his circle of influence. However, you are not going to see him get into fights on social media. He knows that society will ultimately be torn down in preparation for Christ's kingdom, so we do not expect these social issues to be "fixed" until Satan and his influence are restrained.

How do we engage in wise actions? We need to be righteous in all our doings. Righteous does not just mean doing right; the Scriptures talk of *godly righteousness* - working on the side of God's plan.



### **Wise Action: Be righteous in ALL of our doings:**

Proverbs 12:25-26: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>*Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.* <sup>26</sup>*The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

Make sure all of our doings are godly righteous doings, not just good or nice according to our own perspective and the perspectives of the others who think as we do, the other people in "our room."

***The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education. — Martin Luther King Jr.***



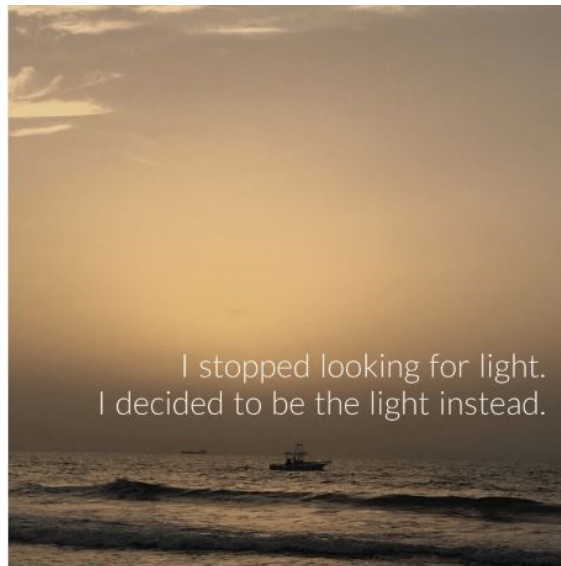
Ken: I was a (Burger King) franchisee but I only had part ownership in the business. The majority franchise owner was this African American, Chuck. He showed me his history. Now, he had history. He takes me on a website on Google, and he shows me in the early 1800s his family's brand name on trucks and they owned the building. It was called C.H. James Holdings, and they were farmers but everybody in that family from the great grandfather went to Wharton Business School. Wharton is one of the best business schools out there. They've got national contracts for McDonald's, the national contract for Walmart, and then he sat on all these boards.

He is very fair-skinned. In slavery, there were some that actually lived in the homes with the masters, and they were the kids. A lot of those got inheritances because they were the kids of the slave owners. He was one of these, and he said, "Ken, the only difference between you and I - you're just as smart as I am. You could have gone to Wharton or any of these schools. You just didn't have access to those opportunities. Had it not been for my great grandfather and then the fact that they were born into that wealth and it was given to them," he would have been in the same position that I was.



There was opportunity back in the early 1800s, though it was limited, and this family stayed with it. They took the opportunity and developed a legacy of passed-on opportunity, but everybody in the family had to do the work. This is a tremendous example of being successful through time. Such wise actions!

**Matthew 5:14-16:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup>nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup>Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*



When we deal with racial issues, this concept is as Christian as any concept we can ever find, and it is a call to action! *You are the light of the world.* It does not say you HAVE a light, or you should SHINE it on different things; it says you ARE the light of the world - LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE. We should be the brightness in the “room” we are in, showing Christlikeness. Whether we visit the “other room” or come from the “other room” we can still see the brightness which emanates.

**Let those who think differently than us see the brightness of Christ:**

**Proverbs 3:27-31:** (NASB) <sup>27</sup>*Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.*

Does this mean we should be crusaders for every good cause? That is not what this Scripture is saying. How do we promote wise Christian actions? This power is not trying to change the world; it is described in the following verses.

**Note the extent of the influence given:**

<sup>28</sup>*Do not say to your neighbor, Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it, when you have it with you. <sup>29</sup>Do not devise harm against your neighbor, while he lives securely beside you. <sup>30</sup>Do not contend with a man without cause, if he has done you no harm. <sup>31</sup>Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways.*

This is talking about our “circle of influence” - those around us. We are to be good to our neighbors. If we are in a position to help them, do not hesitate! As Christians, this is what our *light shining* means.

Whichever “room” you are in, whichever “side” you are on with this racial tension issue, let us decide to be the light that is drawing its power and strength from above, based on scriptural principles so we can light the way. Stop pulling in information on the intravenous newsfeed without questioning the source. Let us rise above it.

*Love your neighbor as yourself.* This includes the ones in the “other room.” We are not prejudiced or bigoted or racist against ourselves.



**Rick:** What do you say to those young people in terms of dealing with their anger? How do you tell them to manage the disappointment, the difficulty and their white neighbors, as well?

**Ken:** I tell them to trust the Lord with all their hearts and lean not to their own understanding. That's really the only way to acknowledge Him in every way. And let Him direct your path because there's no path here on earth that is going to bring you the peace and the comfort that you're going to need that's going to fulfill that missing void. You need God.

Ken was quoting Proverbs 3:5-6.

What do we say to those who are frustrated with people in the "other room"? Trust in the Lord. What if they do not believe in God? Witness to them in a more subtle way. If we can BE the light and others see we do not react in frustration and anger, they may come to us. This is our opportunity. When we stand for something higher, people tend to notice.

**God's plan will bring wisdom to everyone. The resurrection brings full disclosure. Ignorance, prejudice, bigotry and racism will be solved:**

1 Timothy 2:3-6: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

All men will be saved and come to the knowledge (full disclosure) of the truth. Full disclosure means we are presented with the bottom-line clarity of the important facts. In Acts 15, the Apostle Peter gave full disclosure, and everyone abided by it. In the resurrection, everyone will be given full disclosure of God's plan and how to rise above sin.

This is a beautiful picture of how God's plan is going to solve all of these problems.

**Wise actions of being faithful to God through Jesus bring the ultimate answer - a new government:**

Daniel 2:44: (NASB) *In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.*

**Never succumb to the temptation of bitterness. — Martin Luther King Jr.**



Working Towards Wisdom:

Wise actions are reflected in  
shining as a spiritual light in earthly places.

The world needs God, and our actions must reflect that need.

Let our light be IN the world but not OF the world!



Think about the positive position each of us can be in dealing with racial tensions, whatever room we find ourselves in. We can be the light that is proactively affecting others. Be engaged in the lives around us with integrity exemplifying the light of Christ and the light of God's word. We can have a positive influence during this dark time and change the world around us. Find a way to get in the "other room" and bless each other.

*So, how should Christians respond to racism?  
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie) and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on July 13, 2020  
Ep. 1134: What Did Jesus Teach Us About Money?

### Bonus Material and Study Questions

#### *Quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.*

*Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.*

*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.*

*Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.*

*I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.*

*He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love.*

*Nonviolence is absolute commitment to the way of love. Love is not emotional bash; it is not empty sentimentalism. It is the active outpouring of one's whole being into the being of another.*

*We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear.*

*Never succumb to the temptation of bitterness.*

*Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.*





***The soft-minded man always fears change. He feels security in the status quo, and he has an almost morbid fear of the new. For him, the greatest pain is the pain of a new idea.***

(Source: <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/riot-not-always-the-language-the-unheard>)

Riots Aren't Always The Language Of The Unheard: The misuse of the words of Martin Luther King Jr. by Jeremy Thornhill; February 13, 2017; University of Louisiana at Monroe

The primary evidence that this quote is being incorrectly used becomes more apparent when we look at the quote within its larger context:

*"Now I wanted to say something about the fact that we have lived over these last two or three summers with agony and we have seen our cities going up in flames. And I would be the first to say that I am still committed to militant, powerful, massive, non-violence as the most potent weapon in grappling with the problem from a direct-action point of view. I'm absolutely convinced that a riot merely intensifies the fears of the white community while relieving the guilt. And I feel that we must always work with an effective, powerful weapon and method that brings about tangible results. But it is not enough for me to stand before you tonight and condemn riots. It would be morally irresponsible for me to do that without, at the same time, condemning the contingent, intolerable conditions that exist in our society. These conditions are the things that cause individuals to feel that they have no other alternative than to engage in violent rebellions to get attention. And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the plight of the negro poor has worsened over the last twelve or fifteen years. It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice and humanity."*

If it's not clear that presenting the quote stripped from its context removes the original intent, I will spell it out more explicitly. Martin Luther King Jr. did not think that riots were the way forward or even remotely helpful. In fact, he saw them as a hindrance to progress. He is saying that rioting hurts the cause, and in the midst of the Jim Crow era, these riots would break out because the injustice of Jim Crow era laws and institutional racism felt largely unheard. Martin Luther King Jr. confirmed these views further in an interview in 1966.

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# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1133: How Should Christians Respond to Racism (Part II)?

<https://christianquestions.com/society/1133-racism-2/>

See:  CQ Rewind  
SHOW NOTES

1. How are knowledge, understanding and wisdom related? (See Proverbs 2:6)
2. Do any of the *seven things that God hates* apply to you? Do you think a certain race of people, a country, or people with a certain ideology embody these seven things more than those with which you associate? (See Proverbs 6:16-19) What should guide us in our dealings with those outside our circle of acquaintance? (See Proverbs 2:6 [NIV], Colossians 4:5-6 [NASB], Proverbs 6:20-23 [NIV])
3. How do our natural human inclinations influence our perceptions of “truth”? How can we combat our own incomplete understanding (and therefore incomplete reasoning)? (See Isaiah 58:6-12, Micah 6:8, Luke 6:27-35, Mark 9:50)
4. What were some of the things Mr. Cobbs did to improve and encourage those within his sphere of influence? What are some simple (and not so simple) things you could do to improve and encourage others within your circle of influence?
5. Why were the Old Testament Jews told to stay separate from their idolatrous neighbors? How are Christians supposed to view their neighbors? (See Genesis 22:16-18, Zechariah 8:23, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 2:13-22)
6. How do we go about the task of listening to dissenting voices? How do we *purify our perceptions*? What do we need to do to listen wisely and challenge our own perceptions? (See Luke 6:31-36, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Proverbs 4:5-6)
7. How does the debate on Gentile circumcision between Peter and Barnabas and the Jewish Christian elders in Jerusalem illustrate wise spiritual listening? (See Acts 5:1-21) In what spirit did the Gentile Christians receive the Jerusalem council’s decision? (See Acts 5:22-32)
8. How do we engage in godly righteousness? How do we let others see the light of Christ in us? (See Matthew 5:14-16, Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 3:27-31, Proverbs 12:25-26)
9. When will ignorance, prejudice, bigotry and racism be solved? What is YOUR part in combating it at this time within your circle of influence? Look at yourself honestly, what prejudices do you have about others? What will you do to change those perceptions? (See 1 Timothy 2:3-6, Daniel 2:44)