



YOUR OWN PREJUDICE

Look Beyond the Barriers!

February 19, 2022

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Proverbs 28:21 (GNT) • “Prejudice is wrong.”

Galatians 3:28 (NET) • “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female—for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 5:21 (NET) • “Before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, I solemnly charge you to carry out these commands without prejudice or favoritism of any kind.”

1 Samuel 16:7 (NET) • “God does not view things the way men do. People look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

James 3:17 (GNT) • “But the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy.”

Acts 10:34, 35 (NLT) • “Then Peter replied, ‘I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.’”

Leviticus 19:33, 34 (NIV) • “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat

them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 10:19 (NLT) • “So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.”

(See additional references in the student lesson.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “YOUR OWN PREJUDICE”

Prejudice is an attitude. When it results in an action, it becomes discrimination. Prejudice and discrimination combined form the basis for racism. However, racism is more than prejudice and discrimination. Racism is an ideology. It is an ideology of supremacy that places a negative meaning on biological differences, resulting in an objective, differential, and unequal treatment. Ideology is a system of ideas and beliefs about the universe to which people adhere in order to justify their attitudes and actions. —Caleb Rosado, *Broken Walls* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1990), p. 29.

There are many other forms of prejudice besides racism. Christ pointed out that giving a wealthy person a better seat than a poor person, or giving a poor person more preference just because they were poor, was an act totally contrary to the principles of His kingdom. The ideology and the attitude of the kingdom of God

is to put all people at the same place—kneeling at the foot of the cross, and being a part of that kingdom results in actions of putting the interest of others before one’s own. (This is in contrast to an ideology of supremacy.)

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “YOUR OWN PREJUDICE”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Recognize and acknowledge their own prejudices.
2. Understand the root of their prejudices.
3. Take steps to let Christ’s love for all people change their hearts and minds.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity B) pillowcase or an opaque bag with pairs of objects that are similar in shape, size and/or texture (examples: a ball of yarn and a softball; a small cardboard box and a wooden block; a knitting needle and a chopstick, a small stuffed animal and a rolled-up pair of socks); (Activity B) paper; pen/pencil; whiteboard or chalkboard.

Connecting • Student lessons; Bibles.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimfaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Fill a pillowcase or an opaque bag with pairs of objects that are similar in shape, size, and/or texture (examples: a ball of yarn and a softball; a small cardboard box and a wooden block; a knitting needle and a chopstick, a small stuffed animal and a rolled-up pair of socks.)

Get set • Invite the students one by one to feel the bag (do not let them open it) and guess what the objects are.

Go • When everyone has had a chance, open the bag and display the items.

Debriefing • **Ask: Were you surprised at some of the contents? Why?** (Because they weren’t always what they felt like.) **Why did you think some things would be different before we opened the bag?** (They felt like something I had seen or experienced before.) **How was this exercise like the way we sometimes treat people?** (We treat people based on what others have told us about them. We treat people based on our prior experience with them or someone like them.) **What is the danger of coming to conclusions based on what someone seems like?** (We could misjudge someone or miss the opportunity to really

know them. We could hurt their feelings. We could miss out on a good friendship.)

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Appoint a scribe to record answers for the following exercise.

Get set • **Say:** I'm going to read a list of words. After I read each word, say the first word or phrase that comes into your mind. Our scribe will write them down.

Go • Read the list of words that follows on the left, pausing for a moment to allow the students time to respond and the scribe to write. (Possible responses are on the right.)

penny	whistle, loafer, candy, for your thoughts
rain	bow, dance, cloud, drops
black	box, light, dog, cat, sheep, man
whistle	blower, stop, while you work
white	house, man, light, fence, bread
that's	cool, tight, my line, the way things are
brown	cow, bread, shirt, cow knows how/how now brown cow, stone

Debriefing • **Ask:** Why do you think you answered as you did? (It reminded me of something I had heard, or seen, or experienced.) **Why do you think others answered as they did?** (It reminded them of things they had heard, seen, or experienced.)

Ask: What does it mean to react? (To respond quickly without thinking carefully about what we are saying or doing. To respond naturally.) **What is the danger in reacting?** (We can respond in ways that hurt others. We might act so fast that we don't have time to think about what a citizen of God's kingdom would do.)

Say: We react according to our experiences or to what we have been taught through the words or actions of those around us, especially our families. When we react negatively to a person who is different from us, it is

called being prejudiced.

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

Jim was a Caucasian student working in Chicago, U.S.A., after graduation. To get to his office he had to go through a neighborhood unlike any he had ever been in. It was the first time he had ever been around people of another race, so he was cautious. On his first day of work he passed by a dark-skinned man who called out to him, "I'm Daleestades." Jim was frightened, so he avoided the man. The next day the same thing happened. Determined not to be confronted by the man again, Jim walked on the other side of the street the following day. Finally one morning Jim couldn't avoid the man. "I know you; you're Daleestades," Jim said. "Actually, my name is Arthur," replied the man. "The other day I was quoting you a verse from the Bible, I was saying I am 'the least of these.'" Jim smiled and wondered to himself what he had been afraid of. After that Jim and the man spoke frequently and became friends.

Ask: Why do you think Jim avoided the man? (Because he was different than anyone Jim had ever met. He didn't know what the man wanted.) **Why was Jim afraid of him?** (He was afraid the man would hurt him or want something from him. He had never encountered a dark-skinned person before.) **What changed his mind about the man?** (The man's persistence. Jim couldn't avoid him any longer. Jim was curious about his name.) **Talk about a time when you had a similar experience. In what way did it change your thinking or actions?**

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Say: After God gave the law to Moses and the children of Israel, He very specifically spoke about how the Israelites were to treat a certain group of people. Ask three different

persons or groups to find and read the following verses: **Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:33, 34; and Deuteronomy 10:19. Who were they?** (People who were not Israelites. These people were known as aliens.)

Say: An alien was not entitled to all the rights and privileges of an Israelite, so instructions were needed on how to treat them. Although the Israelites were the chosen people, God did not want them to think that their status gave them the right to treat others badly. These verses in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy all remind us that as agents of the kingdom we are required to acknowledge, be kind to, befriend, reach out to, and love those who are different from us.

Ask: What kinds of differences among people do we experience today? (These differences could include country of origin, race, gender, color, hair texture, and language.) **Who is considered an “alien” in our world today?** (Allow the students time to respond.) **How are they usually treated? How should you as an agent of the kingdom treat them?** (with kindness, with love, impartially, like everyone else, like God’s children, too, the way Jesus would treat them)

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Distribute the student lessons. Have students follow as you read the illustration story: “Look Beyond the Barriers!”

Ask: Do the students in your school separate themselves into groups? In what way? (Allow time for answers.) **Is there any other place in your life where the situation is similar—where people separate themselves into different groups?** (parties, church, socials, etc.) **Why do you think people separate themselves like this?** (Because they are afraid. Because they don’t want their friends to think that they are strange. Because of the way their parents treat others.) **What is**

the problem with only mingling with your friends or people who are like you? (That’s not what Jesus did. That’s not how the kingdom of heaven is supposed to be. It limits our opportunities to minister to others.)

Have students find and read together **Numbers 12:1-15**, in a modern translation if possible. It is the story of Miriam and Aaron’s prejudice against Moses’ wife, who was from a different culture. Then review the texts listed in Wednesday’s section of the student lesson.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

Ian is with a group of friends. Someone tells a joke about a person of another race. He is uncomfortable with it, though others around him immediately burst into laughter. Soon others are telling their own jokes. The jokes are getting worse and worse. Ian says nothing. What could he do next time?

Give the students a chance to respond.

Ask: **Why do you think Ian didn’t say anything?** (He didn’t want to draw attention to himself. He agreed with the jokes. He was afraid of what his friends would think.) **What have you done in the past when this situation has come up? Why did you do what you did? What should you do when someone starts telling jokes or talking negatively about people who are different from them?** (A prayer for the Holy Spirit to give you strength and wisdom is important. You may be prompted to walk away. Say, “I’m not comfortable with the way you’re talking about people.” Change the subject. Say something nice about the people my friends are talking about. Challenge what the person is saying by asking a question.) **How will you handle things differently in the future?** (Pray each day for the Spirit’s guidance. Practice in advance what I might say. Get to know the person people are talking about so I can give them a different view.)

Say: God says we are to defend aliens. As children of God, we must always be pre-

pared to interact with all kinds of people regardless of what others may think.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Give each student an object (wrapped hard candy, buttons, stickers) in one of three different colors (red, blue, yellow).

Ask the students to find someone this week that they don't know who is wearing one of the colors and say hello and ask them about themselves. Tell them they are to report back next week about what the response was, how they felt, what they learned about the person that was different than what they thought. Point out that these people could be a different age, religion, gender, nationality—there are many differences that we tend to react to.

Have the students role-play what they might say or do in one of the situations they might face. Discuss with them how and when to approach people and what possible reactions they may experience. Be sure to review with them whom they should or should not approach.

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What may be possible reactions to your gesture?
2. What risks do you take when you defend the defenseless? (that either they or your usual friends will turn on you and you will be left with no one)
3. What are possible benefits to stepping outside your present circle of friends? (new friends, new understanding)
4. Why is a Christian's accepting and defending people who are different so important to God? (We are all part of God's family. Shunning others is an insult to God.)
5. Tell one thing you can change in your life to reflect God's love for those who are considered different in your circle.
6. Without telling anyone who it is, think of something specific you can do for one person against whom you know you have been prejudiced.

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Kermit the Frog, a character in Jim Henson's *Muppet Show*, says, "It's not easy being green." You can substitute just about any other word for green to understand how others who are different from you may feel. To avoid someone or to treat them badly because of the color of their skin, texture of their hair, or difference of their accent without getting to know them for who they are is called prejudice. And as we have learned from God's Word, it is just plain wrong. As agents of God's kingdom, we are obligated to treat everyone as we would want to be treated. This week, ask God to give you wisdom, power, and a heart that will be open and accepting of *all* His children.

Reminder to Teacher: Global Youth Day is the third Sabbath in March. Have you started planning your Global Youth Day Service activity with your students?



STUDENT LESSON

YOUR OWN PREJUDICE Look Beyond the Barriers!

February 19, 2022

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ:** “The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 35-38

LOOK BEYOND THE BARRIERS!

Several decades ago, in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., an American teacher developed a simple classroom exercise to illustrate the power of prejudice to her students. She told the children that having blue eyes meant they were more intelligent, and gave greater privileges to the blue-eyed children. Very quickly she observed that the blue-eyed children were bullying and oppressing the

brown-eyed children, while those with brown eyes demonstrated fear and low self-esteem—even though she conducted the exercise for only one day! The next day, Ms. Elliot returned to her class and told the children that what she’d told them the previous day was untrue—it was actually brown-eyed children who were more intelligent and would have more privileges. The same experience happened in reverse—now the brown-eyed children began to oppress the others.

The experience opened students’ eyes—both blue and brown!—to the power of prejudice and the divisions we create between people. It is very wrong to divide people up on the basis of race, language, culture, religion, and many other categories. We should never make distinctions between people based on our differences, nor try to determine who’s “in” and who’s “out,” who’s cool and who’s not. Jesus saw past all those barriers. He chooses His followers from every race, culture, and background, and He asks us to look past those barriers too. A major part of being like Jesus is to accept others because Jesus loves each of us and wants to welcome everyone into His family.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Proverbs 28:21, GNT.
- » Is your school like Chapin High School was at the beginning of the school year? Do groups of people sit together and exclude others

from joining them? List the various groups in your school and what binds each group together. Do you belong to a group? Why or why not? What are the advantages and disadvantages of belonging to a group?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- » Read Romans 12:4, 5; Galatians 3:27-29; Acts 17:26, 27.
- » Even though God has created us unique and individual from others, we are still one in Christ. All of us are united in Christ as brothers and sisters. Just as we care for and love our families, we should care for and love our world family. When we see someone different than ourselves, we should realize they are a child of God and that He loves them. Our hearts should be touched, and we should treat them as we would Christ Himself.
- » How do I see and treat others that are different from me?

- » How can I show and share my love for God with others?

- » Fill in the missing words.

“ ‘Go therefore and make _____ of all the nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, _____ them to observe all things that I have _____ you; and lo, I am with you _____, even to the end of the ____.’ Amen”

(Matthew 28:19, 20, NKJV).

Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Acts 10:34, 35.
- » Although words such as *racism* and *sexism* (and in most translations even the word *prejudice*) aren't in the Bible, it's clear that God wants everyone to be treated equally. God gives us example after example of how to treat those members of society whom other members of society reject. This is so important to Him that it's even part of the law given to Moses.
- » Speaking of Moses, we see one clear example of prejudice in Moses' own family, when his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, spoke against Moses' foreign wife. Miriam paid for her unkindness with seven days of shame living outside the camp with leprosy.
- » Jesus confronted every -ism there was in the three years of His public ministry. Anyone was welcome to follow Him: women, children, tax collectors, old people, foreigners, those sick with contagious diseases, those who were crippled, and even traitors. He gathered around Him everyone that society said to avoid or ignore. Not only that, He told His disciples that it would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around their neck than to hurt someone He called "the least of these."
- » Prejudice is part of human nature, sometimes learned from our families, and absorbed from the society in which we live. But by God's power and grace we can become defenders, protectors, and friends to anyone.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks after looking up the texts

(if you don't have a particular version of the Bible, you can go to Biblegateway.com).

1. "But the wisdom from above is first _____, then _____, _____, _____, full of _____ and good _____, unwavering, without _____" (James 3:17, NASB).
2. "I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you _____ these things _____ prejudice, doing nothing with _____" (1 Timothy 5:21, NKJV).
3. "There is neither _____ nor _____, there is neither _____ nor _____ man, there is neither _____ nor _____; for you are all one in _____" (Galatians 3:28, NASB).
4. "Then Peter replied, 'I _____ very clearly that God shows no _____. In every _____ he accepts those who _____ him and _____ what is _____'" (Acts 10:34, 35, NLT).
5. "Jesus said to his disciples: 'Things that cause _____ to _____ are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a _____ tied around their neck than to cause one of these _____ to stumble'" (Luke 17:1, 2, NIV).
6. "To show _____ is not _____" (Proverbs 28:21, NIV).

7. "God sees not as _____, for _____ looks at the _____, but the LORD _____ at the _____" (1 Samuel 16:7, NASB).
8. "So you, too, must show _____ to _____, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of _____" (Deuteronomy 10:19, NLT).

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read 1 Timothy 5:21.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Now is the time in your life that friends are becoming the most important people (MIP) in your life. Soon they may even edge out your family for that position. This is also the time you are finding out who you are. That's difficult, because you are changing rapidly every day (maybe even every hour!). Since you are so focused on this task, it may be harder than ever to be around people who are really different. But you must, because that's the way life is.
- » Dealing with people from various backgrounds is necessary in a global society and a global church. Even though it's difficult, now is the time to look at what you've been taught about others and challenge those things you have found not to be true. Ask God to show you where you might have prejudices against someone or a group of people. Ask Him for the power to at least once a week seek out someone who is totally unlike you to interact with. Then stand back and watch Him work.

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read 1 Samuel 16:7.
- » Grab a pencil and finish the following sentences quickly, without stopping long to think about your answer. Put the first thing that comes to your mind.

Elderly people are _____

Immigrants always _____

Girls can't _____

When boys _____
_____ they _____

My country is _____

Other countries are _____

- » Now go back through and think carefully about your responses. Using a different-colored pen or pencil, change your responses to fit how an agent of the kingdom of God should respond. Realize that we often react to people and situations according to the way we have watched others react or the way we have been told to. That's not always the best way because in God's kingdom a different kind of thinking is needed. Ask God to live in you so that you can treat others as He does—without prejudice or favoritism.

