

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO

RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES



Connecting Parents, Teens & Jesus
in a Disconnected World

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How curious a land is this,—how full of untold story, of tragedy and laughter, and the rich legacy of human life; shadowed with a tragic past, and big with future promise!

THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK

BY W. E. B. DU BOIS

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A LETTER FROM AXIS

Dear Reader,

We're Axis, and since 2007, we've been creating resources to help connect parents, teens, and Jesus in a disconnected world. We're a group of gospel-minded researchers, speakers, and content creators, and we're excited to bring you the best of what we've learned about making meaningful connections with the teens in your life.

This parent's guide is designed to help start a conversation. Our goal is to give you enough knowledge that you're able to ask your teen informed questions about their world. For each guide, we spend weeks reading, researching, and interviewing parents and teens in order to distill everything you need to know about the topic at hand. We encourage you to read the whole thing and then to use the questions we include to get the conversation going with your teen—and then to follow the conversation wherever it leads.

As Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen point out in their book *Difficult Conversations*, “Changes in attitudes and behavior rarely come about because of arguments, facts, and attempts to persuade. How often do *you* change your values and beliefs—or whom you love or what you want in life—based on something someone tells you? And how likely are you to do so when the person who is trying to change you doesn’t seem fully aware of the reasons you see things differently in the first place?”¹ For whatever reason, when we believe that others are trying to understand *our* point of view, our defenses usually go down, and we’re more willing to listen to *their* point of view. The rising generation is no exception.

So we encourage you to ask questions, to listen, and then to share your heart with your teen. As we often say at Axis, discipleship happens where conversation happens.

Sincerely,
Your friends at Axis

¹ Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 137.

**NATIONS,
KINDREDS,
PEOPLE,
TONGUES**

IN APRIL OF 2019, the Pew Research Center released a report called "Race in America," which gave an overview of how Americans thought about racial issues in our nation. According to the survey, 58 percent of people say that race relations are going poorly. Fifty-six percent say that being Black hurts a person's chances of getting ahead in life, and 51 percent agree with the same statement regarding Hispanic people. Sixty-five percent of Americans agree that it's more common to hear people expressing racist views or sentiments than it used to be. Seventy-six percent of Black people, 76 percent of Asian people, and 58 percent of Hispanic people say they experience race-based discrimination "at least from time to time."¹

Add to that the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020, the increase

in violent crimes against Asian Americans in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the unethical treatment of immigrants at the border, and it's no wonder this has become such a massive conversation.

The purpose of this guide is not to give a definitive solution to the problem of racism, to give a history of racism, or to unpack every way racism may intertwine with our social systems today. At Axis, our goal is always to equip parents and caring adults with information and confidence to have conversations with the teens in their lives. We want you to be ready when the topic of racism arises, so this guide is based on a biblical understanding of what racism is and how we as Christians are called to respond to it. Our goal is for you to be able to create a

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space where you can talk about the difficult topic of race in a way that creates empathy and understanding in both your teen and yourself—and ultimately brings glory to God.

