

## Race and Communities – Conscious and Unconscious Biases

My road trip through the whitest towns in America by Rich Benjamin

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This is an older video, but I picked it because of the protests happening all across the country and wanted to couch them in a specific viewpoint – how we are a community. We make decisions both conscious and unconscious about the communities we live in, participate in, and seek out – yet how do we as Christians acknowledge who God has made us, and, acknowledge those of different races as also created by God.

Core Questions:

1. The community I live in, what would I label it – a whitopia similarly to what he is talking about in the video or something different?
2. How do you think Jesus wants us to form communities?
3. What ways can we acknowledge when we fall short and go towards God's vision of loving one another?

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. – Matthew 5:43-48

Admittedly not the best verse to talk about racism, even though there is a lot in the Bible about rethinking ethnic and social enemies (Good Samaritan, Greatest Commandment, Gospel of Matthew – Gentiles okay or not, etc.), this verse does point out something about what does it mean to love the way God wants us to love the world. Does it mean only loving the things one would find in a 'whitopia' since that is most comfortable and most like you? Obviously not, Jesus' challenge to us in being perfect revolves around loving in a way that is difficult and many times not our unconscious default.

Again, I would not make a 1-to-1 comparison of Jews and Gentiles and races in the United States; but, I would make a comparison that it is not up to us what love and acceptance looks like. God though Jesus Christ has outlined that for us, and honestly if we followed those teachings our communities in which we live would look much different. God sends the sun and the rain to both the righteous and unrighteous, it is not up to us who receives those things and who does not. When we look deep at what community values are a priority for us, we need to find at the top of the list love and acceptance of all.