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## A Prayer Guide for the Overlooked

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# CARL SPAIN CENTER

## RACE STUDIES & SPIRITUAL ACTION



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# Communities of Color

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"The ultimate logic of racism is genocide, and if one says that one is not good enough to have a job that is a solid quality job, if one is not good enough to have access to public accommodations, if one is not good enough to have the right to vote, if one is not good enough to live next door to him, if one is not good enough to marry his daughter because of his race. Then at that moment that person is saying that that person who is not good to do all of this is not fit to exist or to live. And that is the ultimate logic of racism. And we've got to see that this still exists in American society. And until it is removed, there will be people walking the streets and living in their humble dwellings feeling that they are nobody, feeling that they have no dignity and feeling that they are not respected."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., March 14th, 1968



What Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood when he uttered these words to a predominantly White audience in Grosse Pointe, Michigan just 3 weeks before he was assassinated was that, unless racism is made personal to us, it is likely that we will overlook its presence in our individual lives and the society around us. And if its presence is overlooked, we will never realize its logical end; genocide.

Like all sin, racism is a reminder of the lost and wicked origins of the heart of man. That apart from Christ, our souls are naturally depraved. For all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God (Rom. 3:23), there is no man who does not sin (1 Kings 8:46), If we say that we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8), and whatever does not proceed from faith is sin (Romans 14:23). It is with this understanding of our sinful nature and indwelling sin that the Christian can be certain; our heart is the site of a battlefield between the Spirit of God and the flesh (Galatians 5:16-18).

However, in this war, the Spirit of God has already won the decisive battle and is equipped to fight against any resurgence of resistance by the flesh.

(Galatians 5:24) In Christ we find freedom from sin. In this freedom, the work of the Spirit equips us to walk in the Spirit. And as we walk in the Spirit, we are commanded to bear the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5 13-23).

It should come as no surprise to us, then, after reading of man's sinful nature, that the sin of racism still persists in our world and is crouching at the door of the heart of every Christian. Dr. King was not surprised. He made this statement immediately following his description of Hitler's justification for killing 6 million Jewish people. His statement was a way to remove the racism buried deep in the hearts of those in attendance and cast it before them so that they may finally realize its ultimate logic was no different than that of Nazi Germany. In an effort to appeal to the individual's heart, Dr. King connected the individual sin of racism with the systemic. It should also come as no surprise that Dr. King ended his speech that night by merging the eradication of racism with faith. Much like we see with the merging of faith and the crucifixion of the flesh in Galatians 5. "With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope." Dr. King knew that the ultimate victor against the spirit of racism is the Spirit of God who equips those walking in the Spirit to bear the fruit of love in order to "transform the jangling discords of our nation into a symphony of brotherhood."

We are in the midst of a moment where it is far too easy to retreat into the comfort of our homes and gratify the desires of the flesh while overlooking the spirit of racism in our society and the needs of the vulnerable in favor of our own. The COVID-19 pandemic places communities of color in [grave danger](#) due to the generational legacy of racism in our country. Health disparities that disproportionately affect communities of color, inability to effectively practice social distancing as a result of income inequality, and increased [threat](#) of racial profiling when wearing protective masks are just a few of the factors that make communities of color even more vulnerable in this pandemic. Early data is already showing that [Black](#) and [Hispanic](#) Americans are facing alarming rates of infection and death while Indigenous communities brace for the continued spread to their own community. Communities of color also have an [increased vulnerability](#) to COVID-19 due to their tendency to live in closer proximity to [plants](#) and oil and gas [facilities](#) that increases their exposure to microscopic pollution.

All current [data](#) is pointing towards the need to keep communities of color at the forefront of the discussion regarding the pandemic, but the CDC has yet to release all nationwide racial data of those affected by the pandemic. For

communities of color, this lack of transparency on behalf of the federal government creates a great cause for concern and worry. In the midst of this pandemic, the people of God must respond to God's command to bear the fruit of love by using their prayers, voices and resources to stand in unity with communities of color who are being disproportionately affected by the virus and supporting efforts to protect the most vulnerable in our country. Condemning racism may not change the heart of the racist, though God has certainly done so before, but it will remind our brothers and sisters in communities of color that we see their suffering and stand with them.

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Prayer and Lament are not inaction, it's work. When we pray and lament, we do so to a sovereign, omnipotent and omniscient God. Over the next week, we encourage you to practice total stillness and silence while making your sorrow and requests known to God (Philippians 4:6-7).

Prayers for communities of color:

1. The Gospel would bring them comfort & hope in a time of despair.
2. Protection from the spread of the virus.
3. Quality healthcare for those who are sick.
4. Access to protective supplies.
5. Advocacy & transparency from city & government officials/agencies.
6. Relief from historic disparities perpetuated by racism.
7. Racial Unity in communities of color.
8. Continued support and advocacy from the church and the government after the pandemic ends.

Prayers for yourself:

1. That the posture of your heart would be humble & empathetic towards communities of color & their experiences.

2. For a desire to relieve all types of suffering on earth, especially eternal suffering.
  3. For opportunity to build relationships with those from other racial backgrounds.
  4. To better love those around you from different racial backgrounds.
  5. To advocate for people & communities of color around you.
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The Center aims to share its emphasis on scholarly research by providing materials, educational opportunities, and other relevant resources to any who have a desire to deepen their understanding on race and its function in the church and broader society. Each prayer guide we will include recommended readings that we believe will help inform the work we are doing at the Carl Spain Center and the work you are doing with us.

- [Galatians 5](#)
- **On Lament:** [Dare to Hope in God](#)
- [What The Racial Data Show](#)
- [What Coronavirus Exposes About America's Political Divide](#)
- [The Coronavirus's Unique Threat to the South](#)

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