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Recently I attended a church conference that was a gathering of different denominations that had a common theology involving Spirit-led ministry. I have been to multiple conferences over the years and this is the first one I can remember that tied the Great Commission to the Great Requirement and the Great Commandment, like a three-legged stool. The great commandment is to love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, body and soul, and your neighbor as yourself. We know the Great Commission, to take the gospel to all people groups. But the Great Requirement is probably the stumper. What does that mean? If you remember Micah 6:8, you remember we are to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with our God. So, we are to love God, love people, love justice, and take the gospel message to all nations. One speaker described this as proclamation and demonstration. We proclaim the gospel to the unreached and demonstrate the gospel by meeting needs. If you are on the charismatic bent, you meet physical needs and look for God to move in supernatural ways. This is a great way to look at the mission of the church. Without all three components, the stool is going to fall over. We often see the slogan "Love God, Love People" but what we don't see is "Love Justice" connected to evangelism and discipleship. Words and slogans are great visions, but what we do and where we put our money shows what we value. So, what does your church, what does your small group, what do you value? Does your mission reflect this simple statement: Love God, Love People, Love Justice, and Love the least of these. Jesus did not come for the healthy, but for the sick, and Jesus spent time with the least of these.

Recently, I attended a church conference that was a gathering of different denominations that had a common theology involving Spirit-led ministry. As part of the conference, I led a Race Relations Commission discussion with my friend Aaron Campbell. We spent an afternoon talking about a pathway to racial healing and unity. Our group of 15 shared different individual experiences with race and racism. For the people of color, they shared some painful memories, and our goal was unity and healing. At the end of the time together, we came up with a dandy dozen of ideas to move forward on that pathway. These are good points to ponder and apply in your life.

- 1) Love everybody regardless of skin color.
- 2) Speak out when you see racism. A pastor should speak out using the pulpit. Christians should speak out in the workplace or at their school or in gatherings with friends. Speaking out might cost you something. Pastors in churches are fearful to speak out because of what the congregation might say, so it is never easy to take a stand.
- 3) Know the history. Educate yourself about historical events. Read books. Read people of color. Read what other people say even if you don't agree with them. Behind critical race theory is a history of events, and if we don't know history, we will reinforce it or repeat it.
- 4) Work to change policies. We need more than individual conversations, we need to add systemic change. Form relationships with others to bring change. If you learn history, you will be exposed to policies that need to be reviewed and changed.
- 5) Gather with others to pray. Pray for what we say, when we say it, and how we say it. Pray we will do the right thing.
- 6) Move beyond education to experiences. Experience a relationship with a person of color. Experience being in a place where you are the minority. Experience discussions with people when your opinion is in the minority and where you are afraid to speak out. Experience gatherings that bring unity and healing. Experience praying with people of color and those who have a different viewpoint.

- 7) Develop entry points to relationships and gatherings. To move beyond education to experiences you have to start somewhere. Figure out where somewhere is, and how to make first steps to begin the process. You can't build unity without relationships. Pray for the Spirit to lead you to those you can spend time with. You invite friends into your home, so at some point, invite your new friends into your home. When they return the favor, you have made progress.
- 8) Look for the people in the middle. Racial discussions have two extremes. You may not be able to change anyone's mind on the extreme end of the spectrum. So look for people in the middle that are open to you.
- 9) Bring the church to engage these issues. On an individual level, you might be in the process of awareness, education, and engagement. And if you are doing this by yourself, why isn't your church leading the way? Talk to Elders and leaders and ask the tough questions. What is our church doing to bring unity and healing?
- 10) Touch the hearts of leadership. If the leaders are divided, how can we expect the congregation to follow? If your leadership needs a touch from the Lord, then you know how to pray.
- 11) Find people of peace to bring you into a colorful culture. These people will be a bridge to the community. They have trust that you don't have, and can vouch for you in a community that mistrusts outsiders.
- 12) Remember, my response is my responsibility. Don't worry about others, don't worry about your church, worry about yourself. Others may be further down the road, others may be behind you, but your job is to steward your time, talents, and resources where God is leading you.