

The Deeply Formed Life is a roadmap to live in the richly rooted place we all yearn for: a place of communion with God, a place where we find our purpose amid chaotic times.

Join us in exploring five practices that can spark internal growth and help us reconcile our Christian faith with the complexities of race, sexuality, and social justice.

This week's practice focuses on racial reconciliation for a divided world. We'll see how God's people in the Bible and through history have always been called to be bridge-builders, equipped with the power of Christ to overcome divisions and work for reconciliation.



Questions for Reflection:

- What spiritual practices have formed your life up to this point? Can you name any practices you want to grow in?
- Read this week's scriptures. Which words or phrases stand out to you? What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of these passages?
- How do you define the word racism? Has this definition changed over time?
- Do you agree that much of the West lives in societies marked by racial hostility? If so, when did you first realize that?
- In the book *The Deeply Formed Life*, Rich Villodas writes, "Reconciliation in community will always cost us something, and in Christ the barriers that separate us can come down in his name." What is God inviting us to sacrifice for the sake of reconciliation?
- Rich Villodas highlights seven habits or disciplines for racial healing to cultivate on the journey of being deeply formed: Remembering, Incarnational Listening, Lament, Reconciling Prayer, Racial Self-Examination, Renouncing Whiteness, Regular Confession/Repentance and Forgiveness. Which two habits are you most drawn to and why?

Adapted from *The Deeply Formed Life* by Rich Villodas

Spiritual Practice: Journaling

Journaling as a spiritual practice can be a creative way to spend time with God. In the pages of a journal you can record your prayers and reflect on scriptures, your life and faith journey. A journal can be a place to share your concerns, fears, and challenges as well as expressions of gratitude, celebrations and God Sightings, or ways you see God at work in your life or in the world. Journaling as a spiritual practice is less about the art of writing and more about connecting with God. One blessing of journaling is being able to look back at previous writings and discover evidence of your spiritual growth, new insight on scripture, comfort in how God is with you in challenging times, and ways you experience hope and faith in God.

Spiritual journaling also doesn't just happen with words. A spiritual journal can also be done using drawings and pictures, and photography. Use whatever creative means speaks to your soul and helps you to express your thoughts, prayers and feelings to God.



Try one or more of these suggestions to engage in the practice of spiritual journaling and racial reconciliation this week.

- **Practice 1:** Journal about the racial messages received from your family of origin. What are the conscious or subconscious messages that were handed down to you about Black, White, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Navitive people? How do these messages continue to influence you? (*The Deeply Formed Life*, pg. 228)
- **Practice 2:** Write a prayer of lament regarding racial injustice and hostility. Some questions to consider: What grief are you holding regarding racism? Where are you puzzled and disoriented over the matter? What sins do you need to ask forgiveness for? (*The Deeply Formed Life* pg. 229)
- **Love Your Neighbor Walk: Widening the Table** – A 15-day individual or group study designed to create dedicated time and space to delve into scripture and connect God's word to our social justice habits, particularly those dealing with issues of race, power, and leadership. Each day provides opportunities to reflect on scripture then select from a variety of activities such as reading an article, listening to a podcast or watching a video. Faith United's Love Your Neighbor Planning Team is indebted to the faithful work of the Stark County Dismantling Racism Task Force and their 15 Day Unity Challenge to Dismantle Racism in Stark County. [Click here to access Love Your Neighbor Walk readings.](#) Find more resources here: <https://www.myfaithunited.org/anti-racism/>
- **East Ohio Conference Multicultural Vitality resources** - <https://www.eocumc.com/multi-cultural/index.html>



Holy Spirit, illuminate the places in my own heart where I must grow in my compassion, awareness, or willingness for relationship with those different from me. In the name of Jesus, shape me as a minister of reconciliation. Amen.

(TDFL pg. 230)