

Kaleidoscope of Color: A Barrier Breaker and Bridge Builder

*By Brenda Thomas Jessee, DNP, FNP-BC, CDE, BC-ADM,
Assistant Professor for Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia*



The apostle Paul wrote in the New Testament, “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him” (Romans 10:12, NIV).

We are to love like Jesus. Because Jesus looked beyond people group or color, so should we. May we remember that as Christians, we are to imitate Christ and exemplify His love in each patient or person encounter. Jesus was the line crosser in reaching out to groups of people. He chose to connect with the wealthy and the poor, the widow, the married and the single, the woman who had had five husbands, the leaders and the tax collectors. He was the barrier breaker and the bridge builder. When we look at

Jesus' techniques of reaching the lost, He went to where the lost were. He did not cast stones or mock them. He expressed the truth to them with words and actions.

Hearing the Word

1. Read Romans 10:12 again. How does this verse describe how Paul responded to discrimination of the Gentiles (non-Jews) during his lifetime?

2. Read Zechariah 7:9-10. We see social injustice in many forms in this passage.

"This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other'."

What do justice, mercy and compassion look like? What do these qualities not look like? If you were to paint a picture of current events that resemble these concepts, what would be in your picture? When you hear these words--"justice, mercy, and compassion"--what images, behavior, or mindset come to mind?

3. Read Acts 8:26-40. Who did Philip, a deacon of the early church, lead to new life in Jesus? How might Philip and the Ethiopian official have been alike or different?

4. How would you respond if a coworker made fun of a patient due to race or culture, beliefs, or lifestyle? Who defines us or gives us value: social media, peers, mass media, our Creator?

5. Read James 1:27. What religion does the Lord accept? How might we protect ourselves from being swayed by popular opinion and news bytes?

Responding to the Word

We have a gift of reconciliation through Jesus to share in this lonely, isolated, and broken world. Ask God in prayer to make clear to you how to share this gift with patients and their families.

Reflect more on Romans 10:12. Ask the Lord, "How may I be a bridge builder?" Ask Him to reveal to you traces of racism, discrimination, or social injustice in your mind and heart. Confess these thoughts, values or mindsets and recognize that you are forgiven.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with the love of Jesus Christ in all you do. Consider this humble prayer and make it yours: "May the Lord change even me. May I be the start of change and may I be willing to break down walls and barriers to model Christ and build bridges to change our culture to model Christ."



Brenda Thomas Jessee, DNP, FNP-BC, CDE, BC-ADM • Assistant Professor for Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia

Dr. Jessee works full time as a nurse practitioner in endocrinology and internal medicine. She is also a pastor's wife of a large multi-site church, the mother of five children: three who are adopted (two African American siblings from Ethiopia and one child via foster care) and loves teaching.

Making a difference for the kingdom has been a high priority for Dr. Jessee. She sees nursing as a profession that has opened a great door for effective work" to serve our Lord and King (1 Corinthians 16:9, NIV). Her goal in life is to love the Lord and to serve where He leads.

Nurses Christian Fellowship is grateful to Dr. Jessee for her work and passion for the Word and for nursing.

All Scripture quotations are from The New International Version® NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.