

Small Group Study Guide

# REPARATIONS:

A CHRISTIAN CALL FOR REPENTANCE AND REPAIR

by Duke Kwon and Gregory Thompson



Suggested questions and supplemental resources for a 4-week study group of this important book. For use in churches or small groups.



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# Foundational Principles for Civil Dialogue Around a Contentious Topic

## FROM THE BIBLE

*"Speak evil of no one, avoid quarreling, be gentle, and show perfect courtesy toward all people." (Titus 3:2)*

*"Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19)*

*"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23)*

## OTHER PRINCIPLES

- Try to limit your comments to 2-3 minutes, so that everyone has a chance to speak. Feel free to ask follow-up questions so that we can have a true discussion.
- Some have a tendency to talk a lot, some to talk hardly at all. If you're the former, be sure others get a chance to speak. If you're the latter, please speak!
  - For all of us– don't cut each other off or dominate the conversation.
- There are no absolute experts here. We are all learning.
- Expect someone to say something disagreeable to you, perhaps even offensive. Listen well, listen to see what you can learn, and try to avoid getting personal in challenging someone else's thoughts.
- Keep the identities of people in the large or small group confidential and don't share someone else's story. We want this to be a safe place for people to share what they are actually thinking and feeling.

*Some of these principles are drawn from the ministry of Arrabon ([arrabon.com](http://arrabon.com))*



# Possible Template for a One-Hour Gathering

*Begin your time with a short moment of silence before opening in prayer.*

*Remind everyone of the ground rules for discussion and the challenges of engaging difficult topics together where people likely won't agree and many different perspectives will be represented (pg 1).*

*In-person: give a few minutes for people to arrive and get settled.*

*Online: as people enter the virtual space, let them share one word in the chat that may be on their hearts as they come into the weekly session. Ask them also to share their name and where they are coming from, if they would like to as well.*

**15-30 min prior:** Facilitators meet and pray for the time

**Start time (1-3 min):** Welcome and wait

**Opening (2 min):** Welcome; brief refresher on Ground Rules; opening prayer

**Ice Breaker (5 min):** Acknowledge that people will be coming from different places in this conversation

Let 2-3 people share briefly about their word for the week

**Weekly Overview (5 min):** Share an overview of the argument and major themes from this week's reading

**Small Group Discussion (30 min):** Limit of 6-8 people per group

We used different small groups each week.

Encourage the group to pick their own small group facilitator each week as well to help manage the discussion and uphold the ground rules for discussion laid out at the beginning

Provide each group the questions for discussion and encourage them to ask their own questions if they have them

**Large Group Reflection (12 min):** Reflect and share as people are comfortable

**Close (2 min):** Look to the week ahead; share any reminders; close in prayer



# WEEK ONE

Chapter 1: The Call to See

Chapter 2: Seeing the Reality of White Supremacy

*"I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary.  
The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not in common."*

Frederick Douglass on the 5th of July, 1852

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. (pg 42) "Racism is not incidental but elemental to American culture:" What does this mean, and how do you see it?
2. (pg 46) New identity: We are no longer simply "benedicted inheritors of a city on a hill." Rather, we are "inhabitants of a city that was built on the graves of broken children and beneficiaries of that breaking." Where do you see yourself in this context?
3. What do you think of the "irony that the fact those who have themselves most benefited from entitlement tools are also those who most frequently raise concerns about the bestowal of those tools upon African Americans is a fact that warrants moral reflection"?

## PROMPTS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What ideas from the section of the book we're discussing were new to you or stood out to you?
- What sorts of questions do you find yourself asking after reading this material?
- What do you feel invited to consider more deeply?
- Are you feeling led to take any sort of action?
- Any highlights from small group discussions that you'd like to share?





# WEEK TWO

Chapter 3: Seeing the Effect of White Supremacy

Chapter 4: The Call to Own

*“Where were all the legal and civil authorities of the country, to say nothing of the Christian churches, that they permitted such things to be?”*

Ida B. Wells

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **The centrality of theft.** (pg 74, and earlier) “At the heart of our case for reparations lies the claim that White supremacy is best understood as a massive, multigenerational project of cultural theft. In the name of White Supremacy, America stole Black bodies from their homes, stole the labor from their bodies, stole the fruit of their labors, stole the wealth of their fruit, and in the end stole the very memory of those it victimized from the annals of the earth.... If people truly see this theft, the work of reparations will be mandatory, not marginal.” What does this mean, and how do you see it?
2. **The church’s responsibility.** (pg 132) “Whose responsibility is it to address White supremacy’s centuries-long theft of African Americans?” [The church. Fifty years ago, when the call to take up this responsibility was issued, most churches demurred. The invitation was declined. The question remains whether in this generation Christians in America will respond differently. Will they - will we - finally see and own and respond to the call of reparations as a singular call to the church?] Where do you see yourself in this context and what does it mean?

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# WEEK THREE

Chapter 5: Owning the Ethic of Restitution

Chapter 6: Owning the Ethic of Restoration

*"When they sin in any of these ways and realize their guilt, they must return what they have stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to them, or the lost property they found, or whatever it was they swore falsely about. They must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day they present their guilt offering."*

*Leviticus 6:4-5*

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Reflecting on the Old Testament texts Leviticus 6:4-7 and Numbers 5:7-8 and the New Testament example of Zacchaeus, were the authors successful in convincing you of the Biblical foundation for restitution?
2. What does the work of restorative love look like practically? How can churches become communities of repair, taking up the work of reparations in our own communities?

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# WEEK FOUR

## Chapter 7: The Call to Repair Epilogue

*“The question is not, ‘If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?’ The question is ‘If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?’”*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike*

*April 3rd, 1968 (one day prior to his assassination)*

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do we become people capable of and committed to the reparative work of love? Is there an aspect that is particularly difficult for you?
2. Are you familiar with some examples of reparations? Please share - whether it's something you personally are undertaking or have seen/heard about.
3. Knowing we are all at different stages in the journey, what is the next step you feel that God is calling YOU to do in response to reading, engaging and praying about this subject?

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# RESOURCES FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

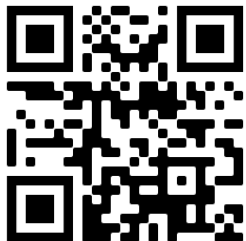
## FROM CORACLE



Scan with your smartphone to explore a helpful collection of essays, video and audio recordings, and recommendations to help you continue deepening your awareness of racial issues in America and steps we can take to bring Jesus' redeeming power to those places of brokenness.

[www.inthecoracle.org](http://www.inthecoracle.org)

## FROM THE REPENTANCE PROJECT

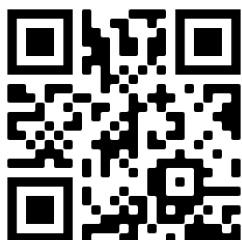


Scan with your smartphone to explore two very formative resources: "An American Lent" and "An American Lament." These 50-day devotionals immerse you in a prayerful, scriptural engagement with the wounds of America's racial past.

Great resources for someone just starting to explore this topic.

[www.repentanceproject.org](http://www.repentanceproject.org)

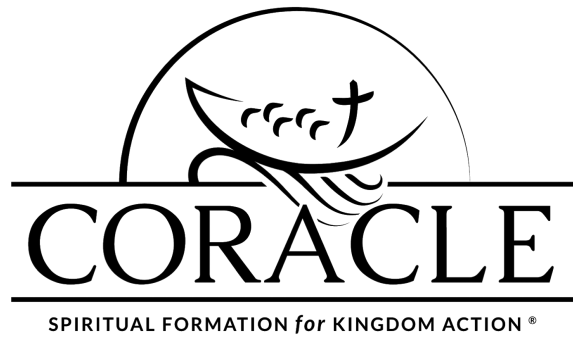
## FROM ARRABON



Scan with your smartphone to explore a variety of courses, devotionals, albums, and other resources for you and your church to grow as a reconciling community.

[www.arrabon.com](http://www.arrabon.com)





[Coracle](#) is a ministry that exists to inspire and enable people to be the presence of God in the brokenness of the world through Spiritual Formation *for* Kingdom Action.

Some of this happens at Corhaven, a retreat home in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia; some of it happens in the Washington, D.C. metro area and throughout the mid-Atlantic; some of it happens online across the country and around the world.

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- ❖ Personal and Group Retreats
- ❖ Spiritual Direction
- ❖ Corhaven Retreats
- ❖ Ministries for Reconciliation, Justice & Shalom
- ❖ Coracle Fellowship Program
- ❖ Community
- ❖ Pilgrimage
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- ❖ signing up for our [Coracle Weekly Newsletter](#) for a little soul-care delivered straight to your inbox
- ❖ getting in touch with us by emailing [info@inthecoracle.org](mailto:info@inthecoracle.org)
- ❖ exploring our [Website](#) and following us on Social Media [@inthecoracle](#)