

# Voices: As the hype of George Floyd dies down, persevere

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As an African American female, my social media feed always is full of names of unarmed African Americans whose hashtag didn't trend like George Floyd's. For my mental health, and not to feel hopeless about the world around me, I spend seasons disengaged from social media. I was on one of these breaks when the video of George Floyd erupted.

For the first two weeks after it happened, I didn't need to be on social media to be informed about it. My phone was riddled with messages from my white friends extending sympathy. I couldn't find that sympathy after [Atatiana Jefferson](#), a 28-year-old African American woman, was shot and killed in her own home 10 minutes from where I live.

Their sympathy didn't feel real or like they actually cared. Instead, it felt more like they needed a Black friend to console them and to prove they weren't racist. None of them actually sat me down to see how I really was doing, how I really felt.

After about two weeks, all the messages stopped. They had checked the box that proved they weren't racist, and then they continued about their lives.

It kind of feels that way with the whole nation. Every company proudly displayed the hashtag. Our churches had that one sermon about how racism is a sin. Maybe we even had that one conversation with a Black person or read that one book.

This is like giving a drop of water to a person with severe dehydration and expecting him not to die of thirst. One drop is not enough.

I'm afraid as the hype over George Floyd dies down, so will people's sense of urgency to face the tension caused by our racial history.

## **Repentance and real change**

There won't be real change until we first have a radical change in our lives—a gospel change. That kind of change caused the people of Israel to lament and willingly bear the sins of their forefathers.

The gospel atones for past, present and future sins. Repentance from sin is the beginning of allowing the gospel to take full effect in our lives. Repentance is an acknowledgment, not just of the action, but also of our selfish intention, and then turning away from it.

This cannot be a one-time event. We must repent continually, because our very nature is against God and because true change is found at the cross.

But we cannot have the cross without true repentance. And evidence of true repentance is perseverance.

For all who have made efforts to become more racially conscious during this time, I appreciate you, but if it doesn't last, if we go back to business as usual after we have done our good deed, then we must ask ourselves, "Did we really have a heart change?"

## **Repentance requires perseverance**

Here are a couple of suggestions on how to persevere.

First, be intentional. Most of the people I have talked to are in completely white spaces everywhere they go. Most of their co-workers are white, the people in their neighborhood are white, and the people at their churches are white. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, but it does keep us

from engaging in different people's perspectives.

With this reality, we are going to have to go to greater lengths to find people who don't look like us to engage with. This could mean going to Black-owned restaurants, working out at community centers with diverse populations, seeking a more diverse church or even moving to a more diverse neighborhood. Whatever is done, it's important to engage continuously.

Next is to be in continual prayer. This always is good, but particularly here, because God may be showing you some ugly things about yourself. People may call you out on various thoughts that previously were unchallenged. It may hurt, it may be uncomfortable, but it is good.

And last, never feel like you have done enough. I don't say this to "guilt trip" or to shame, but to keep you sober-minded. The task of reconciliation will not be complete until Christ returns—whether that be our being reconciled fully to Christ or to one another.

Christ already has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility, but on this side of eternity, we must be intentional to live like it. In eternity, we will see it.

We place our hope in the fact Jesus already has won, and we can be made one in him. As we weed through the discomfort and examine ourselves, we must trust Jesus already has finished the work.

To love one another is a command. It is how we live the gospel, and it is what it means to be the church. Let us persevere in such love.

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