



# **Do All Lives Matter?: The Issues We Can No Longer Ignore and the Solutions We All Long for**

*Wayne Gordon , John M. Perkins , Dick Durbin (Foreword) , Richard J. Mouw (Afterword)*

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**Do All Lives Matter?: The Issues We Can No Longer Ignore and the Solutions We All Long for** Wayne Gordon , John M. Perkins , Dick Durbin (Foreword) , Richard J. Mouw (Afterword)

Something is wrong in our society. Deeply wrong.

The belief that all lives matter is at the heart of our founding documents--but we must admit that this conviction has never truly reflected reality in America. Movements such as Black Lives Matter have arisen in response to recent displays of violence and mistreatment, and some of us defensively answer back, "All lives matter." But do they? Really?

This book is an exploration of that question. It delves into history and current events, into Christian teaching and personal stories, in order to start a conversation about the way forward. Its raw but hopeful words will help move us from apathy to empathy and from empathy to action.

We cannot do everything. But we can each do *something*.

## Do All Lives Matter?: The Issues We Can No Longer Ignore and the Solutions We All Long for Details

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# From Reader Review Do All Lives Matter?: The Issues We Can No Longer Ignore and the Solutions We All Long for for online ebook

## Christine says

Read in the context of visiting Lawndale, this book moved me to tears and a constant sense of awakening to a whole world of hope within hurt that is only 20 miles from "my world." A quick read, it begins to answer why all lives matter (because we are one human race created by God to be his image bearers and his beloved children), why all lives don't seem to matter (because of a history of entrenched racism where non-whites were "other" and therefore deprived of land, family and even their inherent sense of worth) and what we as individuals can start to do to truly foster the valuing of all human lives. Written from a Christian perspective and by an awe-inspiring pair of Christian Community Development pioneers, this book combined moving stories with meaningful suggestions. I only wished it was longer, but satisfied myself by reading other books of the same authors.

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## James says

Wayne Gordon, and John Perkins cofounded the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA). For decades they have been prophetic voices to the evangelical community, helping us tackle the problems of racism and economic injustice. In their new book, Gordon and Perkins answer the question *Do All Lives Matter?* SPOILER ALERT: their answer is *yes*; however they also showcase why the slogan *All Lives Matter* is a tone deaf response to the ***Black Lives Matter*** movement. "Simply Stated: *All lives can't matter until black lives matter.* . . True, all lives matter, but we have to wake up to the reality that our country remains divided over issues related to race. We have to own up to the fact that African Americans and other ethnic minorities in our country are mistreated far more often than most of us care to admit" (22).

Gordon & Perkins discuss the Black Lives matter movement and their protest of the recent rash of African Americans killed at the hands of police (Chapter one) They advocate 'listening to the stories of others and our own(chapter two).' Perkins shares his own journey and struggle against racism and injustice in the deep South. They review America's troublesome history of racism (chapter three) and the ways the struggles and experience of minorities is invisible to mainstream, white America (chapter four). In chapter five Gordon relates how he and his church community (Lawndale Community Church) in inner-city Chicago entered into the pain of the African Community after the police officer was acquitted in the Eric Gardner case. Chapter six discusses a Christian response to the Black Lives Matter movement and chapter seven gives a snap shot of how Lawndale has responded the problem of violence in their community. In chapter eight Gordon and Perkins provide practical suggestions for learning about injustice and working for social change. Chapter nine discusses the importance of hope in the face of structural evil and the problems that beset at-risk communities like Lawndale. Senator Dick Durbin wrote the forward and Richard Mouw writes the afterword.

Gordon and Perkins are trusted voices for me and I appreciate the way they take an honest look at the issues facing minorities in our country, particularly the Black community. They are unafraid to speak to the way public policy and the justice system (i.e. police departments, stop-and-frisk policies and the court system) have been detrimental and harmful to African Americans. That isn't to say they don't have a category for personal responsibility (racism isn't to blame for every problem) and they are quick to point out that many police officers are good and responsive to urban communities. This book isn't out to demonize anyone but to

help those of us who are white and privileged make space in our hearts for empathy towards minorities in our country for the things they are made to suffer.

It is often the progressives and the political left that is most responsive to issues of race. White evangelicals value diversity but we don't always do the hard work required for real reconciliation with the Black community. Gordon and Perkins have been doing this work for decades, investing in lives and communities, creating community partnerships and providing opportunities for economic development and systemic change. They are not armchair liberals. They are believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ who believe that it calls them to uphold the dignity of all people and to stand against injustice. This book makes vivid our troublesome historic and current national racial tension and challenges Christians to stand up for our African American neighbors. All lives matter, because Black lives matter. I give this four stars.

Note: I received this book from Baker Books in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Mark says**

I was a little disappointed with this book. While the title of it is Do All Lives Matter, only the last couple of chapters actually consider All Lives. A minimum of 18 times in this short book they refer to Black Lives matter, and the killing of African Americans by cops. While I absolutely think this is a terrible thing that has happened and needs to be addressed, Do All Lives Matter should be about all lives not just the African Americans killed by police officers. Nowhere in this do they talk about the huge number of African Americans killing other African Americans. Just this morning I heard about a toddler that was shot and killed when gang members were going after the child's uncle and was in the car at the time. Black officers also kill white people but it just doesn't make the news. Killing people is wrong. Period.

I think because of the title, I expected more of ALL LIVES MATTER. I do think we need more diversity in a lot of areas, even our friendships. Some of his ideas at the end are worth reading but overall I was disappointed.

I received this book free from Baker Books through Goodreads for my honest opinion.

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### **Mary Lou says**

Review: Wayne Gordon wrote Do All Lives Matter? “with a profound sense of urgency and determination to do something—to exercise whatever influence I might have to push back against the violence, the hatred, the intolerance, and the insensitivity that results in some people feeling insignificant, inferior and unequal—in short, feeling that their lives don’t matter” (Wayne Gordon & John Perkins, Do All Lives Matter?: The Issues We Can No Longer Ignore and the Solutions We All Long For, Baker Books, 2017, p. 16). One of the ways the Gordons are “doing something” has been to initiate the Lawndale Violence Alternative Training Program, teaching people new kinds of responses so their anger does not lead to violence (p. 69). It’s one of many pro-active ways their church models love instead of hate across cultural barriers. Gordon suggests additional specific approaches that are recommended for churches: “pray and discuss the prayers of St. Francis of Assisi,...build and cultivate relationships across ethnic lines,...allow the right books and movies to inform and inspire you [a number of books and movies are suggested], support restorative justice policies

and efforts...work with the police and leaders of your city or your community” (pp. 71, 73, 75, 78, 80). He pleads: “Please do what you can do proclaim to the world that all lives matter. Some may march and protest, some may pray, some may write letters, some may blog, some may write poetry and songs, it might be that some can only weep, but we all need to do something” (p. 82).

The heart-breaking racial divide in the United States has erupted with new intensity in recent times. Gordon and Perkins’ brief book addresses this pain and violence head-on but also offers ways to bring peace. As Perkins says, “There’s always a solution. We just have to resolve to get to it” (p. 29). Indeed. A timely must-read. 5 stars.

M.L. Codman-Wilson, Ph.D., 7/24/2017

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## **Julia says**

Do All Lives Matter? The Issues We Can No Longer Ignore and the Solutions We All Long For by Wayne Gordon & John M. Perkins is a rather short (85 pages) exploration of the quest to discover if all lives really matter. Based on the concepts behind the Black Lives Matter movement, this book identifies the roots of the movement and reveals whether those claiming that "All Lives Matter" are truly helping their own cause or missing the mark.

While I did find the statistics and back history of the ideas behind Black Lives Matter to be interesting, I did not find myself swayed to the authors' viewpoint that Black Lives Matter is a critical stepping stone before we can seek the notion that All Lives Matter. Why? Because the book doesn't address all of the negative actions that have been done in the name of the movement itself. Any time you have a movement or a cause, there will be people on both sides of the extremes. So while I found the authors' points to be interesting and partially relevant to today's issues, I did not feel as though it was enough to make me rally my support toward the cause with all of its current implications.

All of that being said, I do feel that this was well worth reading and would be time well spent for anyone interested in our current racial dilemmas that would like to better understand where the Black Lives Matter movement and concept are coming from. My only concern is that it doesn't really address where the concept is going as the younger generations step forward to take claim of it. 4/5 stars. In the end, while I understood why the authors say that the quest to prove that All Lives Matter must start by demonstrating that Black Lives Matter, I feel as though demonstrating that All Lives Matter is just as valid of a starting spot for those of us that have been down similar paths.

\*I received a free print copy of this book from Baker Books for the purpose of this honest review. All opinions are my own.\*

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## **Jessica says**

This book teaches you why Black Lives Matters MATTERS, and how to go deeper than the hashtag and get to know people who have been hurt and strive for reconciliation. This book is honest as it goes into both history and current events, real people, experiences and ideas for trying to move forward together- one person at a time, one community at a time, one conversation at a time.

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## **Dan says**

#BlackLivesMatter

#AllLivesMatter

These hashtags have been used by many to call attention to an issue. This issue has its roots in American history. This issue at one time threatened to divide our nation. This issue simply stated is this: all people should be treated equally.

Sadly, this is not the case. The color of skin has been a method by which people are judged and then treated. Pigmentation causes prejudice to show itself in some people. A skin tone is seen to be the factor that gives license to malign, mistreat, and injure someone.

In their book, *Do All Lives Matter?*, Wayne Gordon and John M. Perkins look into the issues of race relations, the recent history of race-related tragedies, and how to reconcile a shattered relationship between dark skin and light skin.

I found this people to be an insight and engaging. The book is open about the distrust that exists. It also gives hope that the shackles of racism can be unlocked and freedom to see each other as a brother or sister is available. We need to work towards it; one life at a time.

\*I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Laura (Book Scrounger) says**

Wayne Gordon and John M. Perkins have written a timely and important book for the church (evangelicals in particular), in which they aim to address issues of racial reconciliation within the framework of the current racial violence and responses in our country.

This is not a very long book at all (92 pages) — it could easily be read in one or two evenings. In many places it attempts to skim and summarize important issues that we should probably all pursue further reading on. Still, if you have found yourself wondering why we need the slogan “Black Lives Matter,” why the phrase “All lives matter” rings hollow to many, and what role the church can/should play in all this, this book is well worth reading.

The authors bring many decades’ worth of experience to the table: John M. Perkins has been fighting for civil rights his entire life, and has been on the receiving end of terrible violence and injustice, as some of his other books describe more thoroughly. Wayne Gordon felt called to move to a high-crime area of Chicago and pastor a church there, and has been ministering there for forty years. Both men have worked in multicultural environments for a long time.

I’m going to just provide summaries and a few observations on each of the chapters:

1: This chapter introduces some of the reasons why “all lives matter” has not been achieved in our country, highlighting some of the cases of police brutality that saw a lot of media attention within the past few years, and emphasizing that simply saying “all lives matter” in some contexts comes across as a denial of reality.

2: John M. Perkins tells the short version of his life story here, emphasizing the need to listen to other people’s perspectives if we truly want to understand what is important to them and why.

“So where do we go from here?” he asks at the end. “The apostle Paul said ‘Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ’ (Gal.6:2). Somehow, it all comes down to mutual love and respect for one another. Period. We must have enough love to reach out and feel the pain of others, bear it in ourselves, and look to Christ for resolution. As the called-out ones—the body of Christ, the church—we should be the model for that.”

3: Here the authors provide a brief overview of the many ways that our country has, throughout its past, not just once or twice but systematically, oppressed and marginalized entire groups of people. We have made an awful lot of progress and come a long way, but there is still far to go. They emphasize that it is not “unpatriotic” to critically analyze our country’s past—in fact, it is necessary if we truly want to understand “where we’re at” today.

4: It is not surprising that “big things” like acts of violence communicate to people that their lives don’t matter. But there are other ways that happens too—when African Americans are ignored, or treated like their contributions are not as important as others’. This may not always be intentional, but it still has a cumulative effect nonetheless.

5: This chapter tells the story of how several churches came together to find common ground after feeling the demoralizing effects of violence. To someone like me from a rural, northern, predominantly white Baptist church, the idea of a church participating in a protest that blocked traffic and praying for peace in their district seems hard to identify with. I don’t know many churchgoers who’ve felt the need to participate in a protest, unless it was against abortion, so this section was particularly eye-opening to me—a great picture of how churches can engage the pertinent issues in their communities, and inspiring when the police officers who could have arrested them instead joined them in prayer.

6: Here the authors contend that most of the primary objectives of the Black Lives Matter movement are not at odds with Christianity—that we all want more peaceful communities, and we all want to be treated like our lives matter.

7: Wayne Gordon shares the role that grief and empathy can play in entering in to the pain of others.

8: This chapter gives some practical advice for ways to “sow love,” and “demonstrate the conviction that all lives matter,” both individually and as a community. #1 is praying the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, which I thought was a wonderful idea. There are suggestions for movies and further reading that can help us see from other perspectives (including some of the authors’ previous books, as well as “The New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander, which I also recommend).

9: This chapter encourages us to hold on to hope in whatever we do.

Like I said, this book is short and tries to cover a lot of topics while sharing personal stories, all in a short space. I think it does a good job speaking to what it set out to, but I think it works best as a gateway to other reading.

Disclosure: I received this book free from Baker Books through the Baker Books Bloggers [www.bakerbooks.com/bakerbooksbloggers](http://www.bakerbooks.com/bakerbooksbloggers) program. The opinions I have expressed are my own, and I was not required to write a positive review. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/wa...>

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## **Joan says**

We may feel powerless as we see society becoming more violent, especially in racial areas. The authors have written this book to help change that direction of society. "The time for building a culture of peace and respect to replace a culture of violence and hatred is now." (17) They want to get people talking, coming together to find new understanding with a view to healing what divides us.

They give examples of how being black in America can be dangerous. They also review the mistreatment of Native Americans and women. This is a good section and offers a great deal of background for those who do not understand the racial tensions of today.

The authors admit it is not an easy journey. They explore the biblical basis of how we are to treat each other. They look at the roles the church and individual Christians are to have in the healing process. They give many practical suggestions, leading to changed hearts and the resulting actions. The idea is to bring people to the place of relating to others well because their lives matter. Some good examples of people who have made a difference are included.

This would be a good book to read with a group. I would recommend it to church boards and professionals. It is a good book to get people talking and thinking about what can be done in their community. It is short and not intimidating.

Food for thought: "Please do what you can to proclaim to the world that all lives matter." (82)

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. My comments are an independent and honest review.

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## **Paul C. says**

Authored by pastor Wayne Gordon and civil rights activist John M. Perkins, 'Do All Lives Matter?' delves into the raging topic of racism towards black Americans as well as police brutality. A very short read, the authors note the need for action to be taken in communities in order to improve police-civilian relations, in order for officers and individuals in their community to understand one another better.

The authors throughout note that not all police-shootings of black men are race-related, and at a few points in the book police are honored, especially those killed as a reaction to police shootings of black men, making it clear that the authors do not stand for violence done to police. While the authors are outraged towards racism of today they remain resilient that though action is needed, it is to always be nonviolent.

A high point of the book for me was when the authors spoke against homogeneity, speaking into the need for us to emerge from our bubbles, cultural or otherwise, to experience life in different perspectives. I was



overjoyed at them speaking into the need for democrat and republican individuals to seek out relationships with those in the other party so as to avoid only hearing one perspective. To cultivate friendships and regularly discuss their differences as well as accept each other, unrealistic (unfortunately for many) as this may seem.

A critique I have would be that the “solutions” offered towards the book feel to inadequately respond to a complex issue. A big issue for me was also the size of the book; it’s so small that it really felt more like a pamphlet in my hands than an actual book. I just checked Amazon where the book is listed at \$7.64. As cheap as that is for a new book, the word and page count is extremely low. I don’t think that’s the best idea for a subject as controversial and multi-faceted as this one.

If I were to recommend a book on this topic I would recommend John M. Perkin’s *Dream With Me* (Baker, 2017) which I feel bests ‘Do All Lives Matter’ in quality of style as well as in solutions proposed.

\*I received my copy from Baker in exchange for an honest assessment.

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### **Mariejkt says**

"Do All Lives Matter?" by Wayne Gordon & John M. Perkins is about race issues we are still facing to this day in American and in the church. This was such a powerful book that I had to take my time with it as there was so much to digest from it. This is a little book that is very powerful at explaining the racism still going on in America and in the church even to this day. Also it talks about what we can do about it. It explains not just the obvious racism but some of slight of hand type racism that is out there like ways some will on purpose keep others down. This was a very powerful book and I highly recommend it.

I was given this book from Baker Books for free and was not required to give a positive review.

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### **Jeremy Gardiner says**

I picked up this book because I'm genuinely interested in learning from the other side. I wanted to hear their own view and perspective, in their own words. On the positive side, I appreciate the holistic overarching goal of "all lives matter," because we're all of one race and made in the image of God. Amen. I can also understand why using the phrase in response to "black lives matter" comes off as a protest and dilutes the message. Point taken. However, as the book went on it got worse. They were supportive of feminism and organizations like N.O.W, they proposed horrible solutions like churches walking out of their services to protest and blocking traffic (something they did numerous times). They also uncritically endorse the Black Lives Matter movement which has as its guiding principles: "queer affirming" and disruption of the "nuclear family" (see their "what we believe" page). Additionally, every death mentioned in the book was just assumed that race was the issue, not considering it might have been other factors. This conversation on race needs to happen and as Christians we all stand united against racism. The problem is we might not agree on the best way to solve it.

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## Aaron says

Book Review - Do All Lives Matter by Wayne Gordon & John M. Perkins

All true Christians will affirm the idea that black lives matter. To deny this is to deny the unique place that human beings have as the only image-bearers in his creation. To affirm that someone's life matters less than another's is to affirm a belief that is foreign to the teachings of scripture. Setting aside the movement for a moment, if we simply assess the statement that black lives matter from a biblical perspective I don't believe that you can hold a contrary view while having the Spirit of God within you. Those who are truly born of God will absolutely affirm that people of all color have equal worth before the face of God. So why is it then, when a people who have been oppressed in our nation want to declare a truth that we all agree upon, that many conservative Christians retort with "all lives matter"? This is a question that has been haunting me since the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement took root in our nation. Wayne Gordon and John Perkins explore these issues from a biblical perspective and the result is a book that touches on real life issues and answers them responsibly from a biblical framework.

I would agree with the authors when they say that "All lives can't matter until black lives matter". After all, to negate the latter is to, out of necessity, negate the former. To understand the rise of the BLM movement we need to go beyond Ferguson and even beyond Trayvon Martin. The message that black lives don't matter goes back many years. The message, whether intentional or not, is deeply ingrained in the history of our nation. Despite the tremendous steps that we have taken in overcoming racism, the ripple effects are felt in every facet of American culture. Sometimes these ripples are barely noticeable and at other times they appear as a giant tidal wave. The truth is, no matter how imperceptible the message may seem to us, it is a message that is ever present and always before the eyes of those affected by it.

Do All Lives Matter is a book that has caused me to think deeply about these issues all over again. This journey started for me when I was in high school. One of my best friends was biracial and despite being equal parts black and white his entire life was spent being identified as a black man. I clearly remember the day that him and his older brother got into an argument over his choice to date a white girl. His brother called him out by telling him that he needs to date "his own kind" to which my friend responded, "which one is my own kind? We're just as much white as we are black". The point that my friend was making was that he was both black and white and yet the expectations that society (even his own brother) put on him was that he was expected to "act black". Why? Well the only thing that I can think of is that the color of his skin predetermined what people expected of him. I didn't fully grasp the significance of this vignette until recently when I heard Voddie Baucham point out the inherent racism in calling President Obama black rather than biracial. The thing that struck me many years ago was that I didn't even bat an eye when my friend's brother referred to him as black. If someone were to ask me what color he was I would have said he was black. Is this fair? Probably not. How many times prior to that encounter had I projected an entire set of expectations and assumptions upon someone simply due to their skin color? How many times since then have I continued to do so? By doing this, are we sending an unintentional message that the color of someone's skin determines the extent of which they matter?

Fast forward about 12 years and my journey to figure out my role in reconciliation continues. I remember sitting in my car with a friend. He was a guy that from all appearances was comfortable in his own skin. But that day when we were having lunch and talking about what God was doing in our lives that week, he made a shocking revelation to me. Fighting back tears, he said that sometimes he just looks down at his skin and wishes he could wash it off. That statement hit me hard. Everyone loved him and I couldn't imagine someone ever making him feel as if his life didn't matter simply because of his skin. And yet, here he was confessing to me that despite many years of God working in his heart to love the way God created him, he was

constantly aware of his skin color. For some reason, despite being accepted and loved by so many white people, he saw his skin color as a deficiency and felt the sting of his life not mattering as much as other lives.

So how does this relate back to the book? After all, this is a book review and not an account of my own history of struggling through these issues. This would be a fair observation. However, I don't want to simply say a few good things about *Do All Lives Matter*, I want to give an example of how the book has helped me to resolve some issues that I have been thinking through personally. This book is absolutely worth buying and absolutely worth reading. The chapters written by Perkins lend particular weight to the discussion as he recounts his own experiences with racism and feeling as if his life doesn't matter as much as others. What this book has helped me to realize is that there are ways in which we all contribute to the lie that some lives don't matter as much as others. Whether intentionally or not, our behavior when interacting with others communicates a message of value. Should I have to go out of my way to ensure that the person I'm speaking with knows that I value and cherish them as a human being and member of the human race? Well... no. Nobody should be put in a position to do something against their will. But then again, why wouldn't I want to do all that I can to let a person know that he matters in my eyes and in the eyes of his creator? Especially someone who has been told his entire life that his life doesn't matter. Love dictates that this is the best way to live life and it doesn't cost a dime to treat someone with dignity and respect.

Where to purchase

**Amazon** | **ChristianBook.com** | **Baker Publishing**

This review first appeared at [www.teleiaphilia.com](http://www.teleiaphilia.com)

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## **Amy Langmaack says**

When I picked up this book, I was hoping for a little bit more exposition on what the Bible says about the issue that all lives matter. Instead, this book focused on personal stories and experience, which, while they carry a lot of weight to them, are not the basis for why we, as Christians, believe that all lives matter.

I found the explanation of the Black Lives Matter movement informative. But I finished the book, still not understanding why the movement focuses solely on black lives. The beginning of the book argues that all races matter. But then says that Black Lives Matter is the movement to support.

I wish more time would have been taken to unpack what the Bible says about emphasizing the importance of caring for our neighbors. And I wish the chapter detailing the steps to what we can do practically would have been more in depth.

This book seems to be a good start to the conversation, but much more must be read beyond this book in order to understand it more comprehensively. Or, as the book suggests, conversations with those of other races should be engaged in.

I received a copy of this book from Baker Books. This review is my own honest opinion.

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## **Gail says**

Short and simple, but not simplistic. Most of it should go without saying, but sadly it doesn't, which is why the authors wrote this book with a sense of urgency. It's a place to start and provides recommended resources to go deeper. White America needs to acknowledge that throughout our history and still today we have given blacks the message that their lives don't matter, at least not as much as ours. White Christians, at least, should be able to humble ourselves enough to acknowledge this. I had the privilege of hearing co-author, Dr. John Perkins, preach his message of love and reconciliation just before I read this book. White law enforcement in Mississippi brutality demonstrated that neither his life nor his brother's mattered to them, but God's love taught him otherwise.

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