

# *Reading While Black by Dr. Esau McCaulley, questions for discussion*

## Week one: Chapters One and Two – Black Interpretation and Policing

- 1) What do you think it means for churches and individuals that black ecclesial interpretation has been left out of major seminaries and courses of study? How has the community in which you were raised impacted your interpretation of the Bible?
- 2) Did you see connections in the way black experience has been left out of the reading of scripture with the content of Color of Compromise - for those who read both? What connections do you see between the history and the hermeneutics?
- 3) Have you been part of a black church at any point? What do you think those of other cultural identities can learn from the black church experience?
- 4) Dr. McCaulley makes a biblical case for police reform. Why do you think this isn't a theological issue for many Christians? Do any other biblical examples of policing come to mind? Did this chapter change or inform your view?

## Week two: Chapters Three, Four, and Five – Politics, Justice, and Identity

- 1) Dr. McCaulley made the case that strengthening the voice of the black church in Biblical interpretation is a separate question from liberal/conservative theology. What thoughts do you have about that?
- 2) What thoughts do you have about the role of the church in politics having read Ch. 3? Can you think of examples of times the church ought to stay out of politics and times when it ought to be involved? How do you navigate these tensions as a Christian who is politically aware?
- 3) Is there a difference, in your mind, in what individuals ought to do and what the church corporately ought to do about justice? Does Luke indeed give us the resources to speak about the creation of a just society?
- 4) Have you ever studied the African presence in the Bible? What do you think the role of culture and ethnicity is in church?

## Week three: Chapters Six, Seven, and the Bonus Track – Anger, Slavery, and Additional Resources

- 1) Dr. McCaulley talks about black rage in Ch. 6. What are your thoughts about Psalm 137 as "trauma literature"? Did you connect to the idea of reading the scripture as a record of the traumatized?
- 2) Have you ever been angry or disappointed with the church? What resources have you turned to? What other examples in scripture come to mind of the church failing to live up to its calling and how is that handled in scripture?
- 3) Having read chapter seven, and Tisby's book for those that did, how do you make sense of the fact that there was Christian support for slavery? Dr. McCaulley emphasizes the character of God in his reading of scripture, as well as looking at some passages as attempts to limit sin rather than permit certain activities. What are your thoughts on his method of reading scripture as he discusses the scriptural stance on slavery?
- 4) What do you think the "white church" is missing by leaving out black interpretation and experience? What have you learned from this book that you didn't already know? Has it inspired you to read more, or find more resources on this tradition? If so, please share what those are.