

# Love

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

*John 15:13 (NRSV)*

Let's be honest, this is uncomfortable. We were not created to live in the tension of a world that does not see each person as equal. We were not created to live in the tension of a world that does not honor the image of God in each person. We were not created to live in the tension of a world where the oppressed are portrayed as less than human. We were not created to live in the tension of a world that allows a brother to kneel on the neck of his brother. We were, however, created for love. As Jesus prophesies about his own crucifixion, he reminds us that holy love is embodied by sacrificial discomfort. It's okay to feel uncomfortable when we recognize our own biases held beneath the surface of our hearts. It's okay to feel uncomfortable when confronting racial insensitivity in our friends and family members. Bearing the weight of sin is full of discomfort, just ask Jesus! He, too, was uncomfortable on the cross. But sacrificing our comfort for the sake of the healing and restoration of our brothers and sisters in the black community is an act of love. In fact, it is an act of the greatest love. In sacrificing our comfort in self-reflection and conversation, we honor the lives of our black brothers and sisters and participate in their freedom from oppression. That surely sounds like the great and holy love of Jesus.

## *action*

Search me, God, and reveal to me any subconscious bias I may be holding beneath the surface of my heart. Forgive me for holding onto my bias for so long and rid me of it please. Help me to better see your image reflected in the faces of people of color. Forgive me for the moments I haven't spoken up or confronted racial insensitivity when faced with it. Lord, give me the courage to speak out against these things and hold loving, corrective conversations with those in my circle of influence who say racially insensitive things. Help me to find comfort in the discomfort, that I may love others better than I ever have before.

If you feel tempted to bow out of a difficult conversation, take a deep breath, stay and listen for a while. Pray in the midst of the conversation. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you some insight on God's perspective and courage to maintain the discomfort. Actively practice thinking of discomfort as sacrificial love.

