

Session 5—Building Bridges

The Skin You Live In

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NOTES:

Introduction: Arpita Pani from India on “the skin she lives in”: found a small interracial church ... Hungarian friend taught her how things work here.

• Be different than your forefathers.

- **Judges 6:25-32**—God asked Gideon to tear down his father’s idols
- “Our father’s idols/bulls” might refer to any cultural idea or belief or practice that is unbiblical; consider perspectives, values, practices, philosophy, worldview, feeling, biases, etc.
- To build healthy cross-cultural relationships, what might we have to set aside?

• Allow God and others to challenge and destroy your prejudices.

- **Philippians 3:4-8**—Paul admits his cultural/ethnic idols and sacrifices them to knowing Christ
- Not necessarily bad people or bad things, but they may not capture God’s full picture
- May need to become secondary so that Christ and His kingdom values can be central

• Place your culture/race below Christ.

- Ethno-centric: pride myself on my ethnicity, the brand I lead with, which often excludes others and Christ. (“I’m a black Christian.”)
- Ethno-conscious: I’m aware of my ethnicity, but I don’t lead with it. (“I’m a Christian, who happens to be black.”)
- Even bad things can be used for good.
- EX: KKK garments torn up for bandages

• Five practices that build bridges & healthy cross-racial relationships

- **Act neighborly**—be friendly to those in your geographical area
- **Share common interests**—go where things are happening that you like
- **Be warm and inviting**—invite others home for social happenings
- **Offer mutual respect**—show interest in their world by asking questions



- **Respond with kindness**—show love



REFLECT and DISCUSS:

Take some time for individual reflection. Then discuss these questions:

1. How would you describe the view of ethnicity held by your parents and family? How comfortable are you with that view now?

2. Re-read the story of Gideon from **Judges 6:25-32**. What are one or two family “idols” you might have to tear down in order to build bridges across racial or other differences?

3. Re-read Paul’s “pedigree” from **Philippians 3:4-10**.
 - a. If we could ask Paul what “idols” he had to tear down in order to become God’s missionary to the Gentiles, what might he tell us?

 - b. What if he had not been willing to sacrifice his “confidence in the flesh”? How would that have impacted the spread of the Gospel?

4. Give some examples from what you see in the media about people who are ethno-centric.

5. The Navigators is a global, multicultural, multiracial ministry, and we want to become even moreso.
 - a. What are some things we must be sensitive to that a mono-racial ministry doesn’t need to pay attention to?

 - b. What skills do our staff (and especially our leaders) need to have?

 - c. What small sacrifices should we be prepared to make?

6. Let’s get practical. Review the five practices that build bridges, asking what small steps you could take in the next month to implement them.
 - a. I could act neighborly by . . .

 - b. I could share common interests by . . .

 - c. I could be warm and inviting by . . .

 - d. I could offer mutual respect by . . .

 - e. I could respond with kindness by . . .

