



Little Girl at the Park:

A few years ago, I brought my girls to our neighborhood park to play. A young girl, maybe 8 or 10 approached me. She had a lot of questions:

How come my kids were black and not white like me? (I could not possibly be their mom.)
Where did we come from?

Her teacher said that all people with black skin live in poor areas of the world. What were we doing there?

My girls repeatedly asked her to play with them and she refused. Her parents, in ear distance, listened on with indifference.

I tried to answer her questions with grace, knowing that as the 3% of Arizonans that are black, we might be the only opportunity to pour into her a different view of black people. She was pretty adamant that we did not belong there and I should not love my precious girls.

I also had to answer a lot of questions from my girls and teach them to keep their hearts soft toward all people (again).

My Lament:

God, we love you and are trusting you for what you are doing in our world today. But my heart is breaking for young people who are hearing messages that any people group are less than another. My heart is so heavy over the prejudices that my family, and all black people in America face every day.

I know you made us all precious in your sight and in your image. Help us to carry that message out in a grace filled way that will change the environment for those who are minorities.

I pray for parents and teachers, any people that have the power to influence young minds to pour in messages of equality, love and mutual respect. I pray that they will stand up for any child being racially bullied.

I pray that we teach our children how to treat each other better. I pour out all of my hurt over those that are indifferent or are purposely teaching children to hate. I pour out praise for those that are teaching your ways.

All these things I am lifting to your ears, because I know you are a God who hears our cries.

Meant to Put us Down:

We were newlyweds traveling through the Midwest to visit family. We stopped to get gas as I got out to stretch my legs a truck with several young men speeds right by us yelling “Nigger Lover!”

I passively aggressively leaned over to kiss Emil (they couldn’t get the best of me!!) as angry hot tears started to stream down my face. We quickly finished getting gas to get back on the road for fear they may come back.

I was 23. Even though small racist things had been happening for the 3 years before that while I was dating Emil, nothing was that overt before that. As we got in the car Emil said it had been happening to him his WHOLE LIFE. I was horrified and angry that anyone would put down my husband without even knowing him. I finally began to understand my white privilege and how hard the struggle with racism is. It is hard to hear messages meant to tear you down day after day.

I married Emil because he is such a good man. Loves God, his family, and works hard to care for the people around him. The fact that someone would call him a name to put him down infuriated me.

But Emil is NOT an exception to black men. There are SO MANY wonderful black men that work hard to make this a better world every day. But out of fear or insecurity these young white men were seeking to tear them (him) down with their words.

Half of what the young men said is true! I do love him. I couldn’t help but love him and nothing that they said could tear that down. But isn’t that just like Satan? To use half-truths to try to divide us?

Right now there is a lot of mis information, people only seeing half of the sides or half of

the truths... and it is dividing us. It's time to come together as a nation against the injustices that divide us.

My Lament:

God how long will we look the other way while people in our nation are hurting? How long will we believe and concentrate on half-truths? How long will we allow people to be bullied and torn down?

God it isn't fair for any people group to be put down! We know we are precious in your eyes! When will this change? Lord, I see you at work in the hearts of our nation right now! God please continue to change our hearts and heal us! Help us to love each other and love you in the right ways!

Help us to use words and truth to build each other up. Help us to understand that we never stand taller when we put each other down. But we all stand tall when we lift each other up!

God we are trusting you to reveal half-truths, to show us where we have gone wrong. We trust you Lord to heal hearts that have been broken over and over and to open the eyes of the people who have been blind to it.

We trust you to heal our nation!

Attack in the Grocery Store:

This week my youngest daughter Janiya and I went to the grocery store to grab some food. Janiya was joyfully pushing the cart begging for sweets.

An older lady clearly looking agitated and frustrated passed by our cart and looked at her and said "Stupid Black..." under her breath.

This mama bear wanted to take out this older lady! These kinds of attacks come out of nowhere. It leads someone to never feel safe. To always feel on guard. How would you feel if you were "surprise attacked" all the time? Throughout history we see oppressed people groups rise up over and over, because they need to feel safe.

Janiya is 12. She should only be worried about what sweets she wants to beg for in the grocery store.

My Lament:

God how long will I need to explain to my children to soften their hearts when hard hearts are still raining down hate? Why O God does it seem like we always have to do right while people with hate in their hearts try to tear my children down? How long will we need to protect ourselves from attack?

I pray Lord that people will stop and examine their thoughts and ways. That we would once again be a nation that is the shining beacon for freedom, justice and loving our neighbor.

I pray for resilience in our generations. That we could bounce back from some of the hate and be ready for true heart change.

I pray we would love God in the right ways and that would lead us to love each other in right ways.

Lord help us to stand up for ourselves in peaceful and helpful ways. Please take the anger and hurt and use it for good and change!

God, help the conversations to continue and real change to happen. Don't let this just be a passing fad as we move on to the next issue of the day. Move our hearts Lord!

*As of the date of this post Jennifer has shared 7 experiences as well as her 7th prayer of lament.

