



## ***Black Dad. White Dad.***

June 19, 2022

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NRSV)*

### **Connect**

- It's Father's Day and Juneteenth all at once! Father's Day is a day to celebrate our fathers and the father figures in our lives. Juneteenth, just a year into its designation as a Federal holiday, celebrates the notification in 1865 to the final slaves who were enslaved in Texas, of the Emancipation Proclamation which freed all slaves. Discuss both occasions and your association with them.

### **Engage**

- Read *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*. This passage is the basis for "*The Shema*" – a daily prayer in ancient Israelite tradition. *Shema* is the Hebrew word for "*Listen*" which is the word used to begin the passage. In terms of its grounding nature and widespread use, The Shema is the equivalent of the Lord's Prayer to Christians. It is a formative part of Jesus' life and ministry and what he answers, in part, when asked "*What is the greatest commandment?*" It is attributed to Moses and is encouraged to be shared with generation upon generation and a part of every daily conversation. Speak to the power you find in this passage and how you feel it may be valuable to repeat daily as our Jewish siblings do.
- DeMarko and Mark shared vulnerably about the differences they experience in the world as a black and white dad, respectively. Some have talked about the "*black tax*" – that a person of color has to be "*twice as good to get half as far*" in society. How do you experience or witness biases based on race, particularly in our city today?
- Do men struggle more to be in vulnerable relationships than women? Is there a tendency to stay "*topline*" in conversation – weather, sports, etc., instead of diving deeper? What would it take to enter more vulnerable relationships?
- Frederick Douglass said, "*It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.*" Do you agree? If true, what can be done for children, and the brokenness experienced in adulthood?
- Closing the gaps of hurt and hate in our world often start one relationship at a time. We are all "*Home Team*" in a spirit of faith. Is such unity simply wishful thinking or is it a spiritual imperative? Discuss.

### **Next Steps**

- Where are you pursuing deeper, more authentic relationships? If you are already, work on ways to deepen that connection for the sake of mutual support and growth. If not, consider getting involved in a service or study group where you might begin to foster relationships built around positive purpose.

### **Pray**

*"Lord, while we celebrate Fathers and Freedom this day, we know every day is a gift from you and worth celebrating. Strengthen our resolve today, to be authentic in our relationships, supportive in our friendships, and grounded in your loving purpose. Amen."*