



STUDY/DISCUSSION GUIDE

Welcome/ Introduction

What comes to mind when you think of “preaching in the public square”?

What would you say is the goal of the Forward Together Moral Movement, based on Rev. Barber’s welcome message?

Reflect on the three Reconstructions that Rev. Barber describes in the Introduction. What are they? And what is the significance of the Third Reconstruction?

Chapter 1

- How long has the NC NAACP been holding its annual Moral March (a.k.a., Historic Thousands on Jones Street, HKonJ)? And why is that history important in understanding the Forward Together Moral Movement?
- What are the five non-partisan, human values of the Forward Together Moral Movement? Discuss them.
- What does Rev. Barber say is the primary calling/responsibility of elected officials?

Chapter 2

- How many people were arrested on the day of the first Moral Monday rally in Raleigh, NC? Do you agree with their act of civil disobedience?
- What were some of the actions by the North Carolina State General Assembly that were being protested at the first Moral Monday rally?
- Read and discuss Micah 6:8.

Chapter 3

- What has become the theme or rallying cry/chant of the Forward Together Moral Movement?
- What do you think about what has happened in the state of North Carolina regarding health care? What is going on in your state?

Chapter 4

- Rev. Barber says, “Justice and Love always win.” Do you agree with that? Why or why not?
- Read and discuss Matthew 25:37–40.

Chapter 5

- What happened on June 25, 2013? And what was the significance of it on the state of North Carolina?
- Where does North Carolina rank nationally for people in poverty? Discuss the reality of the current situation in North Carolina and in your state.
- Why does Rev. Barber say “the right to vote is sacred”?

Chapter 6

- What is your reaction to the moral language that Rev. Barber uses of “right vs. wrong”?
- What does it mean to be “a Movement, not a Moment”?
- Read and discuss James 5:1–4.

Chapter 7

- What national news story set the stage for Moral Monday rally number 11 on July 15, 2013?
- Discuss the history of lynching described in this chapter and the comparison to Stand Your Ground laws. What is your opinion of that comparison?
- How does Rev. Barber use the illustration of Esther from the Bible in the context of Moral Mondays and the appeal to repeal Stand Your Ground laws across the country?

Chapter 8

- What happened to derail the black-white voter fusion movement, which was a critical part of the First Reconstruction Period, and reached its height in the 1890’s in North Carolina?
- Why do you think songs are so important to movement-building? What songs have inspired you to action?
- Read and discuss Psalm 118:5–7, 22–24.

Study/Discussion guide for *Forward Together: A Moral Message for the Nation* by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, with Barbara Zelter (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2014).

Chapter 9

- Reflect on Rev. Barber’s historical retelling of the 1963 March on Washington and Dr. King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. What stands out for you?
- What is the dream of today? And what is the nightmare Rev. Barber describes?

Chapter 10

- Read and discuss Jeremiah 22:1–3.
- Rev. Barber writes, “Being moved by the Spirit necessitates a quarrel with the way things are in the world.” What is your reaction to that statement?
- “Right now, in the richest nation on earth, the richest nation ever, we have more poor people than at any other moment in our country’s history.” How does this strike you? What will your personal action/response be?

Chapter 11

- What does Rev. Barber mean when he says that he is a “conservative”? And that those who claim to be “conservative” are actually “liberal”?
- Discuss the NAACP’s statement in support of marriage equality. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

Chapter 12

- Why is it so important for labor rights and civil rights activists to work together?
- Read and discuss Isaiah 58.
- Why does Rev. Barber call fast food workers “the front ranks of the Third Reconstruction”?

Chapter 13

- What are the five goals of the Forward Together Moral Movement described in this chapter?
- Have you made an analysis of the data in your state about the poverty rate, the percentage of workers who are protected by unions, the size of the NAACP and other anti-racism advocacy organizations, the key organizations who push an agenda of hate and fear, etc.? What have you found?"

Chapter 14

- What are the “dozen do’s” of the Forward Together Moral Movement? Discuss them.
- Why is it so important to “shift the center of political gravity and discussion”?
- Looking back on the entire book, what are you taking away with you that is most challenging? Most inspiring? Most hopeful?

Response

What is your response to the official statement from Bishop Johnson? How does this debate help the church? How does it hurt the church?