

BIG IDEA

Conversations can help us understand the many facets of a tough topic.

ABOUT DOMINIQUE DUBOIS GILLIARD

Dominique DuBois Gilliard is the Director of Racial Righteousness and Reconciliation for the Evangelical Covenant Church. He also serves on the board of directors for the Christian Community Development Association and Evangelicals for Justice. In 2015, the Huffington Post named him one of the “Black Christian Leaders Changing the World.” Dominique is the author of *Rethinking Incarceration: Advocating for Justice that Restores*, which addresses many of the shortcomings within the United States’ justice system and encourages Christians to pursue reforms that emphasize reconciliation rather than punishment. His book won the 2018 Book of the Year Award for InterVarsity Press.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the worst thing you’ve ever done? You don’t have to share it. Instead, share how it would feel to be known for the rest of your life by that mistake?
2. As a group, rewatch Dave Ferguson’s interview with Dominique Guilliard. You can find the conversation on the COMMUNITY app or at communitychristian.org/media.
3. What stood out to you about the video interview? What was new information to you? What is stretching you and making you uncomfortable?
4. Read Matthew 25:31-46; Hebrews 13:3; Psalm 107: 10-16. What words or phrases stand out to you?
5. What do the above passages tell us about God’s character and concern for those who are incarcerated?
6. Incarcerated individuals carry the labels of “felon” and “ex-con” which shame, stigmatize and restrict them for the rest of their lives. As humans created by God, they also carry the label of “image bearer” and “beloved”. How difficult do you find it to navigate the tension of these “labels”? How does reading Romans 5:8 influence your answer?
7. Do you believe God can redeem every situation? Explain.
8. Grace is beautiful - we all need it and receive it from God and others, but it can be hard to practice and extend to others. Where do you struggle to extend grace?
9. Toward the end of the video, Dominique discussed some practical ways to get involved through prevention, ministering to the incarcerated, and serving families with incarcerated loved ones. Community 4:12 has several teams addressing these issues:
 - **Kids Hope and Saturday Stars Mentors:** working with students in under-resourced communities to improve school performance and self-esteem.
 - **Safe Families:** Providing safe temporary housing for children while their parents manage challenging circumstances. Host children, support host families or provide resources.
 - **Community Freedom:** Walking alongside individuals and their families as they transition from incarceration back to their communities. Join the weekly service or small groups team visiting individuals in prison, the “Give Hope” team caring for families with incarcerated loved ones, or the prayer team.

Do any of these suggestions resonate with you? Explain.

10. Wrap up the discussion by praying for those currently incarcerated and the new COMMUNITY location launching at the Joliet Treatment Facility, Fall 2019.