

## Chapter 11—White Women's Tears

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**Travis' Thoughts**

Candor compels me to state that the material for this chapter is not my own. It was my wife--Michele Kleeman--who took up the task of figuring out this chapter for me. Why? It is because I am simply out of gas; I simply do not have any more energy in thinking about race and what it means. In other words, my racial stamina is gone and I need rest. I know this is the case because I have grown irritable towards the subject, and if DiAngelo is correct, this irritation is a sure sign that I am retreating back into safety. My intention for this chapter was to leave it blank as a way of saying and showing that I am not exempt from racial stamina and white fragility. I wanted to leave this chapter blank as a starting point for conversation. But Michele would not have it, and I thank her for that. I think she could not have it because she sees this chapter better than I do, because she is a white woman, and I sense that she recognizes the power of her own tears. So what you find here is her work. In chapter 12 I resume the study, which I must say, is not impressive. I did not recover from my fatigue; it is extremely brief and to the point. But I wanted to make this known because Michele's work here seems more lively than anything since chapter 6--at least in my opinion. She took up this chapter in full stamina, and I think that shows. This is all a way of saying that we are in this together, that whiteness is a real thing that takes a system to overcome.

## Summary

Tenets that Male White Fragility is dominating the conversation (134-135):

- Control of the conversation by speaking first, last, and most often
- Arrogant and Disingenuous invalidation of racial inequality via 'just playing the devil's advocate'
- Simplistic and presumptuous proclamations of 'the answer' to racism
- Praying the outraged victim of 'reverse racism'
- Accusations that the legendary 'race card' is being played
- Silence and withdrawal
- Hostile body language
- Channel-switching
- Intellectualising and distancing
- 'Correcting' the racial analysis of people of color and white women
- Pompously explaining away racism and the experiences of people of color

Response to what is missing in this chapter

"It's infuriating because of its audacity of disrespect to our experience. You are crying because you are uncomfortable with your feelings when we are barely allowed to have any. You are ashamed or some such thing and cry, but we are not allowed to have any feelings because then we are being difficult. We are supposed to remain stoic and strong because otherwise we become the angry and scary people of color. We are only allowed to have feelings for the sake of your

entertainment, as in the presentation of our funerals. And even then, there are expectations of what is allowed for us to express. We are abused daily, beaten, raped, and killed but you are sad and what's what is important. That's why it is sooooo hard to take" (pg. 136).

## Reflection Questions

1. What effect did BBQ Becky's tears have on the situation?
2. How can tears be harmful?
3. How are white emotions impacting the church/your church?
4. How can you translate your emotions into advocacy/allyship?

5. How does Christ need us to show up?

### Recurring Questions

1. How has your understanding of whiteness progressed?
2. How do you sense God is calling you to respond?
3. What are your lingering fragile responses and why?
4. Are you sure you understand the Cross?

### Homework

Journal about how you are going to navigate the space you take up within racial dialogue.