

## KIDS, MLK DAY, AND AMOS 5:24

January 18, 2025

What does your Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration look like? For years, I only saw it as a day off from work until I started attending the East End Baptist Church in a small town in Virginia. The churches in my area had celebrations, gatherings of the local NAACP chapters, grand reenactments of Dr. King's speeches by tiny boys with booming voices; there was always something spectacular going on!



My first year attending these celebrations was at the urging of my new group of church friends. I attended again the following year because of the swell of pride I felt at the last gathering. Doves of brown-skinned people came together to herald the efforts of one who propelled many. It was and still is glorious! But there was something else too. The celebration helped expose my son to a sense of pride in his skin that he'd never experienced. The funny thing is he did not realize what was happening and still may not know the root of his pride. Looking back, I can see seeds being planted that are still blooming today. I believe that is a fulfillment of Dr. King's dreams. Though not all the tendrils of his hopes have been realized, one has. Some African Americans born long after his departure feel deserving of freedom, justice, and equality in the skin they were born in.

"But let justice flow like water, and righteousness, like an unfailing stream" (Amos 5:24).

I see that happening with my son. The Hebrew word for justice, *zedakah*, can mean "to lift from shame to honor." *Mishpat*, the word for righteousness, can mean "to have a good eye or to be generous." The one does not work without the other. Justice not given generously is no justice at all. Righteousness or generosity without just administration is one-sided. My son has been lifted from the shame of being a dark-skinned child, and generously so. He now loves the skin he is in. It all started at a celebration for a man who understood the need for justice and righteousness to flow over all people in every way.

Is that what the prophet Amos meant? I believe it was a big part of it. None of us can fully appreciate the other without first appreciating who God made us to be. If we truly love ourselves the way God does, the natural outcome would be to love others, too. We couldn't help but see the beauty in it all. And justice and righteousness would be unhindered and refreshing!

Friend, join me in praying that we all will successfully teach our children the principle Dr. King borrowed from Amos 5:24. May justice roll down on us all like a refreshing stream, unhindered and free.

Recommended read:

Online Article: [Teach Love and Compassion on MLK Day](#)

Picture Books: *I Am Enough* by Grace Byers, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo, and *All Because You Matter* by Tami Charles, illustrated by Bryan Collier.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Become An Agent of Justice](#).

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