

# **I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World Study Guide**

**I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World by Martin Luther King, Jr.**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Part 1: Chapter 1-3.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Part 1: Chapter 4-7.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Part 2: Chapter 8- Chapter 10.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Part 2: Chapter 11- Part 3: Chapter 15.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Part 3: Chapter 16- Chapter 17.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Part 4: Chapter 18-20.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>

# Plot Summary

"I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World" is a collection of speeches by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with information relative to each speech provided by James M. Washington. The speeches were made in regard to the United States' struggle for equal rites of all people. It also gives a narrative of the time and the circumstances that started Dr. King's involvement.

The speeches in the book are given in chronological order to when they were publicly released. In 1956, Dr. King had an essay published in a religious journal that was a summary of his book "Stride Toward Freedom". This essay was entitled "Our Struggle". In this essay Dr. King explains the reasons for the black population's reevaluation of himself and his status and what the black community will need to do to fight for equal rights. He also discusses the miscalculations of the white leaders that failed to discourage the Negroes from fighting back for their rights. The next speech depicted in the book was given in 1957 and was named "Facing the Challenge of a New Age". Dr. King explains the pains that the country is going through and explains that these pains are normal for growth and for the birth of a new era. He also discusses the fact that God loves all people and that in order to bring about a new piece of history the people must be willing to love each other as God loves all of his children.

Dr. King goes on in his speeches to talk about nonviolence as he learned it from studying Gandhi. Dr. King is constant in his speeches that the only way to fully reconcile the differences in the United States is to make nonviolent stands. When the Vietnam War starts, Dr. King speaks out against the war because it does nothing but create hate. Dr. King also points out that the United States is sending black and white men to foreign countries to kill and die next to each other when they are not allowed to sit next to each other in schools and restaurants.

Dr. King speaks out about his faith and his belief that each man needs God in his heart. He tells the people that the only way they will be able to have a new country is if America itself is reborn. He calls on the Negro population to not hate the white man for the things that are being done because there are many white people that support them and walk with them. He explains that if they let themselves hate that it will only create more hate and that it has to be stopped. Dr. King gives his final address on April 3, 1968 on the eve of his assassination. His next to last sentence is that he is not fearing of any man.

# Part 1: Chapter 1-3

## Part 1: Chapter 1-3 Summary and Analysis

"I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World" is a collection of speeches by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with information relative to each speech provided by James M. Washington. The speeches were made in regard to the United States' struggle for equal rites of all people. It also gives a narrative of the time and the circumstances that started Dr. King's involvement.

The book begins by outlining the events that preceded the publishing of "Our Struggle". This was a summary from a book of Dr. King's called "Stride Toward Freedom" and was printed in a religious journal called "Liberation". It discussed the boycott of the bus transportation system in Montgomery that began because of the 1954 Rosa Parks arrest.

In this summary, Dr. King addresses the loss of self respect of the Negro people. The self-respect hadn't been completely done away with, and when the African American population began to gain wealth through jobs they began to reevaluate themselves. Though the Montgomery Bus protest was never expected to succeed by many, there were enough proud Negroes to boycott the transit. More than forty thousand African Americans refused to ride the bus system. The populace was willing to stick together. Dr. King describes the nonviolent resistance that he believes in stating that if they refused to get mad then they could win.

There is an outline of the miscalculations of the white leaders that led to the uniting of the Negro community. It begins with the mistake of arresting Mrs. Rosa Parks for not giving up her seat. She was one of the most respected Negro women in Montgomery. The list outlines the events that follows and why each of the moves made was a mistake that spurred the African American populace. Dr. King states that he knew that there may be a possibility of death for some of the protesters, regardless of the refusal to use violence. Dr. King states that the Negro populace doesn't wish to win over the white community because it would be the same problem with a different system. He instead urges for freedom for all, regardless of color.

Facing the Challenge of a New Age was given in 1956 for the First Annual Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change. Dr. King begins the speech explaining that to live in the twentieth century is a privilege. He calls it an age that is ushering in a new social order but admits that the time is one filled with trials and pains. He states that there is never any growth or birth without the pains that are associated with growth or birth. The amount of time that the Negro people have lived life under the rule of others, that deem themselves superior, have caused them to feel tired. He discusses the Dred Scott Decision of 1857 that labeled Negroes as property and the time it took to get away from that ruling.



Dr. King addresses the fact that they had a type of peace before the Negro community united together to fight for their liberties. He states it was a type of peace that was laced with injustice and insults and that was always uneasy. He calls for a type of true peace that is more than the absence of war, a peace that consists of brotherhood and justice. He states that all men should be measured by their soul and by the mind but not by skin or completion. He calls freedom an expensive thing and urges all Negroes to be willing to pay for their freedom and never forget that it will cost them should they want it for their children. King states that freedom is worth losing a job and going to jail for, and he would rather be a free pauper than rich and live as a slave.

The Power of Nonviolence was given at the University of California at Berkeley in 1957. In this speech King discusses how necessary it is to always try to use nonviolence because it is the only way to win over one's adversary. He discusses the types of love that there are and says that the Negro community is not to love their oppressors with a affectionate kind of love, or a kind of love that is reciprocated, but a love that you have realizing that they are God's children the same as you and you are to care for them. He states that they are not to agree with the actions of their oppressors but are to love them in a way that shows the oppressors that they are wrong and cause them to be ashamed before God. He ends this speech by calling his people to be maladjusted to the way things are that keep them oppressed. He tells them that Amos was maladjusted in the bible and called to God for judgment. King says that is the way to get freedom and justice.

There had been a lot going on in the country at that time that lent to the beginning of the civil rights movement, and Dr. King touches on these things, but seems to hinge most of the credit on the arrest of Mrs. Rosa Parks. Dr. King refers to her and her simple choice of not moving seats as if it were a main component of the movement. There will be more mention of Mrs. Rosa Parks later on in the book.

It appears that Dr. King is almost as much against the violent protesters as he is against those that are oppressing the black community. He discusses in length the reasons why there should not be violent protesting. The reader will see more discussion on this point later on in Dr. King's writings. Dr. King gives the appearance of a well educated man that loved God, and his country and wanted the best for his people but wasn't willing to give up his beliefs and convictions to get what he wanted. He put the rules of God first, often commenting on God's laws for men as the reason that no one should be kept as property or a slave. That all are deserving of God's love.



# Part 1: Chapter 4-7

## Part 1: Chapter 4-7 Summary and Analysis

In 1959, Dr. King addressed college and high school students before a march for integrated schools. Dr. King addresses the young students and says that with all the mixed colors of faces in the crowd he can see the face of the future. He states that he has hope that they will not take "No" for an answer and will demand complete segregation and total equality. The people Dr. King is addressing have either just earned the right or will soon be old enough to vote. He calls it the greatest privilege as an American but explains that if you are a black person in America that you may be putting yourself at risk by going to vote, especially in the South. Dr. King mentions the fact that he wants to help to increase the number of black people that vote. He urges all the people to be a fighter for civil rights and it will make them better at whatever they choose as their career.

Dr. King and his wife traveled to India in 1959. He speaks about that trip and says that while he had wanted to visit the home of Gandhi he didn't have an opportunity until he was attacked by a woman who stabbed him. He was forced to slow down to recover and took advantage of the pause in his agenda to plan a trip to visit Gandhi's home. Dr. King states that Gandhi's teaching of nonviolence is what motivated his protesting methods. Dr. King says that while they were in India they had a warm reception and had many opportunities to speak and sign autographs. After his stay in India, Dr. King states that he was more convinced than ever that nonviolence was the only method that would produce true peace and equality. He discusses the problems that are in India but states that they are making massive strides and thanks to Gandhi's teachings they have been able to live in peace with the British that previously had been thought impossible. He also says that India will require outside help but not from someone that will need a favor in return or someone that is acting superior. India should have help because it is the right thing to do, according to Dr. King.

In 1959, Dr. King resigned as pastor of his church to devote more of his time to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In Dr. King's opinion, there were more and more people that were either moving too slow or that were preparing themselves to fight a civil war. He begins by discussing three views of violence, the first being pure nonviolence. This is not for the masses because of the amount of discipline and courage it takes. The second is violence in self-defense. He points out that by all societies it is acceptable to protect yourself, even accepted by Gandhi. The third is the advocacy of violence as a tool of advancement. Dr. King admits this is where people are tempted by a quick means to an end. The fear that Dr. King addresses is that when the Negroes are the ones to start the violence that all evil that comes from it will be blamed on the Negro. He discusses other forms that can work without violence and the methods that he and the others that work with him have found effective. He lists off strikes, sit-ins, refuse to pay fines, boycotts, sit-down protests, mass marches, and many others. Dr. King does call these effective and admits that they take time but compares it to an



ocean wave that continues to beat on the cliff. Eventually enough drops of water hit calmly and repetitively and the old structure is worn away. Dr. King calls the most powerful weapon the voices, feet, and bodies of united people all working toward a just goal.

"Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" was an article that appeared in a magazine in 1960. It discusses his decision to embrace nonviolence. Dr King states that he looked at liberalism and found that it was too sentimental with regard to human nature. He also felt that neo-orthodoxy was too pessimistic. Dr. King states that he found truth in both of these areas and also likes much of the philosophy of existentialism. Dr. King explains that he always had found it wrong to endure segregation, but it wasn't until he was in theological seminary that he began to think of a way to rid society of this burden. He discusses different religions and states that any religion that says they are worried about your soul but not the bad housing that condemns the person is a religion waiting to be buried.

When he discovered Gandhi's teaching, Dr. King states that he read about satyagraha. Translated, this means truth-force, or love-force, and became the focal point of Dr. King's studies. It wasn't until Dr. King had the opportunity to boycott the Montgomery bus system that he had a way to use what he had learned from Gandhi and other areas stating that God gave him the spirit and Gandhi gave him the method. King explains that it must be used in all areas of disagreement and that war is now more than ever a way to kill the entire world due to the weapons of mass destruction that are held by every country. While Dr. King calls for the churches to be against arms war, he does say that every crisis has dangers and opportunities and that always the voice of God may reign supreme.

Dr. King seems to have had a lot of his thoughts and teachings influenced by his Christian faith. He even talks about his walk with God in some of his speeches and the fact that he believes the trials he has gone through have brought him closer to God. While Dr. King is quick to interject his thoughts about God, it appears that he has done a great amount of studying about other topics to broaden his knowledge. It doesn't appear that he only studies topics he is interested in. He is able to talk about people that he disagrees with and seems to be knowledgeable about why he is not in agreement with these people. It seems that he has been able to study their thoughts and philosophies to accurately refute their findings and methods.

Dr. King appears to be a man of conviction. In these speeches, and the ones that the reader has yet to read, Dr. King will continue in his convictions about nonviolence and the need to do away with nuclear arms. Dr. King takes a look at more than just the need to fix the civil problems that the Negro faces. He also looks at the reasons that they are in place and the problems that will arise from violent methods to get rid of them and the problems that will come from not pushing for those liberties quickly enough. He appears to be just as worried about the people moving too quickly or too slowly.



## Part 2: Chapter 8- Chapter 10

### Part 2: Chapter 8- Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

"The Rising Tide of Racial Consciousness" was given in 1960 to the Golden Anniversary Conference of the National Urban League. In this speech, Dr. King talks about the things that led to the increase in self dignity of the Negro population. He lists off the first factor as the move from rural life to urban life and the connections that let the black people know what was going on in the rest of the world. Dr. King states that this led to the black population's broadened outlook.

The second factor is the rapid education advancement and the number of illiterate Negroes being massively decreased since the emancipation. The third Dr. Kings lists as improvement in economic status. He admits that this process is slow, but states that they have overall better medical care, education opportunities, and better housing, which has made the Negro reevaluate his position. The fourth factor is the law passed down that outlawed segregation in the schools. The last factor that King attributes to the increase in dignity is the realization of the struggle for freedom that is happening all over the world.

Dr. King calls the racial issue one that is a national problem and calls for those that would talk about their desire for equality to do more than just talk about it. King calls it the responsibility of each Negro to fight for his own rights and that he should never assume that anyone else is going to feel as strongly as the Negro should about his own rights. King blames the Negro's disillusioned state of mind on the fact that they have been so conditioned to the segregation that they have lost their initiative. He points out all the problems with the Negro community and calls for them to change their problems and push their children to constantly be better and do more.

"The Time for Freedom Has Come" was Dr. King's explanation why being arrested in the struggle for civil liberty had become a mark of honor. It was written in 1961. Dr. King explains that when they started the bus boycott that it was old women that were active in the struggle for equal rights but that it has grown, and now those who are taking an active part are young college students. They are willing to go to jail and receive physical abuse with the knowledge that they are bringing in new rights for their people. He calls for the people to take a look at the black college student who for a time was an imitation of the white college student. He states that now the white college students are trying to have the same fire that the black ones have. King states that he is not surprised to hear a young beautiful girl tell him that if she must die for the struggle of her people, then she is ready. He continues to urge people to fight with nonviolence. He explains that when a person goes to jail for disagreeing with an unjust law that the person is showing respect for the law and realizes that they belong in jail until the law is changed.

Dr. King was put into jail in Birmingham in 1963 and wrote a response to a group of clergymen that stated Dr. King was doing nothing more than inciting civil disturbances





with his nonviolent protests. Dr. King writes to the clergymen that he and his group have tried to ensure that they are able to take the blows that are given without retaliation and names the steps they have taken to prepare themselves. He also tells them that while he doesn't find himself an extremist, as they have suggested, that he does think that it is good to be an extremist for the right reason. He calls Jesus an extremist for Love, Paul the Apostle an extremist for the gospel of Jesus, and names off many others. He ends the letter with the hope that he will be able to meet them some day as brothers in faith.

In this part of the book the reader sees that Dr. King makes mentions of the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacy groups. It seems odd that he would not label these groups as the most harmful to their cause. Instead, he names the leaders of the white churches that should be standing by their Christian brothers regardless of color. It appears that King would rather be opposed than to have people that act uninterested. While King makes mention of the fact that it is the whites that are oppressing them, he does state continually that any color, race, or creed should not be discriminated against.

While King is answering the clergymen who question his motives and methods, he mentions the fact that they are openly speaking out against him but not speaking out against the troubles that King and his group are fighting against. It appears that this almost angers him to some respect. He likens what he and his group is doing as to the fight that people had in Germany against Hitler. He admits that he is breaking laws, but if he had been in Germany he would have broken the law and tried to hide his Jewish brothers.

Again in this part of the writing the reader will see that Martin Luther King makes many mentions of the bible and Jesus and his faith. It will continue to be a theme in his writings as the reader continues.



## Part 2: Chapter 11- Part 3: Chapter 15

### Part 2: Chapter 11- Part 3: Chapter 15 Summary and Analysis

"I Have a Dream" speech was given in 1963 and is one of Dr. King's most well-known speeches. In this speech Dr. King talks about the strides that have been made in recent years towards the end of injustice, but warns that there is still a lot to fight for. He calls the danger, at this point, becoming complacent and lulled by the few advances that have been made. He states that any who hoped that Negroes needed some time to blow off steam will find that they were wrong and that the Negro will continue in his fight. Dr. King warns his people not become distrustful of white people and points out that there are those that are fighting with them for the good of mankind regardless of their skin color.

Dr. King goes on to acknowledge the fight that many of the people in attendance have had and that there will be fighting to endure when they go home, but urges them to continue and to realize what they have already accomplished. Dr. King tells the people that they will someday see the glory of the Lord, all flesh together.

Dr. King accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. His speech was presented on December 10th in Norway. Dr. King explains to the people that he is unsure why he would receive such an honor and lists off all the things that are happening in the United States and the recent murders and riots. He then says that after examining the situation, the honor must have been given because of the dedication to the nonviolence that King and his companions so earnestly call for. He states that he alone should not be given the honor of this award and explains that there are so many that will never receive name recognition that have done their part in working toward peace. King states that he believes that unarmed truth and unconditional love will eventually triumph. He explains that when things become their darkest they will know that the new civilization is struggling to be born.

In 1973, a bomb killed little girls as they were in Sunday school in Alabama. Dr. King delivered a sermon to at their funeral. Dr. King calls the little girls martyred heroines and explains that instead of simply looking for the murderers, they should be fighting to change the system that could produce such men. King addresses the mass and warns them not to lose faith in their white brothers. He comforts the family with the thought that everyone eventually receives death and it should not be looked at as an end but as a beginning to eternity where the girls reside. Dr. King also commends the parents for where the children were at when they died and that they were not doing filthy things but praising the Lord.

In 1965, Dr. King gave a speech following the march that lasted fifty-four miles from Selma to Montgomery. Dr. King tells the people that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave them some part of their dignity but refused to give them any power since they couldn't



vote. He urges Negroes in the South and North to vote. He tells them that segregation is in the process of dying in Alabama but that it is not over yet. He tells those listening that the battle is in their hands and the road will not be smooth and there are no bright lights to lead the way but that they must continue on.

Dr. King tells those that have made the march that there are still dark times and jail cells waiting for them as they continue to protest and work toward ending unjust laws. He warns that the goal must never be to embarrass the white people because it will not create a peaceful society. He tells them that they must work together to achieve a trusting brotherhood and a unified nation.

In 1966, more than eighty percent of the black populace voted in the state of Alabama for the Democratic Primary. Dr. King wrote "Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom" for a magazine article. He discusses the problems that will definitely occur should the black people use violence to try and solve their problems. He says that there is a problem with the violence level in the black communities but that it is always black against black but they haven't turned their anger towards the white population. He talks about the Vietnam war that the United States has entered into and their willingness to fight for oppressed people in another country. King states that not a single person had been killed in a nonviolent demonstration. Even the black girls that were killed in the church bombing happened months after the civil protests had stopped.

King acknowledges self-defense, but is curious why people had been willing to tell him that they wouldn't join his cause because they might fight back if they were hit or spit on. King points out that Negro children are denied rights that white children are born to and that they have to live with rats and roaches. He admits that it is odd that these parents aren't willing to fight until they are spit on. While King states that there is a need to change things, he warns that hate will continue the current problems and the only way to end the violence is to refuse to hate or kill. He explains that there is no easy way to create a world where people can live together, but if it is done it will be done by white and black people of good will.

When King gives the sermon at the funeral of the little girls killed in the church bombing, the reader sees the beliefs of King brought into play in a great way. He will mention the girls later on in other speeches since it was such a brutal attack. His talk of faith and belief in an afterlife seem to play a great role in his beliefs in nonviolence. He doesn't explain what religion Gandhi professed. The reader is unsure if they shared similar views on that subject.

King continues to warn against the evils that will occur if the Negro population turns to violence or if they begin to hate all white people. King didn't want there to just be a "change" in the system. He wanted it to be just for all. The reader is left with the thought that if things had been the other way around that King would have been willing to fight for the rights of anyone that he felt was oppressed. He had been oppressed himself and felt that it was unjust and inhuman for any person.



## Part 3: Chapter 16- Chapter 17

### Part 3: Chapter 16- Chapter 17 Summary and Analysis

In 1967, Dr. King delivered this address to a meeting of Clergy and Laity Concerned. It was at Riverside Church in New York City, exactly one year before Dr. King was assassinated. He begins speaking out against the war in Vietnam and says that there is a time when being silent is the same as betraying what you believe in. He urges people to speak out with humility and to stay within their known limits. He explains the connection between Vietnam and the civil rights that he has been fighting for. He points out that there were programs that were underway to help the poor in America and there was progress being made until the war in Vietnam started and the nation's attention turned to the other country. He explains that the country won't be able to make true advancements as long as it is mad with thoughts of war. Since Dr. King was able to make this connection with the war in Vietnam, he calls the war an enemy of the poor.

As he continues to explain the negative effects of the war, he points out that black and white boys are fighting in the war and are able to kill and die side by side for a country that won't allow them to sit together in an eatery. He also describes the fact that America has sent her black citizens to die in a country and secure civil rights for people when those same rights are denied to them back home. Dr. King admits that he cannot in good will speak out against the conditions of those in the ghettos without speaking out about the Vietnam war and his own government. He states that if America dies, one of the reasons will be Vietnam.

Dr. King calls for the people to realize that the only way to fix any problem is through nonviolence. He describes the things that are going on in Vietnam, but assures the people that the only way to fix them is to offer them the same love of God that we have. He says it is to the people to offer them the calling to be sons of God just as we are. He looks at the past before the Vietnam war began and points out that just a few short years ago when Vietnam was asking for help the United States government refused help, stating that they weren't ready to be free. Dr. King calls for the people to protest the war in Vietnam and explains that each person is important. He quotes the first epistle of Saint John in describing how we should treat each other with love.

In the year 1967, Dr. King had an article that was published in the New York Times Magazine. In it, Dr. King talks about what it has taken for the black population to realize it has power and what they must do now that they have successfully started on their path. He names three sources of society power that the Negro must conquer. The first is ideology. In this, King calls the Negro people to exert their influence in nonviolent ways and states that white people have learned more about the Negro struggle from the nonviolent protests in a few years than they had in a hundred years prior.

The second that he names as a source of power for the Negro people is economics. While King states that the Negro people don't make as much money as a white person



doing the same job, he does say that they make up a vast amount of the working population and they also make up a huge number of consumers. King explains that if this can be harnessed and organized then it would be a powerful force. The final source that King identifies is political power. In this piece, Dr. King explains that there are more blacks moving to the major cities and more white families moving to the suburbs. He explains that soon there would be the majority of the larger cities that would be controlled by black voting power.

Dr. King states that while there is power for the Negro community to control, there is also a weakness in them that they have a lack of mutual confidence and trust. He blames this in part to the fact that the black community has been so badly manipulated. He makes a call to his people to raise up men who will be good political leaders.

In these chapters, the reader sees that Dr. King is speaking out against many things that are going on in the United States that don't seem to be connected to his civil liberties protest, such as the Vietnam war. It does appear that he has taken a lot of time to organize his thoughts and produce them in a way that is very convincing and demonstrate his devotion to the cause. As the reader gets closer to the date that Dr. King is assassinated, it seems to become easier to take in every word and dissect them, looking for hints about his death. In previous speakings, Dr. King had explained that there may be a time when death is called for in the pursuit of equal rights. He talks about the great Gandhi and the role that he played in helping India receive equal rights for its people and the assassination of Gandhi. It is easy to look for hidden meanings in Dr. Kings messages, but the message never changed. He always talked about equality regardless of color and the need to live with forgiveness.



## Part 4: Chapter 18-20

### Part 4: Chapter 18-20 Summary and Analysis

In 1967, Dr. King gave an address to the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He addresses the question about where the Negro people should direct their attention now that they have achieved so much in their striving toward social equality. King states that there is no bill or law that can be passed or put into effect that can free a black man if he still feels that he is a slave in his mind. Dr. King discusses the effects that power will have on the future of the black populace. He discusses the fact that power is often regarded as an evil thing and links together power and love, and how when they are used together, power is at its best when it has love with it.

Dr. King speaks about the need to remain nonviolent and the little effect that riots have had on the gaining of any rights. He says that it is a time for action but tells the people that they need a program and a strategy put into play with their nonviolent movement. Dr. King explains that violence is darkness and you can't put out darkness with more darkness. You have to bring in light, or love. He says he needs a minute to preach to the people and tells the story of Nicodemus talking to Jesus. The only thing that Jesus tells him he has to do is to be born again. Dr. King says that is the only way things will change, and that once there is an inward change the things on the outside will change as well. Dr. King says that the United States needs to be born again and that it is the only way that things will truly change. There has to be a change on the inside.

Dr. King gave a sermon in 1968 just two months before his assassination. Parts of this speech were played at his funeral. "The Drum Major Instinct" is what Dr. King spoke on. He stated that each person wants to be the drum major, the leader and out in front. Dr. King says that this in itself is not evil, but if a person doesn't learn to control it it can create evil in people. He blames people's desire to live above their means and buying houses that they can't afford and wearing clothes that are costly on the drum major instinct. Each person wants to feel superior to the others, in King's words. He explains that it is this drum major instinct in each person that causes people to want to be better by any means necessary and eventually it has led to racism where the color of one's skin alone is enough to put you out in front of your neighbors and brothers.

Dr. King takes a minute to talk about his own death and tells everyone that the only thing he wants to have mentioned at his funeral is that he gave his life to help others. That he tried to be a servant to his fellow human that was in need. He tells the people that they have to live in love, justice and truth in order to make a new world out of the old one that they live in.

"I See the Promised Land" was given in the year 1968, April 3, the eve of his assassination. Dr. King explains that he has talked to God and thanked him for letting him live in the twentieth century so that he can see all the things that are beginning to happen. Dr. King goes on to talk about the things that he has seen happen and the



things that he wants the Negro population to continue working on. At the end of the speech he admits that he would like to live a long life but it doesn't concern him because he knows he has been able to look over the mountain and has seen the promised land. He says he has no fear of any man and is not worried about anything.

It is noted that the final speeches that Dr. King gave he addressed that fact that he was going to die. It causes the reader to wonder if Dr. King knew he was near his time of death. He does state that he wants a long life but that it is not his ultimate goal. Dr. King's next to last sentence from the speech "I See the Promised Land" has Dr. King saying "I'm not fearing any man."

Dr. King never changed his mind about the methods that he had people using, and even when he felt that people were no longer listening to him and that he wasn't doing any good, the reader sees that he still seemed to be dedicated to the words that he had spoken. The speech "The Drum Major Instinct" was given two months before Dr. King was killed. In this speech he almost gave his own eulogy. While it was not uncommon for Dr. King to be recorded, it was odd that this address would be recorded rather than written, as many of his letters were published in magazines. Dr. King was able to speak at his own funeral with words that had been provided just two months prior.





# Characters

## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights activist. He was an advocate of nonviolent protesting and in 1964 was a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. He was born in the year 1929 and became a preacher in the year 1947. In the year 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger and Dr. King was one of the men that encouraged the Montgomery bus transit boycott. Dr. King spoke out about his faith and his belief that in order to fix the problems in America there would have to be forgiveness from all the citizens. Dr. King was against riots and violence and urged the black community to remain nonviolent since it was the only way they would be able to end the cycle of hate.

Dr. King himself was arrested and spent many nights in jail over the course of his protesting. He told the Negro community that in order to show the errors in the laws they must be willing to spend time in jail so that their love for the country and her laws couldn't be argued. Dr. King told the people to raise up leaders that they could count on and that could be strong leaders and speakers for the black community. Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

## Gandhi

Gandhi never met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. but it was Gandhi's philosophies on nonviolent protests that gave Dr. King his direction. Dr. King wasn't sure about Gandhi's methods until he had an opportunity to try them on the Montgomery bus boycott. Dr. King explained that even though Gandhi's methods weren't quick they were the only way to ensure that the circle of hate didn't continue. Gandhi lived in India and Gandhi's techniques were used against the British rule that had India in civil injustice. Dr. King and his wife traveled to India in February of 1959 and were guests of India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was one of Gandhi's disciples.

When Gandhi was assassinated there was a trust fund set up known as the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, and it collected \$130 million. This was noted as the largest, spontaneous contribution to the memory of a single person. King describes Gandhi as one of the half-dozen greatest men in the history of the world. Gandhi not only taught about the way that he believed they should live in India but did his best to live that way as well. It is noted that Gandhi led "untouchables" by the hand into the temples they were banned from and renamed them "Harijans", which translates into "Children of God." Dr. King explains that this would have been the equivalent as President Eisenhower taking a Negro child by the hand and walking them into a segregated white school.





## **Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr.**

Father to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Pastor at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta when Martin Luther King Jr. accepts his call to preach.

## **Coretta Scott**

Wife of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. They marry on June 18th and she supports his protests and travels to India with her husband.

## **Mrs. Rosa Parks**

A black woman that was asked to move out of her seat for a white man on the Montgomery bus transit. This began the boycott of the bus system on December 5th 1955.

## **President Dwight D. Eisenhower**

President that federalizes the Arkansas National Guard to take nine Negro school children into a white high school in Little Rock.

## **Mrs. Izola Curry**

A woman that stabs Dr. King Jr. Dr. King was autographing his book "Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story" when Izola narrowly misses Dr. King's heart.

## **Prime Minister Nehru**

Disciple of Gandhi. Dr. King and his wife were the guests of Nehru in 1959 when they visited Gandhi's home land.

## **President John F. Kennedy**

President Kennedy was responsible for federalizing the Alabama National Guard to have Governor George Wallace removed from the entrance of a school. George Wallace was attempting to stop Negro children from entering.

## **Neshoba County Sheriff Rainey**

Sheriff Rainey and his deputy, Cecil Price, are implicated in the murder of three civil rights workers whose bodies were found on August 4th of 1964.

## **President Lyndon B. Johnson**

President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act in 1965.



## Objects/Places

### **The Southern Christian Leadership Conference**

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference or the SCLC, is formed at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and Dr. King is elected the president of the organization.

### **Montgomery Bus Company**

The company whose bus driver asked Mrs. Rosa Parks to give her seat up to a white person. The Montgomery Bus Company was looked at as the first step in the civil rights protesting. Montgomery buses are integrated a year and fifteen days after the strike began.

### **Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story**

The book that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote depicting the bus boycott. While signing autographs for his book in Harlem, Dr. King is stabbed by Mrs. Izola Curry.

### **Ebenezer Baptist Church**

The church where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s father preached. Dr. King Jr. became the co-pastor in 1960.

### **The Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee**

The Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee, also called the SNCC, was temporarily put into place in Raleigh, North Carolina at Shaw University to help coordinate student protests in 1960. It becomes permanent a few months later and Dr. King is one of the key note speakers.

### **Letter from a Birmingham Jail**

The letter that Dr. King Jr. wrote in response to criticism to his nonviolent protests. The criticisms came from the black church leaders which concerned Dr. King.

### **Lincoln Memorial**

The Lincoln Memorial in Washington was the site where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963.



## **Nobel Peace Prize**

Awarded to Dr. King Jr. in 1964. Dr. King attributed the honor to the people he had working with him and the teachings of Gandhi.

## **Vietnam War**

Dr. King Jr. spoke out against the Vietnam War, stating that it called for white and black boys to kill and die together when they weren't allowed to sit together in schools or restaurants.

## **Poor People's Campaign**

Started by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with the hope of dealing with the problems of the poor blacks and whites in America.

## **The Drum Major Instinct**

Dr. King gave this sermon two months before he was killed. Excerpts from this speech would be played at his own funeral.

# Themes

## The Importance of Love

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. never changed his message or his methods of protesting. He followed Gandhi's teachings to the best of his ability and spoke out against hate and violence. He also explained the kind of love that people needed to have. He explained that love didn't mean that you were supposed to care for and hug the people that were doing you wrong but that you were supposed to realize that they were God's children the same that you are and you were supposed to care for them in that regard. Dr. King tells the people over and over again that nonviolence is the only that there will ever be balance. He states that if they are able to change things with violence then it won't have solved any problems but will simply create new ones. He tells the community to not hate people because it only creates more hate and if they want there to be peace then it has to start with them. Even when small children die because of the bombs that are intended to stop the civil rights movement, Dr. King warns the people to not let hate take over their hearts.

Dr. King says that if you have hate then it is the same as trying to let darkness end darkness. He tells people that the only way to end the darkness is to let the light destroy it. The light he explains comes from the love that the people have for each other.

## The Role of Faith

Dr. King Jr. spent most of his life preaching the gospel, and most of his speeches and writings refer to the role that God will have to play in things to make a difference in the world. Dr. King refers back to the discussion that Nicodemus had with Jesus. Jesus didn't tell him to do good works or not to steal or any number of things. Dr. King points out that Jesus only told him to be born again. Dr. King tells the people that if America is to truly change there must be a change from the inside. He says that America as a nation has to be born again.

Dr. King Jr. told the people that his faith is what kept him strong. He names many of his speeches after themes that show his faith such as "Our God is Marching On" and "I See the Promised Land", which was King's final speech. Many of his speeches were even given in churches or written to religious leaders. Dr. King tells people that when times got hard the thing that helped him remain steady was God is his life and that he grew closer to God because of the struggles that he went through.

## The Love of Country

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. saw a lot of problems with America. He spoke out against those problems and urged others to do the same. In the process of his protesting and his campaigning to fix the errors in the justice system that he saw he always spoke

about the love that he had for America and the steps that he and the others must take to ensure that it was kept intact and whole through the struggle. Dr. King didn't want to destroy America or to change it completely. He saw the things that were going on in the United States as wounds that needed to be healed.

The reason that Dr. King was so committed to nonviolent protest is because it was the only way he could see that people could be made to see the problems without damaging future relationships. Dr. King talks about his love for America in most of his speeches. Dr. King spoke out against war but he was willing to fight to the last breath for the country that he loved. The reader can also see that Dr. King spent a lot of time researching the country's history and political status. He was well educated and had a desire to help his nation through this hardship as easily as possible.

# Style

## Perspective

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had endured racism for many years. Most of the book consists of his speeches and writings that were given from the viewpoint of a person that had been looked at as a second class citizen with less rights than others in the same society. Dr. King was also a preacher, and while he urged people to fight for their civil liberties he also urged them to realize that God has called all of his people. The life and background of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is easily seen in his writings, although he doesn't spend much time explaining what his life was like. He also studied the teachings of Gandhi in depth and the reader sees that the reoccurring theme in Dr. King's writing is nonviolent protesting and needing to keep good relationships with those that opposed them.

While most of the book is the writings of Dr. King, there are introductions to each speech written by James M. Washington. In it is information relative to the speeches and the circumstances that surrounded Dr. King at the time he wrote each of them. The reader can see that James M. Washington studied Dr. King's life in detail and had respect for his teachings. In addition to this information is a brief Foreword by Coretta Scott King, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s wife. It is clear that she supported and respected her husband both then and at the time she wrote the Foreword.

## Tone

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was not combative in tone. He took a stand on nonviolence that carried seemingly into every part of his life. His speeches were convincing and it is clear that he wanted to persuade the listener to take a stand with him and his followers. While there was a desire for Dr. King to convince those around him of the need for change, the reader sees that Dr. King also is very informative. He spends time giving background on the history of the nation and what has led to the problems that he sees. Dr. King seems to have been well educated and can give instances in history to support his beliefs.

The speeches were written for the public to understand to persuade, so Dr. King's wording is easily understood and followed. While it is well thought out and intelligent, it is not overly done or complicated and the reader will find it easy to keep up with. There may be instances where the reader is unsure about exact definitions about groups or laws that are in place but the overall meaning is easily understood.

## Structure

The book is just over two hundred pages. There are four parts to the book with at least three chapters in each part. The chapters are each one of Dr. King's speeches or

writings and the title of the chapters are the titles of the speeches. It is all given in chronological order with a list before the book begins describing the chronological order of events that happened starting with Dr. King's birth in 1929 and ending with his assassination in 1968. The first speech in the book was given by Dr. King in 1956 during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Each of the speeches in the book has an introduction given by James M. Washington that explains the circumstances and the state of the country at the time of the speeches. This is helpful to the reader in understanding why Dr. King was focusing his attention in particular areas. There is also a Foreword in the book given by Coretta Scott King, Dr. King's wife and an introduction by James M. Washington as the editor. The fact that the speeches are kept in chronological order help the reader to understand the amount of change that happened in the short period of time that Dr. King worked in the civil rights movements. The structure of the book is well laid out and the reader should be able to easily understand the order of events and the reason for the placements.



## Quotes

"The extreme tension in race relations in the South today is explained in part by the revolutionary change in the Negro's evaluation of himself and of his destiny and by his determination to struggle for justice." Part 1, Chap. 1, p. 5

"And when you come to love on this level you begin to love men not because they are likable, not because they do things that attract us, but because God loves them and here we love the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does." Part 1, Chap. 3, p. 32

"In the final analysis if first-class citizenship is to become a reality for the Negro he must assume the primary responsibility for making it so." Part 2, Chap. 8, p. 68

"A just law is man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law." Part 2, Chap. 10, p. 89

"The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom." Part 2, Chap. 11, p. 103

"Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man but to win his friendship and understanding." Part 3, Chap. 14, p. 124

"And so we shall have to create leaders who embody virtues we can respect, who have moral and ethical principles we can applaud with an enthusiasm that enables us to rally support for them based on confidence we can trust." Part 3, Chap. 17, p. 161

"As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free." Part 4, Chap. 18, p. 171

"I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind." Part 4, Chap. 19, p. 191

"I want to be on your right or your best side, not in terms of some political kingdom or ambition, but I just want to be there in love and in justice and in truth and in commitment to others, so that we can make of this old world a new world." Part 4, Chap. 19, p. 192

"Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, 'If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the twentieth century, I will be happy.'" Part 4, Chap. 20, p. 195

"I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man." Part 4, Chap. 20, p. 203



## Topics for Discussion

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. explains several methods that they use in nonviolent protesting such as sit-down protests, boycotts, mass meetings and refusal to pay fines along with several others. Which of these do you feel would have been the easiest to use? Which do you feel was the most effective? Why?

Dr. King gives a sermon at the funeral of the girls that were killed in the church bombing in 1963. In that sermon he tells the parents, as well as the rest of the community, to not hate over this act. He tells the people to not lose faith in their white brothers or to retaliate with violence. Do you think that he was right to call for peace and forgiveness at this time? Why?

Dr. King disuses the pains that America is going through with the civil movements and compares it to growth and birth pains. Do you feel that this is an adequate comparison? Argue both for and against this analogy.

Do you believe that there is total desegregation and equality? Explain your answer and gives facts to support it.

During the civil rights movement, a lot of the fight was for the Negro community to have the right and ability to vote. There were some that were killed while trying to vote. Do you think people feel as strongly about the right to vote now as they did then? Why or why not? If you think the feeling about voting has changed, describe what has happened that has caused that change.

The black community had to fight for integration on buses, schools, diners, and the ability to vote. If they had not been met with opposition during the bus boycott, do you think that the movement would have continued any further? Why or why not?

After reading Dr. King Jr.'s explanation about "The Drum Major Instinct", do you think that all people have this instinct and that he accurately explained it? Why or why not? Give some more modern examples of how it is shown.

Dr. King spoke about what he wanted his funeral to be like in his speech "The Drum Major Instinct". Speculate on why he spoke about his wishes for his own service at this particular point in time.