Assumptions and ground rules.

1) We are here because we know that racism exists in America and in the church.
2) Our stance is primarily one of learning and humility. We aim to understand what Austin Channing Brown has to say.
3) We will read the book.
4) No one person should dominate the discussion. If you have spoken already, make sure all others have a chance to speak before you speak again. Facilitators may invite quieter people to speak and may ask more forthright people to listen.
5) We will be honest and kind.
6) We trust God’s Holy Spirit to be with us as we wrestle with what we learn and seek to apply it to our lives.
7) Confidentiality – you may share broad conversation topics but not specifics of someone’s life. If you want to share, ask first. If you want something not to be shared, be explicit.
8) Please set your name in your “rename self” so we know what to call you.
Session 1, July 1, 2020

7-7:10 Introduction, ground rules, and prayer.

7:10 – 7:20 – These chapters introduce Austin Channing Brown and give an overview of her journey from growing up in an African-American family in a mostly white environment, to discovering, and falling in love with, her blackness, to committing herself to working on racism: “Doing nothing is no longer an option for me.”

7:20 – 7:30 – Names.

Watch video of Austin Channing Brown and LeCrae, starting at minute 15:20.

Consider: What factors did your parents consider when they gave you your name. How has or hasn’t your name helped you. If you have children, did you consider race when choosing names?

7:30 – 7:40 – Childhood.

- Discussion on “playing spades.” What cultural markers of “blackness” did Austin grow up with, which did she have to learn. We’re just going to make a list. (24-25, 31-38)
- How did “blackness find Austin?” Why was this so transformative for her?
7:40-7:55
Break out rooms.

Small Group Discussion re: School

Q1. Describe why Austin was disappointed by Ms. Philips “aha moment about racism.” (pg 42-44)

Q2 What did Mr. Silvinski do (and not do) to earn Austin’s trust? (46-51)

Q3 Professor Crendalyn McMath was an important person in Austin’s life. She gave her a sense of belonging. She was her first black teacher....in college! When did you have your first black teacher, supervisor or pastor?

Q4 What did Austin learn from Professor Simms? Why was it so important to her? (61-66)

7:55-8:05  Curtain of Racial harmony, We Wear the Mask.

   In large group: some one reads “We wear the mask”

   - What is the meaning of this poem?
   - Describe the “curtain of racial harmony”
   - Consider: how do you feel when you consider that “harmony” is often not harmony at all, but a very unhelpful attempt to cover up racism.

8:05 – 8:12  Sankofa

   Have you decided that “doing nothing is no longer an option?”
   What did that do to Austin Channing Brown?
   What has it done to you?
8:10 – Homework:

- Read Chapters 5-7, pages 67-111
- Going farther:
  o Listen to some music by Lecrae.
  o watch Beyonce’s Homecoming on Netflix.
  o Worship with a traditionally black church (online for now). Local suggestions: Alfred Street Baptist in Alexandria and Metropolitan AME Church in Washington DC.