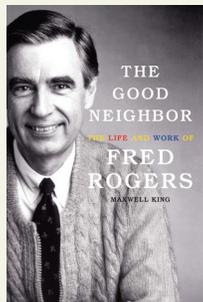


# In Reading Groups

Book Discussion Guide from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Adapted from Las Vegas Non Fiction Book Club, et al.



## *The Good Neighbor* by Maxwell King

In the first full-length biography of Fred Rogers, King offers a view of the children's champion that is both a feel-good tribute and a look into Rogers' commitment to making the world a better place.

1. What is your first memory of Mister Rogers? Did you watch Mister Rogers' Neighborhood growing up? Why do you think you still remember that from your childhood?
2. Many viewers of Mr. Rogers regarded him as the epitome of middle-class bourgeois habits. Were you surprised to learn that Rogers grew up rich in a mansion with a cook and a chauffeur?
3. Author King maintains that the bullying and loneliness Rogers ("Fat Freddy") experienced underpinned his sensitivity to kids' feelings and his own self-doubt (he consulted a psychiatrist for most of his adult life). Why does this bullying (which admittedly did not seem pervasive) seem to be an asset to Rogers where for most it seems to be a debilitating factor?
4. The author has described how Rogers forged his character around traits others may have seen as weaknesses,

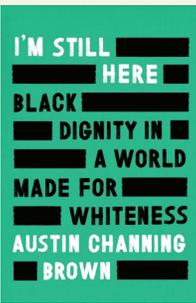
such as caring too much, being shy, feeling cautious, or being very sensitive. How does this approach to character-building mesh with Christian teachings?

5. Some criticize the book for being "boring" and repetitive with many tangents that don't necessarily concern Mr. Rogers or his legacy. What did you think of the author's writing style?
6. Rogers' show discussed themes such as divorce, death of a loved one or pet, childhood disability, and interracial relationships at a time when these topics were not discussed on television in any capacity. In that and many other ways the show was innovative and ahead of its time. What about Rogers gave him this unique insight?
7. In reading the book, it may have occurred to some that Mr. Rogers seems different from others in leadership roles. Everyone seems to love him but then vote for and support

very different people. Why does the public turn away from values that everyone seems to otherwise revere? Was Mr. Rogers dramatizing a world that was already, at that moment, slipping away?

8. The author describes Fred Rogers as fearless, even though his approach was gentle and unassuming. In reading the book, what did you learn about Rogers that could be described as fearless?
9. Recent books (like this one), documentaries and a feature movie starring Tom Hanks have made Mister Rogers a popular topic. Why is Fred Rogers' life worthy of attention at this moment in America? What parts of his character would you most like to emulate?

# NEXT MONTH



## *I'm Still Here*

by Austin Channing Brown

Austin shares an eye-opening account of growing up Black, Christian, and female in middle-class white America, inviting the reader to confront apathy, recognize God's ongoing work in the world, and discover how blackness—if we let it—can save us all.