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**I. Central Definitions of Racism**

- A. Racism can be defined as the belief that one people group is more valuable than another and the practice of distinguishing one people group as more important than another.<sup>1</sup>
- B. "Fundamentally, racism has to do not merely with real or perceived differences between people groups but with the value and significance of these differences. It has to do with the presumption of superiority over other people groups and the conduct of personal and social life that manifest this presumption in personal, communal, and sociocultural ways. Racism has to do with beliefs, actions, and structures that centralize some by marginalizing others on the basis of supposed differences."<sup>2</sup>
- C. Whereas the word racism is not in the Bible, the concept can be understood as a practice of unbiblical partiality (i.e. ungodly bias towards people groups that results in elevating one people group and demeaning another people group; **a respect of persons not sanctioned by God.**)

**Key Point of Sermon:**

Idolatry breeds the worship of creation above the Creator. This breeds earthly, natural, demonic wisdom being the source of defining, defending and resolving issues of life. When we choose to define, defend or seek to resolve the issue of racism (i.e. unbiblical partiality, an ungodly bias towards people groups, **a respect of persons not sanctioned by God**) through ungodly wisdom, it creates more problems than it resolves.

**II. Consider these Insights on James 3:13-18:**

- A. "True wisdom is the practical and successful application of knowledge. Such wisdom comes from God and bears good fruit. The fruit, which consists of righteousness, produces peace, the very opposite of the sin and disorder of 3:14, 16 and 4:1-3."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Piper, *Bloodlines* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 239. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas R. Sharp, *No Partiality: The Idolatry of Race and the New Humanity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 52.

<sup>3</sup> Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 683.

- B. “Earthly wisdom is bound by material and physical concerns and will not suspend its interest in the temporal plane for the sake of the divine glory (cf. 2:1). The maxim from Proverbs 14:12 characterizes this ‘wisdom’ as well as any in the Bible: ‘There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.’”<sup>4</sup>
- C. “Bitter envy and selfish ambition prove that a person is following the route of false wisdom. Envy describes a determined desire to promote one’s opinion to the exclusion of the opinions of others. Selfish ambition pictures a person who tries to promote a cause in an unethical manner. This person becomes willing to use divisive means to promote a personal viewpoint. Bitter rivalries develop out of these practices.”<sup>5</sup>
- D. “The kind of conduct produced by hearts full of ‘bitter envy’ and ‘selfish ambition,’ however, is the opposite of the wisdom that comes from God. It rather originates from below. In a descending hierarchy of values, James identified the true nature of this other ‘wisdom.’ Contrary to the heavenly source of the first wisdom, the second is earthly. The earthliness of this ‘wisdom’ stands for philosophical or other kinds of rational approach to values that does not truly take the revealed will of God into account.”<sup>6</sup>
- E. “This verse (referencing James 3:15) uses three adjectives to describe the distinctive traits and source of false wisdom. First, negatively, false wisdom does not come from heaven or from God. Its source is earthly. It belongs to the way of life of this world. Second, false wisdom is unspiritual, belonging to the natural world and not to the supernatural world. It comes from the mental and emotional ideas of fallen human beings. Unfortunately, we Christians are too often guilty of using this twisted wisdom. Finally, this false wisdom is of the devil. Satan uses it to corrupt relationships.”<sup>7</sup>

**Key Question to Consider:** What happens when earthly, natural, demonic wisdom is applied to the understanding and the resolution of racism?

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<sup>4</sup> Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, The New American Commentary, Vol. 36 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 165–166.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas D. Lea, *Hebrews & James*, Holman New Testament Commentary, Vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 307.

<sup>6</sup> Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, The New American Commentary, Vol. 36 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 165.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas D. Lea, *Hebrews & James*, Holman New Testament Commentary, Vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 307.

**III. When the understanding and the resolution of racism is left in the hands of man and not addressed through the grid of Scripture, man is operating in earthly, natural, demonic wisdom. Where earthly, natural, demonic wisdom is involved in addressing racism, you will find reasons, rationales and resolutions for racism without considering God's description and prescription for the problem. Consider this understanding and resolution of racism that comes from earthly, natural, demonic wisdom:**

- A. Earthly, natural, demonic wisdom has determined that society is divided into the oppressed and the oppressors according to gender, race, class, sexuality, physical ability, etc.
- B. According to this earthly, natural, demonic wisdom, if you are part of the majority ethnicity within the society, you are an oppressor, privileged, and racist by default.
- C. According to this earthly, natural, demonic wisdom, if you are part of a minority ethnic group within the society you are oppressed, underprivileged, and the victim of racism by default.
- D. Therefore, according to this wisdom, all minority ethnic groups within the society are the oppressed and need to wake up to the reality of how they have been dominated by the majority ethnic group's ideas and values for the worse and not the better.
- E. Consequently, according to this wisdom, if you are part of a majority ethnic group within the society and do not own up to your racism by default due to being part of that ethnicity, then you must ultimately be overthrown.
- F. The solution to racism according to this wisdom is activism that leads to revolution— to throw off the chains of the oppressor or allow yourself if you are an oppressor (by way of being part of the majority ethnicity) to be divested of your own power and privilege so that the culture may have liberation, social justice, or equity.

**IV. If we embrace the earthly, natural, demonic perspective about racism presented above, we end up with these ungodly ideals and actions:**

- A. People are understood in accordance with a prescribed label of oppressor or oppressed by nature of being part of the people group deemed the oppressor or the oppressed.
- B. The source of authority that validates racism is the person's experience or interpretations thereof that are not necessarily facts that can be proven and validated accordingly.

- C. Within this wisdom, racism is connected to a people group by nature of being part of that group as opposed to proven individual, communal, or institutional words, actions, or procedures of racism being demonstrated by the person or by individuals within that group of people.
- D. Therefore, according to this wisdom, racism is assumed by nature of the position of the person being part of an ethnicity.
- E. According to this wisdom of racism, you can only be racist if you are a part of the ethnicity that is deemed as the oppressor within the society.
- F. Therefore, any comments or practices of demeaning, devaluing, dishonoring or degrading of the ethnicity deemed the oppressor is not considered racism, only a cry of hurt from the oppressed ethnicity.
- G. Consequently, racism cannot be changed but only overturned by some form of activism or revolution. Therefore, the only thing that can change is the position of the oppressed and the oppressor, not their hearts. This ultimately turns the oppressed into the oppressor creating the same dynamic all over again.
- H. Therefore, 1) There is no common ground amongst people groups; we are divided by nature of our labels into "us" and "them." 2) By default, ethnicities are deemed as greater than or less than according to subjective societal measures. 3) Mutual give and take amongst ethnicities is considered suspect. 4) In order for change to truly happen in society, some ethnicity has to lose and some ethnicity has to gain, which means coming together and working together for mutual gain is not feasible. 5) Actual, proven institutional, communal, and individual acts of racism are minimized, maximized, or ignored resulting in hindering institutional, communal, and individual change for the better of all ethnicities.
- I. So then, you will always have racism with you, since the only thing that can change is the position from oppressed to oppressor. Therefore, Darwinism and the survival of the fittest becomes a logical conclusion for understanding the nature and life of mankind.

**V. Godly wisdom exposes that racism is an issue of the heart that leads to individual, communal, and institutional mindsets and methodologies that create confusion, disorder, and every evil thing amongst people groups and within people groups. Therefore, racism can only be resolved through the mindset and methodologies of God that create oneness, order, and every godly thing. So then, we must distinguish between the wisdom of God and earthly, natural, demonic wisdom as it relates to racism. If we distinguish between ungodly wisdom and Godly wisdom in relation to racism and apply Godly wisdom we can reject the world's understanding and solution**

**for racism and embrace God's description and prescription for racism. Consider this premise and practice in addressing racism:**

- A. Satan has so confused the matter of racism through erroneous, deceptive ideologies of racism that legitimate issues of racism have been minimized, maximized, or ignored.
- B. Therefore, we must discern the erroneous, deceptive ideologies of racism that lead us to minimize, maximize or ignore legitimate issues of racism as opposed to addressing racism to the glory of God.
- C. Erroneous deceptive ideologies of racism lead to the practice of labeling– accusing one of racism without warrant, evidence, or proof.
- D. Erroneous deceptive ideologies of racism lead to the practice of ignoring individual, communal, or institutional racism where there is warrant, evidence or proof.
- E. Erroneous deceptive ideologies of racism lead to the practice of being a proclaimer of illegitimate political ideologies, creating more division.
- F. The social and political agendas of society aim too low in addressing racism. They focus on racial reconciliation or the resolution of racial disparities. The reality is that we must focus on reconciliation to God which can result in racial reconciliation and minimizing of racial disparities as each people group practices loving God and loving others as empowered by God to do so.
- G. Biblical views and wisdom on the issue of racism lead to the understanding of racism as a sin issue of the heart that is ultimately rebellion against God and His will.
- H. Biblical views and wisdom on the issue of racism lead to the practice of being a proclaimer of truth, pursuing biblical harmony and justice as prescribed by God.
- I. Biblical views and wisdom on the issue of racism lead to the practice of addressing people with: 1) the Gospel message of salvation to redeem mankind, 2) the sanctification practice of the “one anothers” to those who have been redeemed to develop in the bond of unity provided through the Trinity, 3) the promotion of God's standard of righteousness in the community to challenge individual, communal, and institutional practices that impede human flourishing according to God's will, and 4) the promotion of God's standard of righteousness in the community to influence and encourage individual, communal, and institutional practices that help facilitate human flourishing according to God's will.

**Reflection:**

“Although CRT (Critical Race Theory) is rooted in secular philosophies, its branches have now reached into the church. Many evangelicals believe it isn’t necessary to adopt all of the ideas that form CRT, but they still believe there are insights that can be gleaned from some of its principles. They argue that CRT reflects ‘what some may say is common grace’ because it has ‘truthful insights found in human ideas that do not explicitly emerge from scripture,’ but the knowledge involved in CRT isn’t like the knowledge involved in treating an ear infection or planting crops (showing God’s common care for His creation), instead CRT would be categorized as philosophy. The word ‘philosophy’ is made up of two Greek words: ‘philo’ (love) and ‘sophia’ (wisdom). There are two sources of wisdom: one is named Jesus, in whom the scriptures tell us ‘are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Col. 2:3), and the other source is the world, of whom the scriptures warn us to ‘beware lest any man spoil you’ [take you captive] ‘through philosophy and vain deceit . . . after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ’ (Col. 2:8). CRT has its source in the world and can never lead to true racial reconciliation because grace and forgiveness are against its very nature! It leads its adherents to continually find fault, accuse with a raised fist, and divide people into identity groups who are suspicious of one another. Christianity, on the other hand, offers us unity through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Paul, who was Jewish, described the way that Jesus was a beautiful source of peace and reconciliation in his letter to the Ephesian Gentiles (a different, and even dominant, racial group): ‘But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us’ (Ephesians 2:13-14).”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Diana Lesperance, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction from a Biblical and Historical Perspective* (p. 20). Kindle Edition.