



Beyond Skin Color: Character, Not Race

"The content of our character is far more important than the color of our skin."



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Part 1 – Returning to a Biblical Vision of Human Dignity

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

— Galatians 3:28 (ESV)

Introduction

Few subjects stir more emotion in our society today than race. News headlines, political debates, social media, and even conversations within families often revolve around issues of race, ethnicity, discrimination, and justice. These discussions can quickly become emotional because they touch deeply on human identity, history, and personal experiences.

As Christians, however, our primary responsibility is not to allow culture to define our thinking. Instead, we must allow God's Word to shape how we view ourselves and others.

The Bible begins with a profound truth that changes everything: every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). That means every person possesses inherent dignity and worth—not because of race, nationality, wealth, education, or social status, but because every person is the handiwork of the Creator.

This foundational truth challenges every form of prejudice. It reminds us that God never intended humanity to be divided into categories of greater or lesser value. While our cultures, languages, and appearances differ beautifully, our value before God remains equal.

Throughout history, humanity has struggled with prejudice. Sometimes people have judged others because of race. At other times, because of nationality, tribe, religion, language, or social class. Sin always seeks reasons to divide people.

The gospel, however, seeks to reconcile.

Christ came not only to reconcile sinners to God but also to reconcile people to one another.

Our world desperately needs this message today.

What Is Racism?

Racism has commonly been defined as prejudice, discrimination, or unequal treatment directed toward individuals or groups because of their race or ethnic background. Throughout history, racism has contributed to injustice, oppression, segregation, violence, and suffering.

Many educators describe racism as operating on several levels:

- **Internalized racism** refers to accepting harmful stereotypes about oneself or others.
- **Interpersonal racism** involves prejudice or discrimination between individuals.
- **Institutional racism** concerns policies or practices within organizations that result in unequal treatment.
- **Structural racism** refers to broader historical and societal patterns that may contribute to unequal outcomes over time.

Whether discussing personal prejudice or broader social systems, Christians should care deeply about justice because Scripture repeatedly calls God's people to defend the vulnerable, practice fairness, and love their neighbors.

At the same time, Christians are also called to avoid bearing false witness, making unjust judgments, or treating individuals as though they are personally responsible for the actions of others simply because they share a racial or ethnic background.

Justice and truth always belong together.

Every Human Being Bears God's Image

The opening chapter of Scripture contains one of the most revolutionary truths ever revealed.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'"
— Genesis 1:26 (ESV)

Unlike every other part of creation, human beings alone were created in God's image.

Notice what Genesis does **not** say.

It does not teach that one ethnicity bears God's image more than another.

It does not suggest that certain nations possess greater human worth.

It does not divide humanity into superior and inferior races.

Instead, Scripture presents one human family descending from Adam and Eve.

The Apostle Paul later declared:

"And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth."

— Acts 17:26 (ESV)

This verse profoundly shapes the Christian worldview.

There are many nations.

Many languages.

Many cultures.

Yet there is one humanity.

The differences we see are real and beautiful, but they do not change our shared origin or equal value before God.

Sin Is the Great Equalizer

The Bible does not teach that one race is more sinful than another.

Instead, Scripture teaches something both humbling and liberating.

Every person is a sinner.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

— Romans 3:23 (ESV)

Notice the word **all**.

Every nation.

Every ethnicity.

Every culture.

Every family.

Every individual.

Sin is universal.

History confirms this biblical truth. Every civilization has examples of compassion and courage, as well as examples of greed, injustice, hatred, and violence.

No people group has a monopoly on virtue.

No people group has a monopoly on evil.

Recognizing this reality keeps us humble. It reminds us that none of us stands morally superior before God based on our ancestry.

Our greatest need is not a different skin color.

Our greatest need is a transformed heart.

That transformation comes only through Jesus Christ.

The Gospel Destroys Human Pride

The gospel leaves no room for racial superiority.

No Christian can honestly claim, "I deserve God's grace more than someone else."

Salvation is not earned through heritage.

Not through nationality.

Not through family background.

Not through education.

Not through social standing.

Salvation is God's gift through faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul reminds believers:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

— Ephesians 2:8 (ESV)

When we understand grace, pride begins to disappear.

The ground is level at the foot of the cross.

Every believer stands before God the same way:

A forgiven sinner.

That truth has extraordinary implications.

If God has welcomed people from every tribe, language, nation, and ethnicity into His family through Christ, how can Christians refuse to welcome one another?

Jesus Broke Down Cultural Barriers

During His earthly ministry, Jesus repeatedly crossed cultural boundaries that shocked the religious leaders of His day.

He spoke publicly with the Samaritan woman (John 4), even though centuries of hostility existed between Jews and Samaritans.

He praised the faith of a Roman centurion.

He healed Gentiles.

He told the parable of the Good Samaritan, making the hero someone whom many Jewish listeners despised.

Again and again, Jesus demonstrated that compassion is not limited by ethnicity or nationality.

He looked beyond labels and saw people.

Broken people.

Hurting people.

People who needed forgiveness.

People who needed hope.

The Church must do the same.

Character Reveals the Heart

One of the greatest mistakes we can make is assuming we know someone's character before we know the person.

The Bible consistently teaches that God examines the heart.

"Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."
— 1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV)

Outward appearance may include many things—wealth, clothing, education, age, social status, or race.

God sees deeper.

He sees integrity.

Humility.

Faithfulness.

Compassion.

Truthfulness.

Likewise, God sees pride, hatred, deceit, selfishness, and cruelty.

Character is revealed by the way we live, not by the way we look.

That truth should shape how Christians interact with every person they meet.

Instead of asking, "What group does this person belong to?" perhaps we should ask, "How can I love this person as Christ loved me?"

That question changes everything.

Part 2 – The Church's Role in Healing Division

The Sin of Favoritism

One of the clearest New Testament passages addressing prejudice is found in the book of James.

James was not writing about race specifically. He was addressing favoritism based upon wealth. Yet the principle applies whenever we show partiality because of outward appearance.

James writes:

"My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory."

— **James 2:1 (ESV)**

He then illustrates the problem by describing a wealthy man entering the assembly wearing fine clothing while a poor man arrives dressed in worn garments. If believers honor the wealthy while neglecting the poor, James says they have become "judges with evil thoughts."

The issue was never merely about money.

It was about making judgments based upon external appearances rather than the heart.

How often do we do the same?

We may judge someone because of their clothing, occupation, neighborhood, education, political views, nationality, age, or race. Scripture reminds us that such judgments have no place among God's people.

The church should be the one place where people are welcomed because they bear God's image—not because they fit someone's preferred social category.

Jesus Destroyed the Walls That Divided

The Apostle Paul beautifully describes Christ's work in Ephesians.

Speaking about Jews and Gentiles, two groups separated by centuries of hostility, Paul wrote:

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His

Part 3 – Living Out the Gospel in a Divided World

The Church Must Be Different

Jesus told His disciples,

"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

— John 13:35 (ESV)

Notice that Jesus did not say the world would recognize His followers primarily by their political views, cultural backgrounds, or social status. He said they would be known by their love.

That love is not sentimental. It is sacrificial. It seeks the good of others. It tells the truth with compassion. It refuses to show favoritism, yet it also refuses to ignore injustice.

The local church should be one of the few places where people from different backgrounds worship together, pray together, serve together, and see one another first as brothers and sisters in Christ.

When the church reflects that unity, it becomes a powerful witness to the gospel.

Learning to Listen Before We Speak

Many conversations about race become unproductive because people stop listening.

Scripture offers wise counsel:

"Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger."

— James 1:19 (ESV)

Listening does not mean we will agree with every conclusion someone reaches. It does mean we take the time to understand another person's experiences before responding.

Some people have experienced racial discrimination personally.

Others have not.

Some communities carry deep historical wounds.

Others have different experiences and perspectives.

Christians should be willing to hear one another with humility, recognizing that thoughtful listening often builds trust where arguments cannot.

Rejecting Every Form of Partiality

The Bible condemns favoritism because it distorts justice.

Whether prejudice is directed toward a minority, a majority, an immigrant, a citizen, a wealthy person, or a poor person, Christians should reject it.

God's standard does not change depending on who is involved.

The Old Testament repeatedly instructed Israel not to show partiality either to the rich or to the poor.

Justice was to be impartial.

Likewise, Christians should avoid making assumptions about an individual's motives, beliefs, or character simply because of that person's racial or ethnic background.

Each person deserves to be treated as an individual made in the image of God.

Teaching the Next Generation

If we hope to see lasting change, we must begin with our children.

Children are not born hating people because they look different. They learn attitudes from the world around them.

Parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors, and mentors have the opportunity to shape the next generation by teaching biblical truth.

Teach children to respect every person.

Teach them to tell the truth.

Teach them to keep their word.

Teach them to serve others.

Teach them to admit when they are wrong.

Teach them to seek forgiveness and to forgive.

Teach them that kindness is never weakness.

Teach them that courage includes standing against prejudice wherever they encounter it.

Above all, teach them that every person they meet has been created by God and possesses immeasurable value.

The Example of the Early Church

The New Testament church was remarkably diverse.

Jews and Gentiles worshiped together.

People from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East became members of the same spiritual family.

In Antioch, church leaders came from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Acts 13:1). Their unity was not based on shared nationality but on their shared faith in Christ.

That unity was not always easy. The early church faced disagreements and misunderstandings. Yet the apostles continually pointed believers back to the gospel as the foundation for reconciliation.

The same principle remains true today.

The Vision of Heaven

One of the Bible's most beautiful pictures of eternity is found in Revelation.

John writes:

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb."
— Revelation 7:9 (ESV)

Notice what John saw.

He did not see humanity stripped of every distinction.

He saw redeemed people from every nation, tribe, people, and language worshiping Christ together.

Their diversity remained.

Their division did not.

This is God's vision for His redeemed people—not uniformity, but unity in Christ.

Bringing Our Communities Back Together

How can we move toward that vision in our communities?

First, begin with personal relationships. Get to know people as individuals rather than through stereotypes.

Second, practice hospitality. Invite neighbors, coworkers, or church members from different backgrounds into your home. Genuine friendships often accomplish more than public debates.

Third, speak carefully. Words have the power to heal or to wound. Refuse gossip, racial slurs, and careless assumptions.

Fourth, pursue justice fairly. Stand against discrimination wherever it occurs, while also remembering that every accusation and every claim deserves to be considered honestly and impartially.

Fifth, keep the gospel central. Political movements may change laws, but only Christ transforms hearts. Lasting reconciliation requires both justice and spiritual renewal.

Our Identity in Christ

The New Testament continually reminds believers that their deepest identity is found in Jesus Christ.

Our nationality matters.

Our family history matters.

Our culture matters.

But for the Christian, none of these is ultimate.

Our highest allegiance belongs to Christ.

When believers remember this truth, they become less concerned with defending personal identities and more concerned with reflecting the character of Christ.

Humility replaces pride.

Mercy tempers judgment.

Truth guides compassion.

Love overcomes fear.

A Final Challenge

The world often encourages us to see one another first through labels.

The gospel invites us to see one another first through the lens of God's creation and Christ's redemption.

This does not mean pretending that racism has never existed or that discrimination never occurs. Scripture calls us to pursue justice, defend those who are mistreated, and refuse favoritism in every form.

At the same time, Christians should resist the temptation to reduce individuals to categories or stereotypes. Every person deserves to be known as an individual, accountable for his or her own actions and worthy of dignity because each bears the image of God.

The cross reminds us that every one of us stands in need of God's grace.

The empty tomb reminds us that Christ has the power to make all things new—including broken relationships.

If the church will live out these truths, it can become a powerful testimony to a divided world.

May we reject prejudice wherever it appears.

May we seek justice with humility.

May we extend grace without compromising truth.

May we love our neighbors as ourselves.

And may we strive to reflect the heart of Christ, who came "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10), inviting people from every nation, tribe, people, and language into His kingdom.

Until that day when believers from every corner of the earth gather around the throne of God, let us remember that our calling is not to measure one another by outward appearance, but to honor the image of God in every person and encourage lives marked by faith, integrity, compassion, humility, and love.

Only then will the Church truly reflect the prayer of Jesus:

"...that they may all be one... so that the world may believe that You have sent Me."
— John 17:21 (ESV)

May our lives point others—not to ourselves, not to our differences, but to Jesus Christ, who alone can reconcile sinners to God and people to one another.

CWT Ministry Support

CWT Ministry is here to walk alongside you with:

- Prayer support
- Biblical counseling
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If you need someone to pray with you, contact:

CWT Ministry

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About The Author



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Is a teacher and servant of Christ with a passion for guiding believers into deeper intimacy with God through Scripture, prayer, and Spirit-led living. His ministry is devoted to equipping the Church to walk in truth, freedom, and faithfulness to Christ's call.

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