

## Racism & Race Baiting

### Intro – Racism in America

- It's hard to turn on the TV or scroll through social media without hearing someone talk about racism.
- Since 2001, Gallup has been polling people of all ethnicities about the subject of race in America.
  - In 2001, both white and black Americans ranked race relations in America as “good,” with 70% of blacks and 62% of whites.
  - The perception of white Americans remained virtually the same until 2013. Among black Americans, the polling numbers dropped in 2007, but rebounded until 2013.
  - In that year, the opinion of both races on race relations began to drop sharply. As of 2018, white Americans rate race relations as only “somewhat good,” while black Americans see them as “somewhat bad.”
- Does America have a serious problem with racism? If so, what can be done to alleviate it?

### 1. What is racism?

- Racism is “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.”
- The question has been asked – “If God created one race of people, then why are there now so many different races?” Anthropologists typically take God out of the equation and say that different races of people developed over many years.

- Christians denounce what we call “evolution,” but is really better called “macro-evolution.” That is, that everything began from a big bang about 14 billion years ago, and life forms evolved from simply to complex, from one species to another, over a period of billions of years.
  - BUT Christians are comfortable with “micro-evolution” because it is not contradictory to Scripture. Essentially, micro-evolution states that there are various adaptations and variations that develop within a species over a period of time, because God created our bodies to adapt.
  - In this case, the Bible says we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139). The human skin is the largest organ on the body, and as such God made our skin to adapt to different climates and exposures to the sun.
  - For that reason, those with darker skin are typically seen closest to the equator, while those with lighter skin are typically seen furthest away from the equator.
  - So, while there might be different skins types all across the world, there is only one race – the human race!! Created by God, placed in the Garden, and flourishing ever since.
  - Not everyone acknowledges that all humans are Adam's race, and even some that do still show prejudice against others simply because of their skin color or culture. That is racism.
- ### 2. What is the history of racism in America?
- The story of racism in America really begins with the Native Americans. It's an ugly part of our

history, but many Native Americans were forcibly removed from their land or killed when our European ancestors came to the New World.

- Many settlers viewed the Indians as savages simply because they were “uncivilized.” Rather than attempting to understand their culture and build bridges of co-existence, Indians were forced onto “reservations.”
- A *reservation* is an area of land managed by a Native American tribe under the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. There are approximately 310 Indian reservations in the United States, although there are more than 550 federally recognized tribes.
- The collective geographical area of all the US reservations is 55.7 million acres, or about 2.3% of the area of the United States – a fraction of where the Natives once roamed.
- And of course, the new European settlers brought slaves to the New World. As we know from history, many of those slaves were from Africa.
- Slaves were first brought to the New World at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Spanish and Portuguese settlers bring slaves from Africa to the Americas. Santo Domingo, now capital of the Dominican Republic, was the New World's first international slave port.
- In about 1562, John Hawkins, an English naval commander, established Great Britain as a leader in the slave trade. He established a triangle of trade, shipping finished goods from Europe to Africa, slaves from Africa to America, and agricultural goods from America to Europe.

- It’s interesting to note that Europeans typically did not capture their own African slaves. The slave industry had been thriving in Africa about 1,000 years before the Europeans showed up, as Africans were routinely sent north through the Sahara. The African natives simply started selling some of their own kinsmen into slavery. In 1654, a Virginia court even granted African Americans the rite to own slaves.
- Many African tribes were at war with one another when the Atlantic slave trade began. Some Africans were willing to sell those they had conquered into slavery for one big reason – guns.
- The Massachusetts Body of Liberties, the first legal code established by European colonists in the New England, legalized slavery.
- Thus Massachusetts became the first state to officially legalize slavery, while Mississippi became the last state to officially abolish it (with belated ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment) in 1995.
- As we know, the Civil War changed everything. The Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery in the southern states, and the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment ended it across America
- But sadly the end of slavery accelerated racism. Whites, who had been accustomed to enslaving blacks, now had to learn to live coexist with them and vice versa.
- During the period of reconstruction, Jim Crow laws existed across the South that mandated the segregation of black Americans from white Americans (buses, water fountains, etc.). Those laws were abolished in 1965.

- For the last 50 years, some Americans grew up in a time where it was acceptable to use the “N” word. Some have been taught since childhood that it is unthinkable. That said, roots of racism still remain. Immigration has only fueled racism against people of all races.
- It needs to be said that America’s race problem is not just white to black. Sometimes it is black to white, or white to Hispanic, or black to Asian. Racism is a problem that touches all cultures.

### 3. What is the current status of racism in America?

- In 2016, Colin Kaepernick of the San Francisco 49ers decided to sit during the national anthem during one of his preseason games. In the games to follow, he made the decision to kneel during the anthem.
- When asked why he decided to kneel during the anthem, Kaepernick and his 49ers teammate Eric Reid say they choose to kneel during the anthem to call attention to the issues of racial inequality and police brutality.
- During a post-game interview on August 26, 2016, he stated, "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder", adding that he would continue to protest during the anthem until he feels like "[the United States flag] represents what it's supposed to represent."

- Kaepernick, and many others after him, began to protest because of what they felt to be injustices that happened to people like Trayvon Martin.
- It’s probably safe to say that the actions of Kaepernick, along with the current political climates, encouraged people to get into “camps” in regard to race in America.
- Race relations in America have also been fueled for many years by white nationalist groups such as the KKK who advocated hate and violence toward people of color. White nationalists are still driven by the idea that the white/arian race is superior to every other race. But by every metric, white nationalists are in the overwhelming minority.

### 4. Are charges of racism always accurate?

- Not every charge of racism is justified, as some are guilty of a practice known as “race baiting.” Race baiting is just as heinous as racism because it continues to divide one race against another.
- Race baiting is defined as “the unfair use of statements about race to try to influence the actions or attitudes of a particular group of people.” Some call this “using the race card” to try and motivate a certain group of people to vote, protest, picket, give, etc.
- The KKK is a good example of a race baiting group. They have historically used incorrect information about black Americans, Jews, and others to keep racism alive.
- Martin Luther King is a good example of someone who advocated against both racism & race baiting, arguing for love and equal opportunity.

- While some in the white community have taken their lead from the hate-filled KKK, some in the black community have elected to take their lead from Malcolm X, rather than Dr. King.
- In my opinion, leaders such as Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Louis Farrakhan, and others have continued Malcolm X's race baiting for economic reasons. If both races were to reconcile their difference, race baiters from both sides would lose their platform and their income.

#### 5. What does the Bible say about racism?

- We've already touched on this. According to Scripture there is only one race – the human race!! Any attempt to divide people along lines of skin color is ungodly and immoral.
- In the Book of Numbers, Miriam and Aaron contended with Moses because he married an Ethiopian woman (Num. 12:1). We don't know if her motivations were purely racial, but racism seemed to play a part.
- As a result, Miriam was struck with leprosy and forced to remain outside the camp for 7 days.
- Sometimes well-meaning people have argued against inter-racial relationships based on God's command to Israel that they should not marry women from other cultures. We need to understand – God's prohibition was not racially motivated – it was spiritually motivated!
- Of course, our Savior Jesus loved and ministered to everyone regardless of race, gender, economics, etc. He judged each person according to their faith.

- God has commanded us not to judge people on their outward appearance. The Bible says, "the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
- It's worthy to note that the early church took the Gospel to every continent they could reach. Paul said the Gospel is for the wealthy, the poor, kings, barbarians, etc. Anyone of any race is free to receive the grace of God (Rev. 22:17).
- Dr. MLK said we should judge people not on the color of their skin but the content of their character.
- As Christians, Jesus has called us not to erect barriers but to build bridges. Andrae Crouch sang, "You're my brother, you're my sister, so take me by the hand. Together we will work until He comes. There's no foe who can defeat us when we're walking side by side. As long as there is love, we will stand."

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)*