

## Renewing Your Mind: Thinking Biblically Part 3

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*Renewing Your Mind*

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*Lord, as we come to your Word tonight, and as we come to deal with very difficult and complex issues, we rejoice that you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. And we acknowledge our great weakness, our inadequacy to these things. And we rejoice that your Word is absolutely able to accomplish its purpose in our hearts, in our lives. And so, we pray that you would send forth your Word. That you would send forth your light and your truth. Let them lead us to your holy hill, to the place of your habitation. For the glory of Christ, we pray in his name, Amen.*

Alright, this evening we are continuing to look at this concept of renewing our minds by trying to be transformed through the Word, not to be conformed to the pressures of an ungodly world and ungodly thought patterns. We've been looking the last couple of weeks at a couple of different things. Two weeks ago, we looked at, remember we've been looking at kind of blending together Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be ye transformed," with Colossians 2:8, which we looked at on Sunday mornings a couple of weeks. "See to it that there is no one who takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world, rather than in accordance with Christ."

And so, we've been saying that there is a sense in which part of what not being conformed to the world is, is recognizing how the elementary principles of the world are making their way into the church, into the Christian mind, into our thinking. And we have to recognize those, and through the power of the Word reject them, and replace them with biblical thinking, with biblical concepts. And so, we've looked at a couple of those elementary principles for those how those elements or these principles sort of come into the church. We looked at two weeks ago, it's not your fault. You're not responsible. That's a basic underlying principle that starts way back in the garden of Eden. We looked at that two weeks ago. Then last week, we looked at this common concept today. Your ethnicity is your identity. And we said both of those things are not right. The Bible tells us to take responsibility for our sin. Though we may be clearly affected by society, affected by our parents, affected by our DNA, by our biology, those things are not determinative. They have impact, but the determinative influence on what you and I do is our own heart according to Scripture. And then last week we saw that though ethnicity is a part of who we are, it's a part of what God has created us to be, it is not our identity when we've come to Christ.

And so, today we're going to look at another one. We're actually going to look at sort of two. One's kind of like a preliminary brief introductory one, and then the main one that we're going to look at. So really, it's one and one half in a sense. And the half is coming first. We're not going to spend a lot of time on this, but this is, I think, something that is a concept that we can think and believe but is not true. It needs to be unpacked a little bit. And that is, the situation before us regarding social justice, the church, is simple and straightforward. I am saying that is an error. It's not simple and straightforward. But it is regarded, in a sense, often by folks on both sides as simple and straightforward. That it's just simple, straightforward, and clear.

Now, there are simple, straightforward, and clear truths of Scripture that speak to it, but this whole thing is very tangled, and, to me, as I dig into it more and more, I feel like I am trying to pull, you know, like a roll of yarn that has been unwound and then rerolled back up, and it's got stuff in it, and it's different colors of yarns. It's like, "Oh my goodness. It's going to be a mess to untangle this!" And I think that's really a good analogy of what things are. But there tends to be a sense in which there is a tendency for us to oversimplify it in our own minds, and then we end up missing each other as we talk to one another.

You know, on the advocates of social justice, we'll take a look at some things in a simple, straightforward way, and we'll conclude disparities prove injustice. Disparities prove oppression. And so, disparities in income, wealth, education, employment, rates of incarceration, disparities among racial groups in those various ways, you know, when you look at one race versus another race, and I am just the word race, because that's what's in the culture. Really there is only one race, Adam's race. Well, there is two races, Adam's race and Christ's race. Those who were all born into the world in Adam's race and by God's race were born again into Christ's people.

But for the sake of understanding, and talking, and dialoging with the world, the term race is used in basically, biblically it's more ethnicity. But anyway, so, the idea is as you look at different ethnic groups, you see disparities in average income, disparities in average accrued wealth, disparities in average educational achievement, disparities in particular employment in different fields, disparities in rates of incarceration, and the disparities themselves are assumed to prove the system is corrupt.

It's a very simplistic analysis. And I think when you look deeper, you see that there are a lot of problems with that analysis. It leaves out way more than it takes in. But on the other hand, the opponents of social justice can also be simplistic, overly simplistic, in their approach to this argument. And they can assume that, you know, because of advances in the last sixty years they can, you know, say, "America is the freest and fairest country. All we need to do is provide equal opportunity under the law, and then everything will take care of itself." Well, that's an overly simplistic understanding as well. There are some abiding impacts of things that we need to really take a deeper look at, if we're really going to try to address the issues.

And so, anyway, it's not that simple, not that straightforward. I mean, for instance, among those who, and I'm basically, we'll just say, of course, I am mostly an opponent of the social justice movement. I think the social justice movement, by and large, is really missing it. That said, I understand there are some valid points that we need to hear and have been a blessing to me as I have considered them to reexamine some things. So, I want us to, I'm just laying my cards on the table. I know that those of you who know me already know that, but if somebody is watching for the first time, just laying my cards on the table for you. That that's where I am coming from. I think that that's the accurate biblical analysis comes down to say mostly the problem, the worldview that influences the social justice advocate position is an unbiblical worldview, a more unbiblical worldview than the other. And both are unbiblical to some extent, but one is much more unbiblical than the other. Not to say that there's not validity. It's like I said, there is. On both sides there is some valid observations.

But so, we can tend to, those on the anti-social justice movement, can tend to underrecognize the impact of the past. We can tend to undervalue the negative impact of Jim Crow laws, red lining, slavery, a failure to understand the impact of the culture that led to lynchings and horrible injustices. And these are things that we should not be satisfied with a shallow understanding of these issues. These issues are too complex. We're talking about human souls. We're talking about the need to pursue in the body of Christ. Now, we can't fix everything out there. We're really trying to get to the body of Christ. But these things are pressing in on us. So, we have to talk about them.

But we have to be willing to look deeper. And we have to be willing to listen to one another. So, that's something that tends to be underrecognized on the part of anti-social justice folks. That is the harm that America's past has done. And to look at some legitimate concerns in the present. What are some things that really are happening in the present? Are there things? Is equal opportunity, really is it that simple? There is some validity that we need to consider.

Okay, so, on the other side though, social justice advocates tend to devalue America's present. They tend to underrecognize the impact of the last sixty years since the Civil Rights Movement. They tend to undervalue America's positive history. And there is a sense in which both sides tend to not want to see things in full context. It's a narrow focus. And so, we need to be challenged to really look at things with a little more care and consideration.

Now, all of that said, I don't think it's a moral equivalency. I do think that the more biblical brothers that I see in the church are lining up more on the side of seeing social justice is a grave danger to the church. But that said, don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. So, what is that? What can we do? Let me give you an example of something that I think is part of what I have reconsidered a little bit because of this. You know, our church is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was that way when I came. The church was founded in 1983. I came in 1993 as the pastor. It was already a Southern Baptist Church. And so, we still are technically affiliated to become an un-Southern Baptist Church. You have to request that in writing. Basically, they want to keep all the

churches they can and all the numbers they can. They're happy to keep you on the roll. Even though, for a while we weren't getting any money or anything at all, and we get very little actually, because we weren't thrilled with the direction of the SPCs, particularly in the first fifteen years that I was pastor.

But anyway, so, the convention turned around in some ways. There were some positive movements, a real growth in the number of Reformed Southern Baptist Churches that accept the doctrines of the Reformation. Anyway so, we've gotten a little more involved in local association and even in giving some money to the larger entities. One of the things that though I had never thought about until recently is the name "The Southern Baptist Convention." I mean, it crossed my mind. I remember maybe considering it sometime in the nineties. It came up as a resolution. But there was not any serious consideration to that. Well, the Southern Baptist Convention was founded in 1845, not entirely, but largely about the issue of the North and the South differences over slavery.

And so, the Southern Baptist Convention has a history from the beginning of being aligned with, not, it's like I said, this isn't as simplistic as people think. But it nevertheless, a significant part of it is clearly associated with that issue of slavery. And so, given that, I think it's something that should be a conversation in the SPC. Should we change our name? I would be very open to that. I think it would probably be the right thing to do. This myself, I would like to dialogue about it, but it's not something you rush and do in the same iconoclastic exercise we've seen over the last year of everybody tearing down monuments. You don't rush to do that.

Godly people do that in a reasoned, thoughtful, careful process. You have a real conversation. And a conversation requires both sides to speak and both sides to listen. Otherwise, you have a monologue. Okay? And we need a conversation. That's something that I think we should look at. And that said, there is a sense in which, one of the things that is probably most, one of the more discouraging things to me is that in 1845 when those delegates met in Augusta, Georgia to found the Southern Baptist Convention, they were at that time Calvinistic. Most of the guys there were Calvinistic. So, the founders of the convention, this is why the Founders Conference is a group of Reformed Southern Baptists who believe in the doctrines of grace, the five points of Calvinism. That's the reformed soteriology, the doctrine of salvation.

And I believe these truths are precious biblical truths, and these brothers that were a part of that convention, many of them wrote some great theology, and not all of them uniformly were supporting slavery. It's like I said, it's more complex than that. But it definitely was something they failed in an opportunity in history to speak out clearly from God's Word about. They tried to introduce the dignity of all human beings at that point in time, and there is some sense in which that needs to be considered and weighed. I'm just bringing that up to say, you see there is value in the conversation. It's not as simplistic as we might first think. But the fact that they missed it on this particular area doesn't mitigate the validity in extraordinary contribution that these men had. It doesn't mean they weren't Christians. It doesn't mean they weren't godly. You have to, it's a very surface and prideful arrogance that assumes you can prejudge people without trying to

get back more carefully into their circumstances. And this is just something that happens all over the place today.

You know, they tear down statues of people. Abraham Lincoln's statue torn down. You know, Frederick Douglas statue torn down. Crazy things happening. But Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, let's get rid of all of them. Well, that's obviously absurd. And you have to put yourself in the place of people. C. S. Lewis has a very helpful concept. He speaks of chronological snobbery. He says, now, Lewis was a classics professor. Many of his great books you are aware of, but he studied the ancient classics. He was a literature professor. He had read all of the great classic works back of the Greek works before the coming of Christ and after.

And so, he coined this term "chronological snobbery" where he said, "For someone to look back and to judge someone in another time and condemn them without understanding and really trying to get into the mind and situation of all they were experiencing is nothing less than chronological snobbery." And he says, "You need to be careful, because if they could look at you today, they would point out your hypocrisy and your foolishness as well, because they could see things that we don't see today." We see some things so clearly they didn't see. But they see some things so clearly we don't see. And if we have a biblical view of man, we believe that man is not advancing like evolutionists do in getting better. We believe man is the same. That there is nothing new under the sun.

And so, we need to be humble in the way we evaluate people's contributions. Things are not as simple as they first appear. They require careful and thoughtful analysis. They require a real investigation, not simplistic assumption and condemnation. Now, that said, I want to move to turn the corner to actually what I want to talk about this evening, which is another one of these things that has seeped into the church through the culture. And this is some voices matter more. Some voices matter more.

This is something that is really being imbibed from the culture in the evangelical church. And it comes, I was listening to Voddie Baucham, and of course I read his book "Thought Lines." It's an excellent book. But in an interview, he was talking about this. Voddie Baucham, if you don't know him, he is an African American pastor who is now working in Africa as the dean of a Christian university there. But he was born in South Central Los Angeles, raised part of the time there and part of the time in Texas, came to faith in college, played college football, and he is really just an outstanding pastor. You've probably heard him preach if you've listened to anything on homeschooling. He's been a leader there. But he's just an excellent theologian in general, and he's spoken a lot about this issue. And in the interview, he talked about that one of the things that is concerning is this idea that is seeping into the church that elevates some voices above others.

Now, do you hear what I am saying? Elevates some voices above others. And Voddie says, "This is basically said in kind of three ways." He says, "We need to listen to the voices of the marginalized. We need to hear the experiences of the oppressed. We need to

elevate black voices.” These are the things he calls out as dangerous. Now, let me explain this. We’ve got to be careful as we evaluate this and wise, because what I am saying is, some voices matter more is the error.

And what I am going to tell you is all voices matter. And there is no sense in which one voice matters more than another. The only voice that matters more than another is the voice of God in the pages of Scripture. And that carries the day. When your voice, or my voice, contradict what God has to say, you and I are wrong. But all voices matter. No voices matter more than others. Now, that said, yes, we need to listen to all voices. And the concern is that some voices have not been listened to. And I think that’s probably, again, it’s not a simplistic all the way one or the other. No, there is a sense in which that’s true. And we need to listen to one another. We need to listen to those who have different perspective than we have.

The church is a place where all voices need to be heard. So, that’s what we’re going to talk about this evening. What does the Bible say about that? Do some voices matter more than others? Because essentially the idea is since the idea in the culture is that the voices of the marginalized and the voices of the oppressed matter more. I was listening to an evangelical who went to the same seminary I went to. [unintelligible] Reformed Theological Seminary. And he is a person I think who is not seeing this correctly, not seeing it biblically. In a message I listened to, he basically said that the people who have experienced depression and injustice have the clearest understanding of what justice looks like. So that what he’s doing is saying that if you’ve experienced injustice, you are an authority to say what justice is.

Now, where do you get that mindset? Not from the pages of Scripture. The pages of Scripture would say that everyone needs to be able to speak, and we need to hear from all, and that we need to not be partial to any. But that we don’t elevate some above others. In fact, Voddie Baucham calls this ethnic Gnosticism. The idea that we need to elevate black voices above white voices. We need to elevate the voice of the marginalized above the voice of the majority. That is that there is the idea that there’s an availability of knowledge that only the oppressed can have. And this is a part of critical race theory and the social justice movement. They actually believe that.

I mean, let’s give you some points that you can find in various places, but essentially principles of CRT, critical race theory, the world is best viewed through the lens of a group oppression narrative. This is, now, I am talking about worldly social justice right now. Now, I will say that I believe that this is coming into the church a lot more than people are acknowledging or realizing. And I think it’s even evident in Tisbe was saying. But the first point, the world is best viewed through the lens of a group of oppression narrative.

The second point is the inequity between groups, the observed inequities between groups, is unassailable evidence of oppression. This is the critical race theory’s analysis of kind of how to think about life. It’s a worldview. And so, they look, and they see inequities, and they conclude this proves oppression.

And thirdly, and this is where it gets interesting and relative to what we're saying, and this is the mindset of the social justice movement. Listen to this. "Profitable and effective dialogue in understanding between groups is impossible since the dominant groups unconscious goals are to retain its power." If you've read much about this, you've watched things. You've seen this kind of thinking. The idea is that the dominant group cannot understand, and the very fact that they give any pushback to the narrative that's being articulated from those who believe they are being oppressed is proof that they're racist and proof that they cannot understand. Your white privilege blinds you, for instance. This is the kind of thing that Robin Diangelo says and that Abraham Kennedy and others who are secular proponents of social justice, but who are looked to by many in the evangelical church as resources to help them think about these issues.

So, profitable and effective dialogue and understanding between groups is impossible since the dominant groups unconscious goals are to retain its power. So, there is really no listening to one side. There is really the sense, and Voddie said it this way, that basically the idea is that in this culture, this is the argument, is that whites cannot do righteousness in relation to racism, because of the wiring of the system and their desire, their unconscious bias and desire, to oppress and to participate in the system.

And the idea is that you don't know that you are a racist, but that your participation in the system is what you unconsciously want, and therefore you have nothing really valuable to say. The culture believes you have nothing valuable to say. Well, it comes into the church as, "Hey some voices have more value than other voices." Do you see how that would come in? And so, that we need to elevate some voices above others.

No, biblically that just doesn't wash. Biblically we need to listen to all voices. And ultimately, we all need to sit down or get on our knees before the voice of God. Now, basically I think there are three things the Scripture would tell us about listening to one another. And the first things is this. Everyone needs to listen. Everyone needs to listen. James 1:19-20.

"You know this, my beloved brothers and sisters. Now everyone," everyone, "must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger." Everyone without distinction. Slow to speak and slow to anger, but quick to hear. That is run to hear, not to speak. So, we all need to be willing to listen. We all need to work harder at listening than at speaking. And that doesn't mean some people in the church because of social structures are disqualified. Do you see that? The church, the Bible does not foresee that kind of nonsense. It just doesn't think in those categories. And the reality is, every culture in every time has had injustice, including first century. Roman society, injustice was everywhere. But there was no discussion of social systemic oppression.

The call was for Christians to follow Christ and serve one another and serve others. So, everyone needs to listen. Everyone needs to cultivate a heart that is not only quick to hear, but slow to speak and slow to anger. We're to cultivate and restrain our anger and listen to one another. You see how this is necessary to have a real relationship, isn't it?

We have to cultivate this. We have to become meek. In fact, this idea, it shows how effective it is in helping you speak.

2 Timothy 2:24-26. Really helpful passage here. This is aimed at, I mean Paul is telling Timothy how to be, but it's an example for all of us. He is talking about false teaching in the church here as well. We were talking about how false teaching is something. It's everywhere in the early church. And it's everywhere throughout all history. You see it here. Verse 23 of chapter 2, 2 Timothy.

“But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.” There is sometimes you just don't need to have the conversation. People are trying to just, they're foolish and ignorant speculations. They're not talking about the things of God. So, and those we refuse those. But it doesn't mean that we don't have conversation with people who are open to conversation, because it goes on to say, “The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, skillful in teaching, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition.” There is a lot said right there. “The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome.” That is literally a fighter. The Lord's bond-servant must not be someone who is ready, and the idea here is, it's actually from a word which means sword, it's hand to hand combat. The Lord's bond-servant must not be someone who is ready to go to hand-to-hand combat right away. You know, a death match on every, just ready to argue, ready to destroy, ready to murder people with your tongue. But instead, must be kind to all.

Interesting word. It only occurs, that word “kind,” it only occurs twice in the New Testament. Here and 1 Thessalonians 2:7 where it says that Paul is saying, “When I was with you, I was gentle like a nursing mother with her children.” That word “gentle” there is the word “kind” here. And so, the word, the idea is, think about a nursing mother how gentle she is with her children. You're not to be a fighter when you have dialogue with other believers. You're to be gentle like a nursing mother. I mean, I was watching the golf tournament the other day, and this guy wins. If you guys are watching, you might have watched the U.S open. A few of you did. Yeah.

And so, when John Rahm wins the tournament, he's got a little baby. Do you remember when his wife walks up with the little baby, and he's trying to get his little son from her, and that little baby has got his mom's hair in his hand, and he's pulling on it. I mean, you can see her. But you know, she didn't go bam! “What are you doing?” Of course not, it's a mother with her child. You saw her take her hand and put her hand on her little baby's hand, and she just held it, and she pulled her hair out from his hand very gently, very kindly. That's how we should be with one another.

And Paul is saying to Timothy, “You should be like this, even with those in the church who are opposing you.” Kind to all. Able to teach. Patient when wronged. This is another rich word. The idea is to stand up in the face of evil, and pain, and attack. It's to stand up, even though this is happening. So, there is a gentleness like a nursing mother and yet a strength of conviction and commitment, but that doesn't attack even then. It's still patient. You're standing up, and you're taking the wounds. But what are you doing?



He goes on next, but you're not just being silent. You have this attitude, and then you are speaking at the right time with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition. Correcting. You're setting, trying to set them straight. You are trying to speak the truth. You're not saying, "All voices are equally valid." That's not what we're saying. You understand that. All voices matter doesn't mean all voices are equally valid. Not at all. Test everything. Hold to that which is good. But we should love one another enough to want to hear from one another. Right?

So, all voices do matter, because all people matter. This, even at this with gentleness. This is the word that is often translated meekness. And so, it speaks of an outward disposition that's hard to be offended. This speaks of someone who is not easily offended at all. And the reason not easily offended, this word "meekness" is such a rich word, it actually, it's translated gentleness because think about gentleness as the outside of meekness. You know, you can't get a rise of someone. They're gentle. Not easily offended. But this word goes deeper than that. It's not just the outward gentleness. Meekness is an inner disposition of heart.

Vines puts it this way in his dictionary. "It's an inner disposition of the heart where the believer regards God's dealings with him as right in all circumstances." So, this means that what happens, the reasons you're gentle with people is because you know that God is the one who is sovereign over everything that is happening to you. And if you're being attacked, if you're experiencing evil hostility against you, God has allowed it, and your calling is to represent him well, and you're not so much focusing on the person who is attacking you as the God who is watching you and calling you to represent him in the moment. And it's the assurance that God is sovereign gives you that gentleness. Do you see that?

So, kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition. And look what happens. If you do all that, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth. This sovereignty of God, you do what God calls you to do, be like this by the power of the Holy Spirit, by looking to Christ, by speaking the truth in love, but listen. Ultimately, they're only going to stop opposing if God grants them repentance. God must give them repentance. That calls forth humility. It's not your ability to persuade. You're supposed to try to persuade, but ultimately that won't carry the day. The electing purpose of God will carry the day.

"If perhaps God will grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." One of the things that you also see is that the heart of a person who is really being godly in dialogue with other believers, when someone's really in error, and you're convinced they are, you know that God must grant them repentance, and the reality is they are ensnared by the devil. And so, compassion is the order of the day. So, every side needs to listen. And this idea, this attitude, now, secondly, every side needs to be ready to speak.

And we saw that in that as well. That the idea Ephesians 4:15. “Speaking the truth in love.” One of the things that shows you that we all need to listen, and we all need to be ready to speak is fifty-eight times in the New Testament you find a Greek word *allos* which is translated with two English words. And the two English words are “one another.” Fifty-eight times encourage one another. Teaching one another. Admonish one another. Love one another. Serve one another. Pray for one another. Confess your sins to one another. Love one another!

The Scripture pictures a relationship where believers are involved in each other’s lives with a mutuality and a reciprocity. And the only thing that makes, is it the arbiter of whether our voice is, needs to be heeded or not, we all need to be listened to, but whether it needs to be heeded, that is take what’s being said and change accordingly, is the Scripture. Is it biblical? That’s the test.

It doesn’t matter how strongly you feel something. It doesn’t matter what your experience has been. I mean, it matters only because, your experience matters, because we care about one another, and we love one another, and we care about what has happened. But experience is not the arbiter of truth. Emotion is not the arbiter of truth. Truth is objective. And truth is found in the Word of God. You can feel things that are completely wrong. And you can feel things that are a lot right, and a lot wrong. And it’s the Word of God that navigates us through these things.

So, everyone needs to listen. Everyone needs to speak. And thirdly, everyone needs to submit to God’s Word. Everyone needs to bow the knee to God’s Word. You’re in 2 Timothy. Just turn over a page to chapter 3. This is one of the most damaging things about imbibing critical race theory into the church is that it attacks the sufficiency of Scripture. It’s not a direct intentional attack, I know that, by most people that are doing it. But it is, nevertheless, like letting in the Trojan Horse to let critical theory into the church in any way.

2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.” Verse 16 is the inerrancy of Scripture. Verse 17 is the sufficiency of Scripture. Do you see that? Inerrancy. All Scripture is God breathed, or inspired by God. Every single word on the page, all that which is written is literally the way that word “scripture” means, doesn’t just mean the thoughts. It means the writing. What the author wrote on the page, [unintelligible], is God breathed.

And it’s profitable. And this begins to get at the idea of sufficiency here. “It’s profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” So, you need to correct those who are in opposition. How do you do it? With the Word of God. But verse 17 makes it absolutely clear. “So that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.” The Word of God has all that you need for every single good work that you will be called to do. The Word of God is sufficient.

And there are some who are saying things like, and this is one of the things that happened at the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention, they actually made a statement, and it passed, because it was kind of a, Voddie Baucham brings this up in his book, it was sort of a, it's a long story, I'm not going to go into it, but the resolutions committee kind of pulled a fast one, changed a resolution that had been submitted and made it, radically changed it to say, "Hey, critical race theory and intersectionality are tools that are valuable for us to use in the church. We don't believe everything about it, but they're valuable." And the reality is, they're not valuable at all. They're completely and essentially critical race theory and intersectionality these ideas, intersectionality is the idea that, again groups, it divides everything into groups, and everything is a conflict between the majority and the minority, and so you need to see what group you're in when it comes to race, what group you're in when it comes to sex, what group you're in when it comes to sexual preference, what group you are in when it comes to economic realities, all these things intersectionality. And critical theory is some of the things I shared with you earlier. It's all about groups too.

Well, the reality is that that is a, there is nothing productive. It's like saying, Voddie mentioned this, he said, "It's like saying, 'you know, we know that Hinduism is about nirvana, and reincarnation, and, you know, meditation, ungodly meditation, and all that, but we want to take, we want to spit out the bones and keep the meat of Hinduism and bring it into the church.'" That's what people are doing with critical theory. They're saying, "We want to spit out the bones and bring in the meat." And the reality is, there is nothing but poison there. And whatever is there can be found in the Scriptures. And the reality is the Bible speaks to the issue of how we treat different ethnic groups.

It's sufficient to that. You know there are places where the Bible doesn't speak clearly. The Bible doesn't speak clearly to mathematics. The Bible doesn't speak clearly maybe to every musical instrument and how you teach it. And so, there are other things that we do. The Bible doesn't speak clearly to all forms of biochemistry, and so, there are other things that we research, and we let the Bible still be the lens through which we look at. But when we come to issues like racism, the Bible speaks clearly and directly to that. The Bible calls the sin of racism is a subset of the sin of partiality, which the Bible talks about a lot. James 2:1-9. All kinds of verses in the Old Testament which we, Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 1:17, Romans 2:11, and the way that the Old Testament word and the New Testament word for partiality, it's interesting, both the Hebrew word in the Old Testament and the Greek word in the New Testament have the idea of seeing the face and acting accordingly.

So, when the Bible says in Leviticus 19:15, "Show no partiality." Now, listen. Leviticus 19:15 is interesting. It says, "Show no partiality to the poor." It says, "Don't show partiality to the poor man over the rich man." And so, the other places, "Don't show partiality to the poor man over the rich man." It's basically saying, "You are not to be a respecter of persons and looking at surface things to decide issues of justice and righteousness." When there is a dispute, you are not to look at the face. That is, both, like I said, Old and New Testament, both have this idea. The New Testament word, same thing. It's to receive the face. Literally, that's what it says in the Greek.

So, it means like you're judging, you're the judge, and you recognize this person, "Oh, I know you." And it changes the way you judge the case, the merits of the case. God hates that. Romans 2:11 says, "There is no partiality with God." That is, same word, there is no looking at the countenance or the face and judging his judgment with God. So, the Scripture does speak to these things, and we need to look at that. We looked at this last week some with the issue of the ethnicity and identity, because the Scripture says so much about that. And the Bible will help us even think biblically about how to look at even the issues in the culture.

I think if we take, if we're willing to look deeper into these issues, we can come to deeper understandings of how God wants us to walk in obedience to him in these difficult times. Not super easy. But it's not beyond what we can do. The Lord has given us the tools that we need in the Scriptures. But the problem is, as I was mentioning, the worldview. You know, if you start thinking that in terms of groups, if you accept the idea that what we need to do is look at disparities among groups and think about that and think about in terms of oppressor and oppressed, then you start seeing people through those lenses. And ironically, you start judging people by the color of the skin rather than the content of their character. You don't judge them based on how they treat other people. In fact, this is part of critical race theory. It doesn't matter how individuals treat other individuals. The system is corrupt. And therefore, people who are supporting the system are for that reason being racist. And they're judged as racist because of the color of their skin, not the content of their character. It's interesting that the Civil Rights Movement was about stopping people from judging people by the color of their skin.

You know, you look back at, we watched a movie the other night as family, movie Woodlawn. How many of you have seen that? Woodlawn. I recommend it. It's a good movie. It's a true story about an African American young man in Birmingham who played football for Woodlawn Highschool, which was kind of neat. We lived in Birmingham for three years, so I even had driven by there. I never heard the story though. But his name was Tony Nathan. And we're watching along through the movie, and I didn't know it was even a true, I mean, I knew it was basically a true story, but I didn't know anything about where this goes. And so, as we're watching, I'm like, "Gosh, I recognize that. That guy played for Alabama later." He's in high school at this point. And he plays against this other guy named Jeff Rutledge, who also played for Alabama. Do any of you guys know these names at all? I wish somebody was a kindred spirit here with me, because I was like, "Man!" Craig, do you remember? Yeah, there you go. Alright Craig. Amen. Let's watch a ball game soon.

But one of the things that was so painful though, this is 1973. And Birmingham had a really exceptionally evil history of racism in the 60's. Bombing of churches, black churches. Horrible things done. Governor George Wallace a leading outspoken racist. Martin Luther King, remember he wrote letters from a Birmingham jail? Jailed in Birmingham. Well, so that's, you think that's over in one sense in 64 with the Civil Rights Amendment. And by that time that schools are integrated, but in 1973, they integrated Woodlawn Highschool. And in the integrating of Woodlawn Highschool, you

saw again the ugly underbelly of white racism. And it was painful to watch. And you realize this is happening still then. But, you know, the great thing about the movie though, is that it's about the power of Christ in bringing unity on that football team, Woodlawn Highschool, and how the blacks and whites came together in Jesus, because there was a man there who inserted himself into the process. And through him many of them got saved, including, apparently, the coach at the high school. The gospel is not super clear in the movie. I always wish they would do a better job of that. It's like they need somebody counseling and consulting them on that. But I appreciate the thing and the movie, and it's about maybe four or five years old. A really good movie.

But it just reminds you again there is so much still that we need to be listening to. If you've been a part of that, if that was your son or your grandson going through what he went through, it would have, you would have scars. And so, this is why we have to all listen to one another, care for one another, and we all have to repent where we have sinned. And we have to pursue one another with love. And when we do that, realizing that we have to listen to every voice, but it's not a one-way street like the culture thinks it is. It doesn't mean we just listen to people who've been through, victims of racism. We listen to everyone and everyone's perspective.

And ultimately, we listen to the Word of God. And if we do that, we keep our focus on Christ. And Christ is one who makes us one in the end anyway. When we are walking with Jesus' love, and joy, and peace, and patience, and kindness, and goodness, and faithfulness, and gentleness, and self-control are coming out, and we are seeing those things in relationship to one another, it's not easy to pursue unity, but we have everything necessary in Jesus Christ and the cross of Christ.

And so, we have to remember we can't think unbiblically. We can't think some voices matter more than others. The world says that. The world is wrong. All voices matter, because all people matter to God. And everyone should matter. Every other believer should be precious to you and me. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

*Our Father, we thank you for your kindness and, Lord, for your mercy in Jesus Christ. That you've not treated us as our sins deserve, but you have opened our eyes to see our own guilt, our own prejudice, our own rebellion against you, and our own lovelessness towards others, our own self exaltation and pride. And in Jesus Christ, you have broken the power of those things for everyone who belongs to you. You have set us free. And we have to walk in that freedom. We have to continually abide in Christ. We have to pursue the filling of the Spirit and growing in the knowledge of God and of Christ and the Word. But as we do, we can walk in unity. We can walk in deeper love for one another, and, Lord, help us to pursue one another. Help us to pursue true oneness in Christ. Make us more like Jesus. Make us more of what you have called us to be, one just as you are one. So that the world may know, Lord Jesus, that the Father sent you. We pray this in your name, Amen.*

Alright, thank you guys for being here tonight.