

"Built for Action: Powered by the Spirit!"

"Time to Pull Together" Core 40

"He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place." Acts 17:26

A. Let's begin with these foundational understandings...

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:11

1. We are all created by God.

"Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person." Genesis 2:7

2. We are all made in God's image.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make human beings in Our image, to be like Us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.'" Genesis 1:26

3. We are all one family.

"From one man He created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and He determined their boundaries." Acts 17:26

4. We are all loved by God.

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

B. Racism in our world...

Racism: "Attributing to one race intrinsic superiority or valuing it above one another and then treating others as undesirable or evil. Racism is about making quick judgments on the characteristics of a race, to rate them as inferior or superior – demonstrating partiality or bias."

1. Racism is sin. Racism is favoritism.

"It is a massive, global, history-long, devastating, bloody, murderous problem. For example, the Armenian Genocide in Turkey in 1915 — a million slaughtered Armenians. Holocaust in Germany: six million. Who knows how many tens of millions in the Soviet Gulags under Stalin? The massacres in Rwanda in 1994, the Japanese slaughter of six million Chinese, Indonesians, Koreans, Filipinos and Indo-Chinese — a litany of history-long bloodletting all in the name of ethnicity or race. That is because humans are in rebellion against God."

2. Racism comes from a fractured worldview, rather than a godly worldview.

When we reject God's view of life, we run the risk of devaluing all life...valuing some lives over others. Treating some with greater or lesser value.

3. Racism is taught.

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love." -Nelson Mandela

4. Racism divides.

God's purpose is for us to have unity. We are called to be a model for the world, not for the world to be telling us about how to act or react. Billy Graham modeled that in the turbulent '60s.

5. Racism continues to exist.

"Our salvation certainly changes the way we relate to God, and our new identity should impact the way we relate to believers and to the unsaved. On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered one of the most inspiring speeches ever given on American soil. From the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., King preached about freedom for all men and denounced the chains of segregation and discrimination that crippled so many of our nation's citizens. His closing exhortation '... for all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentile, Protestants and Catholics to join hands and sing the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at Last,"' remains an ongoing struggle in the United States.

As followers of Christ, we must take the challenge of Martin Luther King Jr. one step further. While he dreamed of a society where 'children would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,' Christians have a higher calling that directs our relationships with others.

We are called to go beyond the content of character and to relate to individuals on the basis of God's grace."

6. Racism isn't a new issue in our world.

It existed among Jews, between Jews and Gentiles, and among all people groups. Culture was more a problem than color. Moses' wife was black, Joseph took Mary and Jesus to live in Africa, Simon of Cyrene carried the cross, and Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 2, Acts 10, and Acts 19 all brought unity.

C. God created us to be one...

1. God cares about all people.

"For the LORD your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed. He ensures that orphans and widows receive justice. He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing. So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt." Deuteronomy 10:17-19

2. God does not show favoritism.

"Then Peter replied, 'I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation He accepts those who fear Him and do what is right.'" Acts 10:34-35
"But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law." James 2:9

3. God removes hostility and introduces harmony.
"But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to Him through the blood of Christ. For Christ Himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in His own body on the cross, He broke down the wall of hostility that separated us." Ephesians 2:13-14

4. God desires a heavenly picture of unity!

"After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar,

'Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!'" Revelation 7:9-10

D. God calls us to "grace relations" ...

1. God calls all of us to grow spiritually.

"Peter told them, 'You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean. So I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me.'" Acts 10:28-29

"You can't go with God and stay where you are." -Henry Blackaby

2. God calls all of us to go faithfully.

*"So Peter invited the men to stay for the night. The next day he went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa."
Acts 10:23*

3. God calls all of us to show mercy.

"Then Peter replied, 'I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation He accepts those who fear Him and do what is right.'" Acts 10:34-35

4. God calls all of us to unity!

*"He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in Him will have their sins forgiven through His name."
Acts 10:43*