

# CRUSHING RACISM AT ITS ROOT

## Series: Division, Racism and the Heart of a Contagious Christian

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### NOTES

TEXT: Acts 6:1-7

## I. GOD, RACE AND THE BIBLE: 6 Theological Facts

### **We are all created by God.**

The Bible clearly condemns all forms of racism and views every person as sacred and equally valuable. Gen 1:27

### **We are all descended from the same parents.**

"The Lord "made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" Acts 17:26

### **Each person is equally welcome to salvation in Christ.**

"God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim 2:4

### **Every person is equally valuable to God.**

"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" - Gal 3:28 - To summarize: "God shows no partiality" Acts 10:34

### **All people will be equally valuable in heaven.**

"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..." Rev 7:9

### **We are to love all people unconditionally.**

"If you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors." James 2:9

## II. MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EARLY CHURCH

### 1. THE CONTEXT

"Now in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplying"

Acts 6  
v1

### 2. THE CONFLICT

"There arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists"

v2

### 3. THE CAUSE

"...Their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food"

v1

### 4. THE CONCERN

"It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God; and we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word"

v2,4

### 5. THE COUNSEL

"...Choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom"

v3

### 6. THE CHOICE

"This proposal pleased the whole group, they chose..."

### 7. THE CONSEQUENCE

"Then the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly..."

v7

### III. WHY ARE PEOPLE RACIST?

- 1. The Family We're Born Into** - A lot of attitudes are shaped when we're young unless we all allow God to do something about it, they can stay with us for a lifetime.
- 2. The Friends We Have** - When our friends (family members or surrounding community) express racist opinions, it's common that we will take on those views ourselves.
- 3. We "Hang" With People "Like Us"** - It's normal to want to spend time with people that have the same interests, background, culture, etc. It creates a sense of belonging that's really important.
- 4. We're Quick To Judge** - We often put labels and stereotype people from different racial backgrounds - i.e. "lazy", "brainy", "aggro" (aggressive, violent) etc.
  - **The way to beat stereotypes:** Don't judge a whole group. Get to know people from different racial backgrounds and find out how much you have in common.
- 5. We Blame Others For Our Problems** - When we feel angry or frustrated, we often look for someone else to blame for our problems. People may look or talk differently than us are an easy target.
- 6. Our Sin Nature** - We are born predisposed to sin, evil. "Sin came into the world through one man, and Neath through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" - *Rom 5:12*
- 7. The Decisions We Make** - Our overall outlook, perspective/assessment of life and others is determined by the decisions we make in life. Jesus said that life's top 2 decisions in life are to "to love God and love others" and shapes the quality direction of all that follows in life.

### IV. CRUSHING RACISM AT ITS ROOT

#### Crush Racism At Its Root

*Eph 6:12*

Prejudice is not the root of the problem. Prejudice is the *result* of it. The root of the tree is the spirit of division and racism.

#### Tap Into The Wisdom of God

*Prov 4:7*

It's tempting to let ourselves be drawn into the conflict of racism, bigotry and hate. The enemy wants that, but rather use your energy to get God's wisdom in dealing with a spirit of division. His wisdom will protect and provide for us.

#### Love Your Neighbor

*Rom 5:5*

We don't have to fight and get mad at people when the spirit of division uses them to try to oppress us in some way. Because of God's love in us, we can love anyone, anywhere, at any time.

#### See Things From The Other Perspective

*Phil 2:3-4*

If we are going to bridge gaps that have been created by the spirit of division, we will need to care enough to put ourselves in the other person's shoes and find out how they think so we can be the blessing God calls us to be.

#### Choose To Forgive

*Mark 11:25*

When it comes to winning the war against the spirit of division, forgiveness is one of our mightiest weapons. Sometimes, only God's Holy Spirit can give you that. Jesus didn't ask you to feel better about the person who wronged you. He commanded you to forgive them. Forgiveness isn't about feelings; it's an act of obedience. It's choosing to put God's Word above your emotions, by making a decision to say, "I forgive."