

The Truth About Today's Key Cultural Issues

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[0 : 00] Chuck Colson was one of the leading defenders of the Christian faith and the absolute truthfulness of God's Word. From shortly after his conversion in the late 1970s until his death in 2012, in a 2003 interview, he was asked to fill in the blank to these two questions.

First, he was asked, the greatest crisis facing the church today is, and he filled in the blank, individualism. The greatest crisis facing the church today is individualism.

Now he defined individualism as the idea that we can do our own thing. The culture is radically individualistic. People just do whatever they want.

The second statement, he was asked to fill in the blank, the greatest threat facing the individual Christian is, and he filled in the blank with the dismissal of truth.

Here was how he explained this. The Barna poll showed that 54% of evangelicals believe that there is no absolute truth. We have been sucked into the biggest lie this culture can propagate.

[1 : 24] Colson was saying back in 2003 that most people in this country, including professing Christians, according to Barna, 54% of evangelical Christians, most people in the country, Colson was saying, including Christians, reject the idea of absolute truth.

That means a universal standard of right and wrong. 2003, the majority of Americans, the majority of evangelical Christians said, there is no objective standard of right and wrong.

No absolute truth. Now, Colson is saying that we as a nation have replaced absolute truth with the idea of personal truth.

That is, I decide what's right and wrong for me, and you get to decide what's right and wrong for you. Not absolute truth. Personal truth is what most people believe.

Now, Colson was describing that in 2003. How much more does that accurately describe our country today, the world in which we live in?

[2 : 52] You know, if you think about it, that helps us understand how behaviors that were widely understood to be sinful and shameful just a few years ago are now widely accepted and even celebrated.

Now, as I wind down my ministry as your pastor, I'm preaching a series of five messages using Billy Graham's last public message as my theme. I put it on the screen each week.

Let's do it again. Billy Graham said his last gathering on his 95th birthday. With all my heart, I want to leave you with truth. The first week we looked at the truth about the Bible.

Last week we looked at the truth about the church. Today we're going to look at the truth about key cultural questions. I want to say this.

As I'm winding down and you're going to begin a new search for a pastor, it is a part of the pastor's job description to preach and teach the Word of God and apply it to life in this world, including today's cultural issues.

[4 : 09] A pastor is not doing his job if he does not teach the Bible in a way that helps Christians apply what God says, the truth of God's Word, to real life, including controversial issues in our culture.

So I want to say to the church and to the search committee, I am praying and I have absolute confidence that you will, search committees, seek for a man who unashamedly believes that the Bible is God's inerrant Word, a man who believes what the Bible teaches about the cultural issues of today, and we're going to look at some of them right now.

But as you, as a pastor's search committee and church, look at such people, interview such people, make sure that they not only believe the truth, but will stand in the pulpit and preach the truth on a regular basis.

That is vitally important. It's not enough just to believe what's right. We need to live it. And if you're a teacher in this church or any church, you need to teach it.

You do not need to be ashamed, afraid, that you're going to offend somebody. The gospel is offensive. The Word of God is offensive to people who do not believe it, who reject it, who oppose it. [5 : 47] So, that's just one word as we get started this morning. I want to look quickly at two cultural issues that we've looked at before, but because we're on the subject this morning, I want to bring them out just as a reminder.

Number one, the truth about homosexuality and same-sex marriage. The Bible clearly teaches that homosexual behavior is sinful behavior. Now, I've preached on that over the years.

There are some examples of scriptures that are very clear. God condemns homosexual behavior. It is sinful behavior. But I want to say in this context, while I've preached that, I've often so emphasized that the Bible's solution to all sinful behavior is to admit it's sin against God and to repent of it, change your mind about it, turn from it, and turn to Jesus in faith and forgiveness. Some people get the wrong idea if anything controversial they'll ever preach, especially on these sexual matters. I have always tried to come across, communicate clearly.

This kind of behavior is sinful behavior, but it is forgivable behavior. God can change anyone's life. And that's the message you need to hear.

[7 : 12] Sin is sin. But by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, anyone can be forgiven, the slate wiped clean, have a fresh start, a fresh even orientation to life.

The Bible also is clear that same-sex marriage violates God's design for marriage. And God's design for marriage, as you see there in Genesis 2, to join one man and one woman in a one-flesh relationship for life.

Look at it. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. That's the foundational statement on marriage that God has given us. He's given us that institution.

And so same-sex marriage violates God's design for marriage. That's clear. Let's go on. The truth about transgenderism. The Bible teaches that transgenderism is contrary to God's design for human beings.

We've also looked at this in the past. So let's just quickly review. God created human beings in his image as male and female. Look at this. So God created man in his own image of God.

[8 : 21] He created him. Male and female, he created them. Since creation, since creation, this is the beginning, human beings have understood that their biological sex, or the new word, gender, was determined by God and revealed at birth.

God determined that you would be male or female. And when you were born, it became obvious if you were male and female. And I want you to understand, if you were born a male, you are a male. If you were born a female, you are a female. You can say, pretend, dress up, disguise, any way you want to. But biologically, you are what you were born biologically.

And you can't change that. And that is the truth of God's word. God creates us male or female.

Now, God commands human beings to present themselves, appear, present yourself as either a male, if you're a biological male, or a female, if you're a biological female.

[9 : 46] Now, and do it in a culturally appropriate way. 1 Corinthians 11, verses 2 through 16, brings this out as it talks about a way a man and a woman ought to appear in worship, and participate in worship.

That's a long passage. I just want to give you a little commentary that explains what we're talking about quickly here this morning. Craig Blomberg explains about how we're to present ourselves according to our biological sex.

Look, most interpreters agree that one timeless principle that may be deduced from this passage is that Christians should not try to blur all distinctions between the sexes.

God created men and women as sexual beings with sexual differences. So we must not try to destroy these distinctives by dressing or grooming in ways that make it impossible to recognize a person's gender or worse still, by changing our sexual appearance through transvestite, the old word, or transgender behavior.

Bottom line, God expects men to look and act like men. God expects women to look and act like women in whatever way is appropriate at this time in this culture.

[11:03] That's the clear teaching of Scripture. And anything that violates that is sinful behavior. Now, let's move on to today's most hot-button issue.

One we've never tackled before. The truth about critical race theory. Critical race theory or CRT may be the most controversial issue in today's culture.

It is being strongly debated, as most of you know, on college campuses, in public school board meetings. You're reading and seeing that on TV.

It is strongly debated in government, even in the military. Of course, the media. It's even being debated in Christian churches and denominations.

This was the most controversial issue at this year's Southern Baptist Convention, and I am disappointed to say that Southern Baptists failed to clearly identify critical race theory as incompatible with the teaching of the Bible.

[12:18] Southern Baptists put together a resolution to declare that only Scripture is God's Word. That's where we've got to look for our ultimate standard of what we believe and how we live. They alluded to it, but the convention failed intentionally.

They called it a compromise. It was too much of a compromise. They would not identify critical race theory as being totally incompatible with the teaching of God's Word.

Now, one thing that has happened this past year that's positive in Southern Baptist life, we have six Southern Baptist seminaries. Their presidents meet from time to time, issue statements, I think it's called a President's Council.

Earlier this year, the presidents got together and they clearly stated that critical race theory is incompatible with the teaching of the Bible and that it is incompatible with our denominations' statement of faith, the Baptist faith and message.

They got a lot of flack. They got a lot of criticism for that. Some people even threatening to leave the convention. You know what my thought is? When a person threatens to leave the convention over the truth, there's the door.

[13:36] I'll open it for you. Wouldn't you? You don't compromise the truth of God's Word to avoid hurting somebody's feelings, especially over a cultural issue that is hurting the church and the family and as clearly as we're going to see, contrary to the teaching of God's Word about dealing with these kind of problems, racial type problems.

Now we've all heard about critical race theory in recent months. What exactly is it? You know, wherever you look, it's hard to just, you know, just firmly, clearly, plainly describe.

CRT is rooted in Marxism, but it replaces Marxism's focus on a conflict between social classes with a conflict between races.

One of the most widely used definitions of CRT comes from the UCLA School of Public Affairs, which is a pro-critical race theory group.

I want you to read it and it looks like it came from a school of public affairs at a university. But look at it. This is one of the most common definitions you'll find if you do any kind of research on this.

[14:59] CRT recognizes that racism is ingrained in the fabric and system of the American society. The individual racist need not exist to note that institutional racism is pervasive in the dominant culture.

This is the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining existing power structures. CRT identifies that these power structures are based on white privilege and white supremacy, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color.

Let's try to simplify that. CRT says that all major legal, cultural, and institutional power lies with and was designed by white people.

Therefore, racism is systemic and inescapable in Western society, especially in the United States.

CRT says that all white people in this country are oppressors by virtue of being white and that all people of color, especially black people, are the oppressed by virtue of being people of color.

[16:17] This is because all power structures are rooted in white privilege and white supremacy. If you've kept up with any of this, I think you can call it a growing movement against critical race theory throughout our culture.

And one thing that's really stood out to me, school board related controversies discussions. More and more black parents, like one father in particular, are totally against this concept of critical race theory, which teaches their children that they're oppressed because they're black and they can't do anything about it.

This black father that probably a lot of you read about or maybe heard on an interview, he said he was teaching his daughter that she was created in the image of God, that she had gifts and abilities, that she could develop, and she could be whatever she wants to be in life.

If she gets the education, the training, she has those talents and gifts, there's nothing holding her back. She can go for whatever it is she wants to be, and that's what most of us have taught our children their whole lives.

That's what is normal to teach in American society. That's what throughout time people have taught their children, wanted for their children, but critical race theory is coming in and saying in effect to black children, you're part of the oppressed group, you can't do any better, you got to wait until we create a revolution to do away with white power in this country.

[17:57] That's what's happening. Now the best resource that explains the problems of critical race theory and its liberal view of social justice is this book, *Fault Lines* by Votie Baucom.

It's the best resource I have found. He has done a great job of researching this. He quotes lengthy quotes of people who are writing in favor of developing critical race theory and he has the ability to show their weaknesses, their flaws, their errors.

He even points out how a lot of the things that are being said publicly about police out to get black people, black men in particular, he cites all kinds of research, studies, government studies and others that shows that is not true.

It is a false narrative that's being promoted by many but especially people involved in CRT. I strongly encourage you, get *Fault Lines* by Votie Baucom.

It will enlighten you on a lot of issues about race and I want to say Votie Baucom grew up basically in poverty, a single mother, a rough neighborhood.

[19:26] But he talks about it in his book that his mother believed in taking personal responsibility. She highly valued education. She made sure that he didn't associate with the wrong people growing up.

And by putting him in the right kind of environments to the best of her ability, by making sure he got a good education and took responsibility for himself and his actions, Votie Baucom is a world-known now theologian.

He has degrees from Southern Baptist seminaries. He has pastored churches, preached in many Southern Baptist churches. We used his material several years ago in one of the Sunday night discipleship classes that we had back then.

Votie Baucom now is teaching at, he is the dean of the African Christian University School of Theology at the African Christian University in Zambia.

He went over there six years ago. Votie Baucom is a black man. He speaks from the experience of being a black man growing up as I described in America.

[20:39] But one of the things he will tell you in that book based on his experience of living in Africa and just living life in this country, he will say the United States of America is actually one of the least racist nations on the planet.

Read what Votie says and the way he backs up his arguments and shoots holes in CRT arguments. Now, Baucom says that CRT has spawned what he calls a new cult or religion called anti-racism. And he points out how anti-racism has its own vocabulary and assigns new definitions to old words and phrases. He provides some of the, he defines some of these words and phrases in a way that will help us to understand some of the things we're hearing today from advocates of CRT when they throw around these words.

So bear with we're going to look quickly and we're only going to look at two explanations. We're just going to look at the statements on most of them but we'll look at two definitions. Number one, you're hearing these words, you're reading these words, look at it.

Whiteness, a set of normative privileges granted to white skinned individuals and groups which is invisible to those so privileged by it.

[22:07] He says the cult of anti-racism roots every aspect of its world view in the assertion that everything begins with the creation of whiteness.

More specifically the creation of whiteness with the express purpose of establishing white people as the dominant hegemonic which means illegitimate oppressors and all non-white people as the objects of that oppression.

Another word I know you know, white privilege. That's a series of unearned advantages that accrue to white people by virtue of their whiteness.

Now here's one that I really needed help on the explanation. White supremacy. He says according to CRT any belief, behavior, or system that supports, promotes, or enhances white privilege.

He says this is not your grandfather's version of white supremacy. When I think, hear that word, I think about the KKK. I think about evil, sinful, race, real racist.

[23 : 23] He says it does not refer to the KKK or neo-Nazis except when it does. This version refers to the very air one breathes in a culture created by and for white people.

CRT people would say that if you are a white person, you are guilty of white supremacy because you are a white person.

number four, white complicity. White people through the practices of whiteness and by benefiting from white privilege contribute to the maintenance of systemic racial injustice.

By you breathing and living, according to CRT, you are contributing to systemic racism in this country.

white fragility. The inability and unwillingness of white people to talk about race due to the grip that whiteness, white supremacy, white privilege, white complicity, knowingly or unknowingly.

[24 : 33] He's talking about the, not the inability to talk like I'm talking now. He's talking about the inability or unwillingness of white people to stand up and be counted and discuss this with people.

systemic sin, the last one. The sin of racism is no longer to be understood as an individual sin.

Instead, the term now incorporates the idea of institutional or structural racism and its implications. Hence, America has sinned and certain white Americans have inherited that sin whether they know it or not. Now, everything that I pointed out at the CRT, this is contrary to what the Bible teaches about humanity and race.

What you have seen on the screen, what I've been talking about, about CRT, this is not something that maybe could be used to help us be better informed as Christians.

No. CRT teaches untruth. A wrong explanation of humanity and the problems of humanity like race.

[25 : 54] This is why people like Votie Bauckham and others call critical race theory a worldview that is contrary to the Christian worldview.

As Christians, we should look at life through the lens of Scripture. A biblical worldview. A Christian worldview. Well, critical race theory, that's its own worldview.

Secularism, atheism has their own worldviews. Now, let's go to what the Bible talks about. Critical race theory is contrary to biblical truth.

And I want to show you why. First, all human beings can trace their origin to one common source. And that is the creative work of God.

Look again at Genesis 1:27. So God created man in his own image, image of God. He created him. Male and female, he created them. What I want us to focus on here is, God created human beings.

[26 : 55] Male and female. Both in his image. Because all people are created in the image of God, all people have equal worth and value and significance.

It comes from being created in the image of God. We don't separate people according to race or ethnicity. We're a part of the one human race. That's the next thing.

All human beings can trace their origin to one common ancestry, Adam and Eve. Adam is the father of us all. Look at what Paul said in Acts 17. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth.

And he made from one man every nation of mankind. Secondly, Eve is the mother of us all.

Scripture says, Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living.

Now just based on what the Bible says about the way God created human beings, two things are true about all people. Every person who has ever lived is of equal worth and importance for this reason.

[28 : 02] They were created in the image of God. Everybody. White, black, brown, red, every.

Then every person who has ever lived is a descendant of Adam and Eve, which means everyone is a member of the same original race, the human race.

This truth helps us understand that all human prejudice, hostility, divisiveness that is based on race or nationality or ethnicity, that's contrary to the way God created human beings to live.

All human prejudice, hostility, divisive, division between races, groups, whatnot. That is contrary to the way God created us and intends us to live in this world.

Therefore, the root cause of all human relational problems, including racial problems, is sin. Not whiteness, as CRT says.

CRT says the root cause of the problems of racism in this country is whiteness. The word of God says the root cause of all racial problems in this country is sin.

[29 : 20] We have failed to treat one another as equal worth and value because we're created in the image of God. We've failed to treat one another as brothers and sisters universally in the sense that we're all part of the human race.

Now, God's solution to the problem of racism and all sin is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I want you to note quickly how Paul describes how coming to Christ changes us and changes the way we view other people.

Paul's describing when a person is born again by the Spirit of God, we are made different. Look at this. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh.

We regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is passed away. Behold, the new has come. When a person truly is born again by the Spirit of God, they're regenerated.

Their whole way of looking at life changes. Supernatural work of God. That's what Paul's talking about. Then, he also describes how God used the death of Christ to unite his people by tearing down walls of racial and ethnic prejudice and hostility.

[30 : 38] Look at this from Ephesians 2. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off, he's talking about Gentiles, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both, Jew and Gentile, one, and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

That he might create in himself one new man, Christians, brothers and sisters in Christ, the church, out of Jew and Gentile. So, making peace and might reconcile us both to God in one body, the church, through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

One of the tallest and strongest walls of separation has ever existed between Jews and Gentiles. And a lot of you know that. The Jews were responsible for building that wall. They were God's chosen people, but God chose them for a purpose.

God chose them to be channels to whom he worked to reach all humanity. But the Jewish people only heard the part about, we're God's chosen people. And they took it pridefully.

[31 : 54] They became arrogant. We're God's chosen people. Y'all are not. They were Southern Jews that said, you know, y'all are not. But that was true.

Instead of becoming agents of peace and reconciliation, they became agents of hostility, rejection, division. Well, the walls of division that the Jews built also became the Gentiles wall.

The Gentiles owned it. And both Jew and Gentile embraced a common hostility and hatred for one another.

Now, a major wall of division exists today between black and white Americans. Like the Jews, I want you to listen to this. This is important. Like the Jews, white people in this country are responsible for building the walls to start with through the institution of slavery that existed in this country's first 200 years, including colonial times.

Now, those walls of division and hostility, they were reinforced by the legal discrimination and segregation that took place in this country 100 years after the end of slavery or until the mid-1960s.

[33 : 17] That was the Jim Crow laws. So we need to own up to what we have done as white people in this country to build walls of division and hostility.

But, like the Gentiles, black people in this country have taken co-ownership of these walls of division. You see, racism and prejudice are two-way streets.

CRT does not believe that. Critical race theory teaches that only white people are or can be racist. Black people cannot. That's wrong. It doesn't make sense.

Racism and prejudice go both ways. White toward black, but also black toward white.

CRT says that we have a problem with systemic racism in this country. But it says very little about individual racism. Systemic racism means that racial problems are embedded in the systems and structures of this country, in government, in banking, in education, and everywhere.

[34 : 31] Well, that was true in this country in the years of slavery and Jim Crow. But in the mid to late 1960s, civil rights acts were passed.

Since then, many other laws have been passed. And the truth of the matter is, systemic racism is illegal in this country today.

It is not allowed in this country today. Our racial problems are not truly systemic, embedded in the culture. Our racial problems are personal problems.

Their problems are problems of the heart. You know, there are definitely groups of people and individuals in this country who are racist to the core.

You may know some. Some of them have such evil hearts that they are proud and public about their hatred for people who are just about in any way different from them.

[35 : 40] These kind of people need to always be called out, condemned, and opposed. We need to let it be known there is no place for groups or individuals who hate people of another race, nationality, or ethnic group.

We must not tolerate racism in any form, on any level. It is sin. It is evil. It will destroy our country. But at the same time now, the only real solution to the sin of racism is repentance. The only real solution to the sin of racism is for the Spirit of God to, from within, change people.

The way they think. The way they see life. The way they live life. The way they relate to other people. Critical race theory says that I must repent of the sins of past generations of racists.

That is not true. That is not true. I cannot repent of my forefathers' sins.

[36 : 57] You can't of yours. We repent of our personal sins, but not anyone else's.

Critical race theory also says, get this, I must repent of being white. That's not only wrong, that's ridiculous. Being white is not a sin.

Now you need to be aware of this. There are some evangelicals, including some Southern Baptists, who have actually called for white people to repent of their whiteness.

And their white privilege. White people do not need to repent of their whiteness.

Because being white is not a sin. If you're white, you're white because God made you white. You don't repent of what God made you.

[38 : 00] Black people do not need to repent of being black. Because black is not a sin. God made black people black. The Bible says that we can and must repent of our personal sins.

You can't repent of past generation sin. There is nothing to repent of about being white or black or anything like that. But the Bible does strongly teach that we can and must repent of all personal sins.

We must all own the sin that we are guilty of against God and other people. We must not only own it, admit it, confess it, but we must turn from it, repent of it.

Let's be more specific. If you have or are prejudiced against someone because of the color of their skin, in your attitude, word, or actions, you have sinned against them and God.

I want to be clear about that. If you are a prejudiced person, you look down, you despise, you mistreat, you alienate someone because of the color of their skin, because of their ethnicity or anything like that, that is sin against Almighty God.

[39 : 21] You are rejecting the way that He has created you, equal, everyone equal in God's image. And you've sinned against that person that you have shown through your attitude, words, or actions, racist conduct.

If that's true, admit it, turn from it. Change your mind. Ask God to help you to change your mind. We cannot be right with Him until we do that.

In fact, no one can be right with God and refuse to repent of, turn from any sin that God has made clear to you that you are guilty of.

The racial problems that exist in our country today are complex. And I don't want to mislead anybody into thinking it's just a simple thing. But I do want to be clear that critical race theory has no sensible or workable solution to the racial problems in our country.

But the Word of God provides us with wise and workable solutions that will help us to acknowledge, deal with, and overcome the sins of racism if we'll do it God's way.

[40 : 36] I want to encourage you this morning. By God's grace, let's all do our part to tear down the walls that keep people apart.

Let's do all that we can to start building bridges that will bring people together. Let's pray. Dear God, help us to see this morning the truth about these cultural issues of today.

The truth that comes from your Word. And help us, Father, to develop our beliefs and our convictions based on those truths.

And help us, dear God, to reject everything that is contrary to your Word. No matter how popular it may be with people around us or just people in general in today's world.

Dear God, help us to see that by your grace, through the power of your Spirit, we can apply the truth of your Word and build bridges across the racial divides that exist in this country.

[42 : 04] Help us, Father, to seek to do that humbly. Help us to seek to do that dependently upon you.

And help us to seek to do that together with others in this church, in this community, of all races, of all ethnicities.

Give us the desire and ability to do this. Let's just, in attitude of prayer, listen to the Lord. You respond to Him as you need to this morning.

Listen, pray, obey. Definitely, yes! Hallelujah. Lilly. Allez Julubal. Bre not for anyone else's pit, welcome to Summit