

EAST  
Singapore

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## CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

### Lesson 8

#### Interracial Marriage

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Interracial marriage is one of the most complex social problems facing an individual, family or society. This is an issue between those who call themselves segregationists or integrationists. This is an issue for all cultures – Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Africans, etc. It is also a deep religious issue. Muslims are strict segregationists.
- B. Interracial marriage is on the rise in the world today. Because of rapid communications and travel, the world is becoming smaller and the race issue is more tolerated but still suspect by many.
- C. Christians believe the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. Therefore they must come to the Bible to determine its teachings on the whole matter of race. Christians should not hide behind the Bible to support any racist's ideas. If a man or woman is a racist, he or she has the right to that conviction (although I disagree), but one must never say that he/she gets these racist convictions because the Bible teaches them – it does not!
- D. The whole race issue is one of culture, for men are victims of their environment. Man's mind is like a computer which records what has been put into it. If as a child we have been taught that he is superior to other people or that he is to fear and hate people of another race, he will carry this into his/her adult life. How do we Christians know what is right and wrong in this matter? What is our authority? We must go to the Bible and read it objectively and honestly, putting our religious, cultural and political prejudices aside.

#### II. INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND EMOTIONAL REASONING

- A. Introduction. There are so many people who operate on emotions rather than fact. Therefore, they let their hearts dictate to their heads and the result is putting up false arguments as straw men in order to support a position that is not reasonable.
- B. Certain races are superior to other races.
  1. History shows the folly of such reasoning, for in the early stages of human existence, the great cultures were not among the white race (they were barbarians), but among the peoples of China and Africa. When Europeans were savages, the Incas (red man) in Central and South America had a thriving culture.
  2. There is not one shred of evidence medically, biologically or scientifically that one race is superior genetically or intellectually to another. It may be true that a race may be inferior socially or educationally to another race because of ignorance, suppression or disadvantage.
  3. If races are superior to one another, why is it that children are not filled with racial hatred? Racial superiority and hatred are learned, not inbred.

4. There are some professing Christians who attempt to show the black man is inferior to the white man because of the curse on Canaan in Genesis 9:25.
  - a. Segregationists. They believe that Hamites are black, Shemites are oriental and Jephthites are white. They see that Noah's curse means that blacks are forever limited to doing the kind of work reserved for servants. The Hamites settled in the south, Shemites in the east and Jephthites in the north. The word "Ham" means "swarthy" or "dark."
  - b. Objections:
    - (1) This curse was not upon Ham at all, but upon Canaan, Ham's youngest son. According to Genesis 10:15-19, the Canaanites settled in the general area which is now Palestine. These Canaanite tribes were all conquered when Israel entered the Promised Land. In Genesis 10:6-10, we learn that many of the ancient civilizations were Hamitic and they were servants to one. Therefore, the curse on Ham was not a curse on Ham at all, but on one small branch of his family, the Canaanites.
    - (2) A "swarthy" person could have a complexion from anything from light brown to coal black. For instance, most Spaniards and Greeks could be called dark-complexioned or swarthy, but they could not be classified a Negroid.
    - (3) From the genealogical tables in Genesis 10 we find that of the 32 descendants of Ham, four settled in Africa. Archeologists tell us that no groups inhabiting the Middle East in Biblical times were Negroid. Of the five groups settling in Africa, one was the Lud????? (they were the only ancient race known to have blond hair and blue eyes). Three other of this group settled in Egypt and were thought to be black. The last group, the Cushites, settled in a region that is now black, and this group does seem to have been Negroid (Jer. 13:23). It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of Hamites were not Negroid.
- C. Certain races really want to integrate, so all races, if they want to stay pure, must not integrate.

Objections:

  1. Statistically this simply is not true. Most people choose to stay with those of their own race for cultural and sociological reasons. In any given culture, not more than 20% will integrate and usually it is a lot less.
  2. No one marries a person of another race for the pure sake of marrying someone of another race. There are many factors. Martin Luther King made a classic statement: "The Negro want to be the white man's brother, not his brother-in-law."
- D. Intermarriage will produce a mongrel race.

Objections:

  1. This simply is not true. Interracial marriage can and does produce normal, healthy children. There may be cultural and social problems but no biological problems.

2. The history of mankind shows that most (if not all) nations are the mixing of races. History is the story of one nation conquering another nation and then an integrating process.
- E. Certain races are physically oversexed. This is a charge laid especially to the black man by white supremacists. It is agreed that black men long to seduce white women.

Objections:

1. The facts of history are just the opposite. It has been white men who have seduced black women. About 70% of African Americans have white blood, but the percentage of integrated marriages is very low.
2. Biologically it cannot be proved that any one race is more physically virile than another race. In fact, all men are sinful and tend to fantasize about sex with men and women of a different race.

### III. INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND THE BIBLE

- A. The Christian must consider what the Bible teaches on the subject of interracial marriage. Do the Scriptures support it or only permit it as an allowable evil?
- B. Moses and the Ethiopian woman (Ex. 2:21 cf. Num. 12:1). Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro, a Muslim priest, was an Ethiopian. Moses married this woman. The word translated “Ethiopian” really is the word “Cush” which means “black” or “sunburnt.” In Bible times this referred to a Negroid (Jer. 13:23). This interracial marriage was opposed by Miriam and Aaron, but God rebuked them (Num. 12) and said nothing to Moses about it. God took Moses’ side on this marriage.
- C. Solomon and his bride (Song of Solomon). The bride describes herself as being black like the tents of Kedar (1:5), and in contrast they groom is described as being white (5:10). The Song of Solomon depicts historically the blessedness of marriage in the sight of God. If intermarriage were immoral or against the will of God, it would certainly not be part of God’s Word, depicting the bless of earthly and heavenly marriage.
- D. Boaz and Ruth (Book of Ruth). This was a wonderful interracial marriage. Ruth was a Gentile and Boaz a Jew. Far from being an object of suspicion and scorn, Ruth became an ancestor of our Jesus (Matt. 1:5).
- E. Timothy’s mother and father (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father. If there was anything sinful about such a union, would Paul have picked Timothy to be his assistant in the furtherance of the gospel? In fact, Paul may have picked Timothy to dramatize the interracial inter-cultural and international church of that day.
- F. What about the Jews forbidding marriage with Gentiles? (Deut. 7:1-3; Josh. 7:12-13; 1 Kings 11:1-2; Ezra 7:14). God does forbid spiritually mixed marriages, but not racially mixed marriages.
- G. Argument from silence. If intermarriage was a sin, God would have forbidden it. The Roman world of Bible times was a social mixture and some of these people were in the church. Yet there is not one time in the whole of the New Testament that states it is spiritually, morally or physically wrong to marry across racial lines.

- H. Marriage is honorable (Heb. 13:4). For the Christian, to treat intermarriage as something unclean, dirty or immoral (as is often the attitude of some professing Christians), is to add to the Word of God. What God treats as an honorable institution, typifying the relationship between Him and His people, we dare not call uncommon or unclean.
- I. Conclusion. It is clear that the Bible does not condemn racial intermarriage. In fact, the evidence is overwhelming for support of it. While the Bible supports interracial marriage, it gives no support to mixed spiritual marriages. The Bible does declare that two believers in Christ should marry one another (2 Cor. 11:14-16).

#### IV. INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- A. Introduction. While the Bible does not condemn interracial marriage, most societies do. Society often looks down on these relationships because of sin, prejudice, ignorance and hatred. There are the facts, and any couple who wants to enter into an interracial marriage will face some social persecution in any society. This should cause a couple to pray long and hard before they intermarry. It is hard enough to make a marriage work without the racial issue. The racial issues just compound the problems.
- B. Different backgrounds. When a husband and wife come from different economic, educational and cultural backgrounds, they have problems. Interracial marriage begins with a “culture gap” and many times the marriage fails. However, those who go into an intermarriage with their eyes wide open often have a stronger marriage because they have pulled together in difficult situations.
- C. Adjustments for the married couple. It will be more difficult for the husband or wife of a mixed marriage to get a job, simply because there are so many people who carry around racial hatred in their hearts. The husband and wife’s family will be different and there will be adjustments to a new culture. How will the husband or wife react when discrimination comes their way?
- D. Adjustments for the children. The children suffer the most in a racist society when intermarriage takes place. Some will always look upon the children as “half-breeds” or “mixed kids.” As wrong as this may be, this is how society treats many children of an interracial marriage. This comes from the sin of racism in the adults, not from the children in the society.
- E. Conclusion. Interracial marriage can produce many resentments in any society. It could destroy a marriage if entered into lightly. My advice to couples who want to enter into an interracial marriage is that they do it prayerfully and cautiously, with the full knowledge of all negative possibilities. However, if the couple are true believers in Christ, and they know the possible hardships and pitfalls ahead, then let them marry with God’s full blessing for there is nothing in Scriptures that says it is wrong.