

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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“SYSTEMIC RACISM”

by Jim Stauffer

I am not sure I completely understand this phrase being bandied about today. You probably then ask in your mind, “Whatever possessed you to write about it then?” And I would not be upset with you for thinking in that vein, but I suggest we look to God for advice.

But, as you and I attempt to understand it we need a definition of terms. First, the term systemic - 1. Of or pertaining to system or a system. 2. *Physiol.* Pertaining to or affecting the body as a whole; *a systemic* poison. Next, racism - 1. A belief that people differ significantly and systematically, as in ability, intellect, etc. because of racial differences. 2. A belief in or advocacy of the superiority or inferiority of a particular group on the basis of supposed racial differences; racial prejudice. (*Readers Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*)

Now we understand the system currently referred to in today’s dialogue on this issue (the current culture including governmental influence). And we understand the latest discussion on this matter involves a specific race, Black Americans. The phrase then tells us, if it is indeed true, there is in our culture and our government a built in prejudice against Black Americans.

I am not knowledgeable enough to propose this charge or defend against it. But I do know if it exists where and how it started. That is the emphasis of this article today.

First, we must deal with the basic claim of racism for it had to exist before it could become systemic. While I do not intend to make this a history lesson, this particular kind of racism under discussion in our land today emanates from the history of slavery in America. There is no denying the fact that slavery existed from the inception of this nation and it continued until the last slave was released following the Emancipation Proclamation and its execution following the Civil War. But slavery in itself has not been a racial issue in the history of man as much as it has resulted from one group of people asserting power over another. Slavery existed in history long before America came into

existence as a nation. But why has it been so?

Now we get down to the nuts and bolts of the matter. It is, as we defined above, a result of one group of people thinking they either are superior or have the right (since might makes right for some folks) to hold others inferior to them as their servants, i.e. slaves. And why do they do that? Because they do not hold others in the same regard as themselves.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

(Genesis 1:26) It is accurate to conclude ALL MEN have been created in the image of God. Regardless of what any statement made by man, all men are created equal in every way. God breathed into man life that made him a living soul. Man is an eternal being as opposed to the animals over which God made him superintendent.

Now let us quickly notice since it does not require a lot of discussion, what Jesus has taught concerning this matter. ALL MEN are taught to love both God and their neighbor **(Matt. 22:37-40)**. Further men are taught they cannot lay claim to loving God Whom they have not seen and not loving man whom they have seen **(1 John 4:20)**. Beyond that Jesus teaches all those who would be His disciples they must love their enemies **(Mat. 5:43ff)**. Now that covers it. Think about your neighbor. **Luke 10:25ff** teaches us it is the one with whom you have contact based on his or your need. Your brother is one with whom you share a common ancestry either nationally or spiritually and your enemy is surely one in need of some help to overcome his hatred. All of these have been created in the image of God. Isn’t it obvious that neither the Lord nor any of His disciples differentiated between the race of mankind when it comes to the relationship he is to have with God, Christ and his fellow man?

The only way racism can be systemic is for individuals to practice it. This practice must become then accepted by a sufficient majority for the culture and government agencies to then have it as a consistent consideration in the conduct of their authoritative duties. Now does that exist? Many are claiming today it does. If their claim is accurate it exists due to the failure of individuals to treat one another as God planned in both the creation and the subsequent restoration of man to God following the fall. Racism cannot exist without individuals practicing it.

In some recently highlighted events where white police officers have abused black citizens the racism was individual. The majority of police officers, both black and white abhor what was done. It is apparent those in charge of such police forces do not subscribe to racism.

Now the greater question is, can racism exist without such obvious physical abuse? And the answer is, of course it can. And that is where it becomes systemic. When choices are made by those in power based on race, that is clearly racism. And that is the systemic racism that must be eradicated if our society is to survive as a multicultural nation.

So how do we avoid systemic racism? The same way we avoid other things in our society that have had a deleterious effect on our character as a nation and as God's creation. We have tolerated evil in society for years. We approve now of all manner of sexual sin from simple infidelity in marriage to homosexuality, transgenderism, the entire LGBTQ thing going on now. We have abortion on demand which represents the extinguishing of one life by the choice of another person. How degrading is it when one person kills another due to racism? It is terrible! How degrading and horrible is it when one person kills one who is completely defenseless simply out of personal convenience? It is terrible! All of these things violate instruction given by a righteous God.

Now tell me why you choose one of these to complain about. The fact is they all are an indication man is seeking his own way rather than listening to the One Who knows him best. And God has warned us about our own way (**Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23,24**). To the world we say, the way to eradicate racism is to identify it as a rejection of God's plan in creation and in His plan of redemption, the same as any other sin. It starts with each of us as individuals. Yes, I want to please my friends and enemies. But most of all I want to please my God.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

“And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke;

and the crowds were amazed. But some of them said, He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. But He knew their thoughts and said to them, Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So, they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (**Luke 11:14-20 NASV**).

Opposition to Jesus is growing. The religious leaders continued to question His authority. Who gave you the right to teach and act as You are doing? To discredit Jesus, they attributed His ability to work miracles to Beelzebul. The people were amazed that a man who could not speak now spoke. Beelzebul is thought to be associated with the Philistine god Ekron. *“Now Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. And Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber which was in Samaria, and became ill. So he sent messengers and said to them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this sickness”* (**2 Kings 1:1-2**). The name was not complementary; the people were trying to link Jesus to Satan. Others asked for another sign, continuing to put Jesus to the test. They did not doubt Jesus' ability to work miracles; to question such power would be a rejection of Jesus as God's Son. Is that their concern? Remember that Jesus is preaching the gospel of the kingdom. If He is in league with Satan, if He cast out demons by the power of Beelzebul, how can Satan's kingdom stand? Divided kingdoms cannot stand. The Jews claimed to have exorcists—those who cast out demons; where did they get their power? Were they legitimate, or did they depend on Satan to do their work?

Jesus said: *But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.* Jesus' miracles were evidence of the arrival of the kingdom. The time had come; the Messiah was present; the power of God was being demonstrated; all were invited to yield their hearts and lives. Here are the miracles; here is God's power; it is obvious and singular. God does not depend upon Satan to accomplish His will. When Jesus died on the cross, Satan's power was broken. Rival kingdoms exist; the demise of Satan's kingdom was assured when Jesus came and died. Don't make the mistake of choosing the

wrong kingdom, the wrong savior, the wrong master. Jesus, the strong man, entered into the house of Satan; after three days Jesus emerged victorious. Make the right choice. A house divided will not stand.

“For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power” (1 Corinthians 4:20). “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil”

(Ephesians 6:11).

Are we with Jesus? Or, are we against Him?

Randy Harshbarger

The Greatest Deficit

You cannot go into debt without deficit spending. That's just a cold hard fact that's true whether you're a family, a business or a government. There are times when a financial entity must incur debt to make progress. That's true, too, but only as long as there is not another and far more serious and far reaching deficit. That deficit is DEFICIENCY OF CHARACTER.

When a man or woman cannot make a promise and feel deep-seated, bedrock need to honor the promise made, they suffer from character deficit. When asked a question if their first thought is whether or not to tell the truth, they are suffering character deficit. When faced with the option of doing something wrong or illegal and their only concern is whether or not they will get caught, there is a character deficit. Our elected representatives are currently attempting to deal with our National Debt, and they must do so. But it is up to “We the People...” meaning each of us as responsible individuals, to deal with our National Deficit of Character. No legislation crafted in Washington can touch it. Only the Word of God, sternly but lovingly applied to the Human Heart can ever heal the wounds left by character deficit. The heart must be replaced, impossible with men but not with God. Ezekiel, the Old Testament prophet said *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh”, (Ezekiel 36:26)*. No one, no nation, is too far gone if they be WILLING. I fervently hope we are WILLING!

Cleveland Reddinger

Editor's note:

The article below offers instruction and advice, but in addition sources that instruction and advice. If we study the verses provided the message resonates even deeper into the heart.

A Precious Promise

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you
Psalms 32:8

As I think about this passage from **Psalms 32:8**, I think about some words from a song that I find myself singing quite often: *“Where could I go, O where could I go, Seeking a refuge for my soul? Needing a friend to save me in the end, Where could I go but to the Lord?”*

I am so thankful that we have this precious promise from the Lord that He will instruct, teach and guide all who fear Him (**Psalms 25:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**). His loving kindness, mercy, care and guidance will preserve all those who are willing to obey and keep His word (**Psalms 103:17-18; Psalms 40:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2**).

Today, He instructs, teaches and counsels us through His word which is only profitable if we are willing to heed and obey it (**Matthew 15:9; Galatians 1:6-9; Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23; 2 John 9**). It is only by listening to and heeding the words of the Lord that anyone will ever find the way of peace and pardon (**John 14:6; John 6:68; Heb. 5:9**) It is sheer folly to listen to and follow any mortal being who teaches something that cannot be found in or proved by the words of eternal life from the Lord. Human opinions, philosophies, think so's and I believe are going to cost multitudes their soul, don't be one of them. Today, heed these words from **2 Chronicles 16:9**, *“For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His”*. I hear the writer of Hebrews as he says; *“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”* Did you hear that *“all things are laid bare before Him”*? You cannot play hide and seek with the Lord. You cannot fool Him (**Galatians 6:7-9**). Make no mistake, the Lord knows whether or not we are allowing Him to instruct and guide us through this earthly life. He knows the way we walk and will reward accordingly.

by Charles Hicks swabbie5256@gmail.com

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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ALSO - BE NOT ANXIOUS.....



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10