

Question: "What does the Bible say about racism, prejudice, and discrimination?"

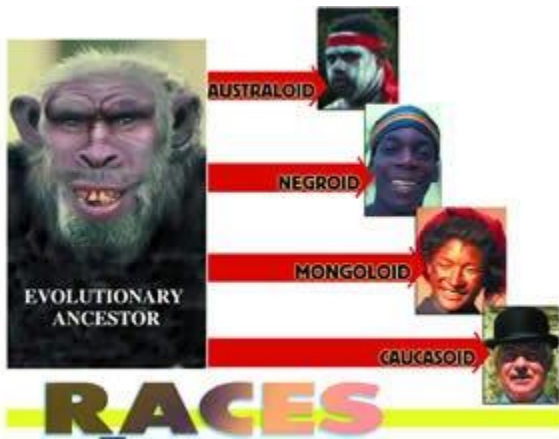
Answer: The first thing to understand in this discussion is that there is only one race—the human race. Caucasians, Africans, Asians, Indians, Arabs, and Jews are not different races. Rather, they are different ethnicities of the human race. All human beings have the same physical characteristics (with minor variations, of course). More importantly, all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God ([Genesis 1:26-27](#)). God loved the world so much that He sent Jesus to lay down His life for us ([John 3:16](#)). The “world” obviously includes all ethnic groups.

God does not show partiality or favoritism ([Deuteronomy 10:17](#); [Acts 10:34](#); [Romans 2:11](#); [Ephesians 6:9](#)), and neither should we. [James 2:4](#) describes those who discriminate as “judges with evil thoughts.” Instead, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves ([James 2:8](#)). In the Old Testament, God divided humanity into two “racial” groups: Jews and Gentiles. God’s intent was for the Jews to be a kingdom of priests, ministering to the Gentile nations. Instead, for the most part, the Jews became proud of their status and despised the Gentiles. Jesus Christ put an end to this, destroying the dividing wall of hostility ([Ephesians 2:14](#)). All forms of racism, prejudice, and discrimination are affronts to the work of Christ on the cross.

Jesus commands us to love one another as He loves us ([John 13:34](#)). If God is impartial and loves us with impartiality, then we need to love others with that same high standard. Jesus teaches in [Matthew 25](#) that whatever we do to the least of His brothers, we do to Him. If we treat a person with contempt, we are mistreating a person created in God’s image; we are hurting somebody whom God loves and for whom Jesus died.

Racism, in varying forms and to various degrees, has been a plague on humanity for thousands of years. Brothers and sisters of all ethnicities, this should not be. Victims of racism, prejudice, and discrimination need to forgive. [Ephesians 4:32](#) declares, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Racists may not deserve your forgiveness, but we deserved God’s forgiveness far less. Those who practice racism, prejudice, and discrimination need to repent. “Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” ([Romans 6:13](#)). May [Galatians 3:28](#) be completely realized, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

What Constitutes a “Race”?



In the 1800s, before Darwinian evolution was popularized, most people, when talking about “races,” would be referring to such groups as the “English race,” “Irish race,” and so on. However, this all changed in 1859 when [Charles Darwin](#) published his book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

Darwinian evolution was (and still is¹) inherently a racist philosophy, teaching that different groups or “races” of people evolved at different times and rates, so some groups are more like their apelike ancestors than others. Leading evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould claimed, “Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1859, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory.”²

The Australian Aborigines, for instance, were considered the missing links between the apelike ancestor and the rest of mankind.³ This resulted in terrible prejudices and injustices towards the Australian Aborigines.⁴

Ernst Haeckel, famous for popularizing the now-discredited idea that “[ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny](#),”⁵ stated:

At the lowest stage of human mental development are the Australians, some tribes of the Polynesians, and the Bushmen, Hottentots, and some of the Negro tribes. Nothing, however, is perhaps more remarkable in this respect, than that some of the wildest tribes in southern Asia and eastern Africa have no trace whatever of the first foundations of all human civilization, of family life, and marriage. They live together in herds, like apes.⁶

Racist attitudes fueled by evolutionary thinking were largely responsible for an African pygmy being displayed, along with an orangutan, in a cage in the Bronx zoo.⁷ Indeed, Congo pygmies were once thought to be “small apelike, elfish creatures” that “exhibit many ape-like features in their bodies.”⁸

As a result of Darwinian evolution, many people started thinking in terms of the different people groups around the world representing different “races,” but within the context of evolutionary philosophy. This has resulted in many people today, consciously or unconsciously, having [ingrained prejudices](#) against certain other groups of people.⁹

However, *all* human beings in the world today are classified as *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Scientists today admit that, biologically, there really is only one race of humans. For instance, a scientist at the Advancement of Science Convention in Atlanta stated, “Race is a social construct derived mainly from perceptions conditioned by events of recorded history, and it has no basic biological reality.” This person went on to say, “Curiously enough, the idea comes very close to being of American manufacture.”¹⁰

GET RID OF THIS *EVOLUTIONIZED* TERM!



Reporting on research conducted on the concept of race, ABC News stated, “More and more scientists find that the differences that set us apart are cultural, not racial. Some even say that the word *race* should be abandoned because it’s meaningless.” The article went on to say that “we accept the idea of race because it’s a convenient way of putting people into broad categories, frequently to suppress them—the most hideous example was provided by Hitler’s Germany. And racial prejudice remains common throughout the world.”¹¹

In an article in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*,¹² researchers argued that the term “race” is basically so meaningless that it should be discarded.

More recently, those working on mapping the human genome announced “that they had put together a draft of the entire sequence of the human genome, and the researchers had unanimously declared, there is only one race—the human race.”¹³

Personally, because of the influences of Darwinian evolution and the resulting prejudices, I believe everyone (and especially Christians) should abandon the term “race(s).” We could refer instead to the different “people groups” around the world.

The Bible and “Race”

The Bible does not even use the word *race* in reference to people,¹⁴ but it does describe all human beings as being of “one blood” ([Acts 17:26](#)). This of course emphasizes that we are all related, as all humans are descendants of the first man, Adam ([1 Corinthians 15:45](#)),¹⁵ who was created in the image of God ([Genesis 1:26–27](#)).¹⁶ The Last Adam, Jesus Christ ([1 Corinthians 15:45](#)) also became a descendant of Adam. Any descendant of Adam can be [saved](#) because our mutual relative by blood ([Jesus Christ](#)) died and rose again. This is why the gospel can (and should) be preached to all tribes and nations.

Can the Bible be used to justify racist attitudes?

The inevitable question arises, “If the Bible teaches all humans are the same, where was the church during the eras of slavery and segregation? Doesn’t the Bible actually condone the enslavement of a human being by another?”

Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible mention slaves and slavery. As with all other biblical passages, these must be understood in their grammatical-historical context.

Dr. Walter Kaiser, former president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Old Testament scholar, states:

The laws concerning slavery in the Old Testament appear to function to moderate a practice that worked as a means of loaning money for Jewish people to one another or for handling the problem of the prisoners of war. Nowhere was the institution of slavery as such condemned; but then, neither did it have anything like the connotations it grew to have during the days of those who traded human life as if it were a mere commodity for sale. . . . In all cases the institution was closely watched and divine judgment was declared by the prophets and others for all abuses they spotted.¹⁷

Job recognized that all were equal before God, and all should be treated as image-bearers of the Creator.

If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant when they complained against me, what then shall I do when God rises up? When He punishes, how shall I answer Him? Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One fashion us in the womb? (*Job 31:13–15*).

In commenting on Paul’s remarks to the slaves in his epistles, Peter H. Davids writes:

The church never adopted a rule that converts had to give up their slaves. Christians were not under law but under grace. Yet we read in the literature of the second century and later of many masters who upon their conversion freed their slaves. The reality stands that it is difficult to call a person a slave during the week and treat them like a brother or sister in the church. Sooner or later the implications of the kingdom they experienced in church seeped into the behavior of the masters during the week. Paul did in the end create a revolution, not one from without, but one from within, in which a changed heart produced changed behavior and through that in the end brought about social change. This change happened wherever the kingdom of God was expressed through the church, so the world could see that faith in Christ really was a transformation of the whole person.¹⁸

Those consistently living out their Christian faith realize that the forced enslavement of another human being goes against the biblical teaching that all humans were created in the image of **God** and are of equal standing before Him (*Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11*). Indeed, the most ardent abolitionists during the past centuries were Bible-believing Christians. John Wesley, Granville Sharp, **William Wilberforce**, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., and Thomas Clarkson all preached against the evils of slavery and worked to bring about the abolition of the slave trade in England and North America. Harriet Beecher Stowe conveyed this message in her famous novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. And of course, who can forget the change in the most famous of slave traders? John Newton, writer of “Amazing Grace,” eventually became an abolitionist after his conversion to Christianity, when he embraced the truth of Scripture.

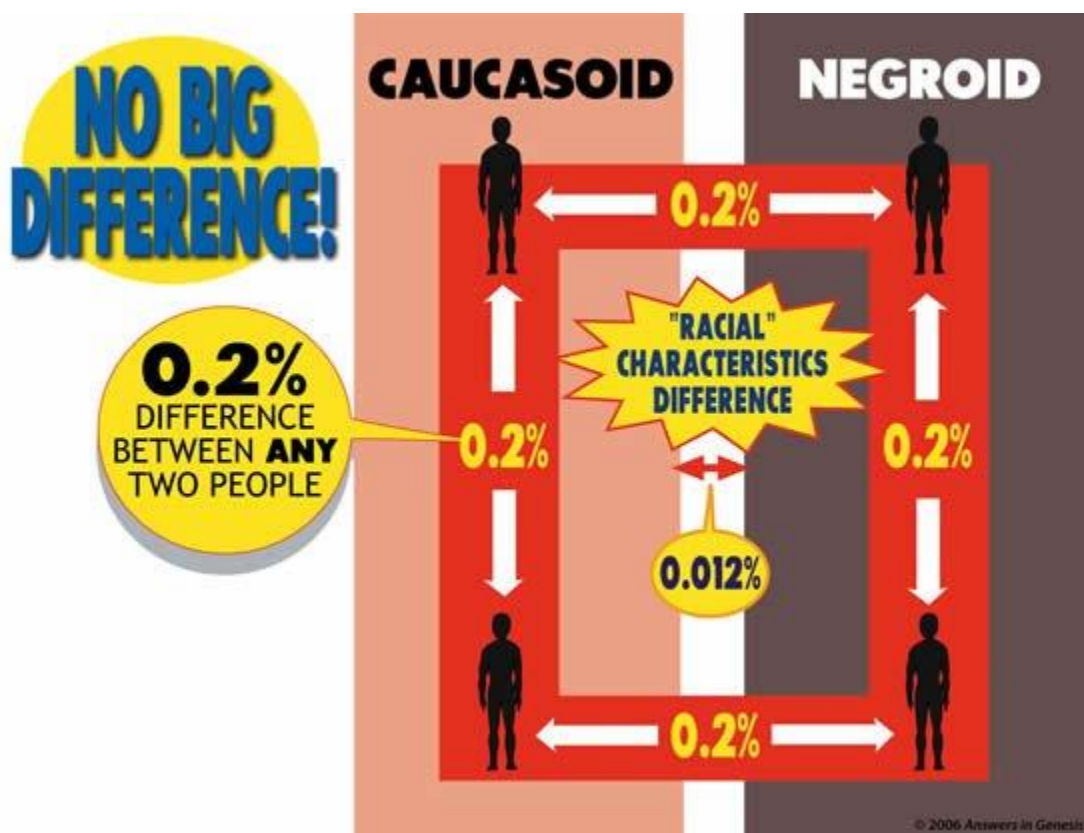
“Racial” Differences

But some people think there must be different races of people because there appear to be major differences between various groups, such as skin color and eye shape.

The truth, though, is that these so-called “racial characteristics” are only minor variations among people groups. If one were to take any two people anywhere in the world, scientists have found that the basic genetic differences between these two people would typically be around 0.2 percent—even if they came from the same people group.¹⁹ But these so-called “racial” characteristics that people think are major differences (skin color, eye shape, etc.) “account for only 0.012 percent of human biological variation.”²⁰

Dr. Harold Page Freeman, chief executive, president, and director of surgery at North General Hospital in Manhattan, reiterates, “If you ask what percentage of your genes is reflected in your external appearance, the basis by which we talk about race, the answer seems to be in the range of 0.01 percent.”²¹

In other words, the so-called “racial” differences are absolutely trivial—overall, there is more variation *within* any group than there is *between* one group and another. If a white person is looking for a tissue match for an organ transplant, for instance, the best match may come from a black person, and vice versa. ABC News claims, “What the facts show is that there are differences among us, but they stem from culture, not race.”²²



The only reason many people think these differences are major is because they’ve been brought up in a culture that has taught them to see the differences this way. Dr. Douglas C. Wallace, professor of molecular genetics at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, stated, “The criteria that people use for race are based entirely on external features that we are programmed to recognize.”²³

If the Bible teaches and science confirms that all are of the same human race and all are related as descendants of Adam, then why are there such seemingly great differences between us (for example, in skin color)? The answer, again, comes with a biblically informed understanding of science.

Skin “Color”

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight.

When Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven” ([Matthew 19:14](#)), He did not distinguish between skin colors. In fact, scientists have discovered that there is one major pigment, called melanin, that produces our skin color. There are two main forms of melanin: eumelanin (brown to black) and pheomelanin (red to yellow). These combine to give us the particular shade of skin that we have.²⁴

Melanin is produced by melanocytes, which are cells in the bottom layer of the epidermis. No matter what our shade of skin, we all have approximately the same concentration of melanocytes in our bodies. Melanocytes insert melanin into melanosomes, which transfer the melanin into other skin cells, which are capable of dividing (stem cells), primarily in the lowest layer of the epidermis. According to one expert,

The melanosomes (tiny melanin-packaging units) are slightly larger and more numerous per cell in dark-skinned than light skinned people. They also do not degrade as readily, and disperse into adjacent skin cells to a higher degree.²⁵



In the stem cells, the pigment serves its function as it forms a little dark umbrella over each nucleus. The melanin protects the epidermal cells from being damaged by sunlight. In people with lighter shades of skin, much of the pigment is lost after these cells divide

and their daughter cells move up in the epidermis to form the surface dead layer—the stratum corneum.

Geneticists have found that four to six genes, each with multiple alleles (or variations), control the amount and type of melanin produced. Because of this, a wide variety of skin shades exist. In fact, it is quite easy for one couple to produce a wide range of skin shades in just one generation, as will be shown below.

The Singerl twins are a vivid reminder that we are all members of one race.

I was taking questions on a live Christian radio talk show and had just answered one about the origin of the supposed human races. I listened as the host patched in the next caller, who blurted out: “I’ll believe we are all one race when you can show me two black people having a white baby and two white people having a black baby.”

I replied, “I can show you pictures of what are called ‘black and white twins’—one twin is very dark and the other very light.” (You can’t show pictures on radio, unfortunately, so all I could do was to describe the picture to the caller.)

“There is no way those two babies had the same father,” the caller responded. “That is impossible. White people and black people do not belong to the same race.”



The Singerl twins (above) are just one example where one twin is very dark and the other is very light. This is a vivid reminder that we are all one race.

Such prejudice, as betrayed by this caller, still exists in certain Christian circles in America and around the world, to my amazement (and disgust).

But it is not just the Christian world where people find “black” and “white” twins incredible—it is also shocking to the secular world. They are surprised because they ignore the Bible’s account that we all came from one race (begun by the first man and woman, Adam and Eve) and dispersed as a result of the Tower of Babel, which led to the formation of people groups (Asians, Caucasians, etc.). They assume, instead, that human groups are deeply divided by significant variations over tens or hundreds of thousands of years and that different people groups originated from different “ancestral apes.”

Are There Really “Black and White Twins”?

Over the last several decades, many examples of fraternal twins, where one is very dark (called “black”) and one very light (called “white”), have been documented. Fraternal twins usually occur when two different eggs are fertilized by two different sperm cells and implanted in the mother’s womb at the same time.

Documented examples of fraternal twins being “black” and “white” include:

1. The Hodgson-Horder twin girls (Born April 2005 in England)¹
2. The Biggs twin girls (Born July 2006 in Australia)²
3. The Richardson twin boys (Born July 2006 in England)³
4. The Grant twin girls (Born 1983 in England)⁴
5. The Singerl twin girls (Born May 2006 in Australia)⁵

In reading over the various news reports on the above sets of twins, I noticed that one reporter called such occurrences “freak,” and others quoted scientists saying that the chance of “black” and “white” twins was a million to one.

Some of the parents of these sets of twins have shared that people stopped and stared when they saw the “black” and “white” children. Some pointed, and others commented that they couldn’t be from the same parents. Some even made racially prejudiced statements about one of the dark-skinned twins. Some believed the parents were lying about their being twins with the same father.

Inheritance

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is the molecule of heredity that is passed from parents to child. In humans, the child inherits 23 chromosomes from each parent (the father donates 23 through his sperm, while the mother donates 23 through her egg). At the moment of conception, these chromosomes unite to form a unique combination of DNA and control much of what makes the child an individual. Each chromosome pair contains hundreds of [genes](#), which regulate the physical development of the child. Note that no new genetic information is generated at conception, but a new *combination* of already-existing genetic information is formed.

To illustrate the basic genetic principles involved in determining skin shade, we’ll use a simplified explanation,²⁶ with just two genes controlling the production of melanin. Let’s say that the A and B versions of the genes code for a lot of melanin, while the a and b versions code for a small amount of melanin.

AA BB CC

aa bb cc

AA Bb CC

Aa BB Cc

Aa Bb Cc

If the father's sperm carried the AB version and the mother's ovum carried the AB, the child would be AABB, with a lot of melanin, and thus very dark skin. Should both parents carry the ab version, the child would be aabb, with very little melanin, and thus very light skin. If the father carries AB (very dark skin) and the mother carries ab (very light skin), the child will be AaBb, with a middle brown shade of skin. In fact, the majority of the world's population has a middle brown skin shade.

A simple exercise with a Punnet Square shows that if each parent has a middle brown shade of skin (AaBb), the combinations that they could produce result in a wide variety of skin shades in just one generation. Based on the skin colors seen today, we can infer that Adam and Eve most likely would have had a middle brown skin color. Their children, and children's children, could have ranged from very light to very dark.

No one really has red, or yellow, or black skin. We all have the same basic color, just different shades of it. We all share the same pigments—our bodies just have different combinations of them.²⁷

Melanin also determines eye color. If the iris of the eye has a larger amount of melanin, it will be brown. If the iris has a little melanin, the eye will be blue. (The blue color in blue eyes results from the way light scatters off of the thin layer of brown-colored melanin.)

Hair color is also influenced by the production of melanin. Brown to black hair results from a greater production of melanin, while lighter hair results from less melanin. Those with red hair have a mutation in one gene that causes a greater proportion of the reddish form of melanin (pheomelanin) to be produced.²⁸

DNA also controls the basic shape of our eyes. Individuals whose DNA codes for an extra layer of adipose tissue around the eyes have almond-shaped eyes (this is common among Asian people groups). All people groups have adipose tissue around the eyes, some simply have more or less.

Origin of People Groups

Those with darker skin tend to live in warmer climates, while those with lighter skin tend to live in colder climates. Why are certain characteristics more prominent in some areas of the world?

We know that Adam and Eve were the first two people. Their descendants filled the earth. However, the world's population was reduced to eight during the Flood of Noah. From these eight individuals have come all the tribes and nations. It is likely that the skin shade of Noah and his family was middle brown. This would enable his sons and their wives to produce a variety of skin shades in just one generation. Because there was a common language and everybody lived in the same general vicinity, barriers that may have prevented their descendants from freely intermarrying weren't as great as they are today. Thus, distinct differences in features and skin color in the population weren't as prevalent as they are today.

In *Genesis 11* we read of the rebellion at the Tower of Babel. God judged this rebellion by giving each family group a different language. This made it impossible for the groups to understand each other, and so they split apart, each extended family going its own way, and finding a different place to live. The result was that the people were scattered over the earth.[29](#)

Because of the new language and geographic barriers, the groups no longer freely mixed with other groups, and the result was a splitting of the gene pool. Different cultures formed, with certain features becoming predominant within each group. The characteristics of each became more and more prominent as new generations of children were born. If we were to travel back in time to Babel, and mix up the people into completely different family groups, then people groups with completely different characteristics might result. For instance, we might find a fair-skinned group with tight, curly dark hair that has blue, almond-shaped eyes. Or a group with very dark skin, blue eyes, and straight brown hair.[30](#)

Some of these (skin color, eye shape, and so on) became general characteristics of each particular people group through various selection pressures (environmental, sexual, etc.) and/or mutation.[31](#) For example, because of the protective factor of melanin, those with darker skin would have been more likely to survive in areas where sunlight is more intense (warmer, tropical areas near the equator), as they are less likely to suffer from diseases such as skin cancer. Those with lighter skin lack the melanin needed to protect them from the harmful UV rays, and so may have been more likely to die before they were able to reproduce. UVA radiation also destroys the B vitamin folate, which is necessary for DNA synthesis in cell division. Low levels of folate in pregnant women can lead to defects in the developing baby. Again, because of this, lighter-skinned individuals may be selected against in areas of intense sunlight.

On the flip side, melanin works as a natural sunblock, limiting the sunlight's ability to stimulate the liver to produce vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium and build strong bones. Since those with darker skin need more sunlight to produce vitamin D, they may not have been as able to survive as well in areas of less sunlight (northern, colder regions) as their lighter-skinned family members, who don't need as much sunlight to produce adequate amounts of vitamin D. Those lacking vitamin D are more likely to develop diseases such as rickets (which is associated with a calcium deficiency), which

can cause slowed growth and bone fractures. It is known that when those with darker skin lived in England during the Industrial Revolution, they were quick to develop rickets because of the general lack of sunlight.³²

Of course, these are generalities. Exceptions occur, such as in the case of the darker-skinned Inuit tribes living in cold northern regions. However, their diet consists of fish, the oil of which is a ready source of vitamin D, which could account for their survival in this area.

Real science in the present fits with the biblical view that all people are rather closely related—there is only one race biologically. Therefore, to return to our original question, there is, in essence, no such thing as interracial marriage. So we are left with this—is there anything in the Bible that speaks clearly against men and women from different people groups marrying?

The Dispersion at Babel

Note that the context of *Genesis 11* makes it clear that the reason for God’s scattering the people over the earth was that they had united in rebellion against Him. Some Christians point to this event in an attempt to provide a basis for their arguments against so-called interracial marriage. They believe that this passage implies that God is declaring that people from different people groups can’t marry so that the nations are kept apart. However, there is no such indication in this passage that what is called “interracial marriage” is condemned. Besides, there has been so much mixing of people groups over the years, that it would be impossible for every human being today to trace their lineage back to know for certain which group(s) they are descended from.

We need to understand that the sovereign creator God is in charge of the nations of this world. Paul makes this very clear in [Acts 17:26](#). Some people erroneously claim this verse to mean that people from different nations shouldn’t marry. However, this passage has nothing to do with marriage. As John Gill makes clear in his classic commentary, the context is that God is in charge of all things—where, how, and for how long any person, tribe, or nation will live, prosper, and perish.³³

In all of this, God is working to redeem for Himself a people who are one in Christ. The Bible makes clear in [Galatians 3:28](#), [Colossians 3:11](#), and [Romans 10:12–13](#) that in regard to salvation, there is no distinction between male or female or Jew or Greek. In Christ, any separation between people is broken down. As Christians, we are one in Christ and thus have a common purpose—to live for Him who made us. This oneness in Christ is vitally important to understanding marriage.

Purpose of Marriage

[Malachi 2:15](#) informs us that an important purpose of marriage is to produce godly offspring—progeny that are trained in the ways of the Lord. Jesus (in *Matthew 19*) and Paul (in *Ephesians 5*) make it clear that when a man and woman marry, they become one flesh (because they were one flesh historically—Eve was made from Adam). Also, the man and woman must be one spiritually so they can fulfill the command to produce godly offspring.



This is why Paul states in [2 Corinthians 6:14](#), “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”

According to the Bible then, which of the following marriages in the picture on the right does God counsel against entering into?

The answer is obvious—number 3. According to the Bible, the priority in marriage is that a Christian should marry only a Christian.

Sadly, there are some Christian homes where the parents are more concerned about their children not marrying someone from another “race” than whether or not they are marrying a Christian. When Christians marry non-Christians, it negates the spiritual (not the physical) oneness in marriage, resulting in negative consequences for the couple and their children.[34](#)

Roles in Marriage³⁵

Of course, every couple needs to understand and embrace the biblical roles prescribed for each family member. Throughout the Scriptures our special roles and responsibilities are revealed. Consider these piercing passages directed to fathers:

The father shall make known Your truth to the children ([Isaiah 38:19](#)).

Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord ([Ephesians 6:4](#)).

For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him ([Genesis 18:19](#)).

These are just a few of the many verses that mention *fathers* in regard to training children. Additionally, the writer of *Psalms 78* continually admonishes fathers to teach their children so they’ll not forget to teach their children, so that they might not forget what God has done and keep His commandments. This includes building within their children a proper [biblical worldview](#) and providing them with answers to the questions the world asks about God

and the Bible (as this book does). It also includes shepherding and loving his wife as Christ loved the church.

Of course, just as God made the role of the man clear, He has also made His intentions known regarding the role of a godly wife. In the beginning, God fashioned a woman to complete what was lacking in Adam, that she might become his helper, that the two of them would truly become one ([Genesis 2:15–25](#)). In other Bible passages the woman is encouraged to be a woman of character, integrity, and action (e.g., [Proverbs 31:10–31](#)). Certainly mothers should also be involved in teaching their children spiritual truths. These roles are true for couples in every tribe and nation.

Rahab and Ruth

The examples of Rahab and Ruth help us understand how God views the issue of marriage between those who are from different people groups but trust in the true God.

Rahab was a Canaanite. These Canaanites had an ungodly culture and were descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. Remember, Canaan was cursed because of his obvious rebellious nature. Sadly, many people state that Ham was cursed—but this is not true.³⁶ Some have even said that this (non-existent) curse of Ham resulted in the black “races.”³⁷ This is absurd and is the type of false teaching that has reinforced and justified prejudices against people with dark skin.

In the genealogy in *Matthew 1*, it is traditionally understood that the same Rahab is listed here as being in the line leading to Christ. Thus, Rahab, a descendant of Ham, must have married an Israelite (descended from Shem). Since this was clearly a union approved by God, it underlines the fact that the particular “people group” she came from was irrelevant—what mattered was that she trusted in the true God of the Israelites.

The same can be said of Ruth, who as a Moabitess also married an Israelite and is also listed in the genealogy in *Matthew 1* that leads to Christ. Prior to her marriage, she had expressed faith in the true God ([Ruth 1:16](#)).

When Rahab and Ruth became children of God, there was no longer any barrier to Israelites marrying them, even though they were from different people groups.

Real Biblical “Interracial” Marriage

If one wants to use the term “interracial,” then the real interracial marriage that God says we should not enter into is when a child of the Last Adam (one who is a new creation in Christ—a Christian) marries one who is an unconverted child of the First Adam (one who is dead in trespasses and sin—a non-Christian).³⁸

Cross-Cultural Problems

Because many people groups have been separated since the Tower of Babel, they have developed many cultural differences. If two people from very different cultures marry, they can have a number of communication problems, even if both are Christians. Expectations regarding relationships with members of the extended family, for example, can also differ. Even people from different English-speaking countries can have communication problems because words may have different meanings. Counselors should go through this in detail, anticipating the problems and giving specific examples, as some marriages have failed

because of such cultural differences. However, such problems have nothing to do with genetics or “race.”

Conclusion

1. There is no biblical justification for claiming that people from different so-called races (best described as people groups) should not marry.
2. The biblical basis for marriage makes it clear that a Christian should marry only a Christian.

When Christians legalistically impose nonbiblical ideas, such as no interracial marriage onto their culture, they are helping to perpetuate prejudices that have often arisen from evolutionary influences. If we are really honest, in countries like America, the main reason for Christians being against interracial marriage is, in most instances, really because of skin color.

The church could greatly relieve the tensions over racism (particularly in countries like America), if only the leaders would teach biblical truths about our shared ancestry: all people are descended from one man and woman; all people are equal before God; all are sinners in need of salvation; all need to build their thinking on God’s Word and judge all their cultural aspects accordingly; all need to be one in Christ and put an end to their rebellion against their Creator.

Christians must think about marriage as God thinks about each one of us. When the prophet Samuel went to anoint the next king of Israel, he thought the oldest of Jesse’s sons was the obvious choice due to his outward appearance. However, we read in [1 Samuel 16:7](#), “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” God doesn’t look at our outward biological appearance; He looks on our inward spiritual state. And when considering marriage, couples should look on the inside spiritual condition of themselves and each other because it is true that what’s on the inside, spiritually, is what really matters.¹

¹Footnotes

1. J.P. Rushton, professor of psychology at the University of Western Ontario, Lond, Ontario, Canada, Race, Evolution and Behavior, www.harbornet.com/folks/theedrich/JP_Rushton/Race.htm.
2. S.J. Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, Belknap-Harvard Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977, 127–128.
3. Missing links with mankind in early dawn of history, *New York Tribune*, p. 11, February 10, 1924.
4. D. Monaghan, The body-snatchers, *The Bulletin*, November 12, 1991, pp. 30–38; Blacks slain for science’s white superiority theory, *The Daily Telegraph Mirror*, April 26, 1994.
5. For more information on the fallacious nature of this idea, see www.answersingenesis.org/go/embryonic.
6. E. Haeckel, *The History of Creation*, 1876, 363–363.

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7. J. Bergman, [Ota Benga: the man who was put on display in the zoo!](#) *Creation* **16**(1):48–50, 1993.
 8. Keane, Arthur H.J., “Anthropological Curiosities - The Pygmies of the World”. *Scientific American Supplement* 64, no. 1650 (August 17, 1907): 99.
 9. This is not to say that *evolution* is the cause of racism. *Sin* is the cause of racism. However, Darwinian evolution fueled a particular form of racism.
 10. R.L. Hotz, Race has no basis in biology, researchers say, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, p. A3, February 20, 1997.
 11. We’re all the same, ABC News, September 10, 1998, www.abcnews.com/sections/science/DyeHard/dye72.html.
 12. S.C. Cameron and S.M. Wycoff, The destructive nature of the term race: growing beyond a false paradigm, *Journal of Counseling & Development*, **76**:277–285, 1998.
 13. N. Angier, Do races differ? Not really, DNA shows, New York Times web, Aug. 22, 2000.
 14. In the original, [Ezra 9:2](#) refers to “seed,” [Romans 9:3](#) to “kinsmen according to the flesh.”
 15. For more on this teaching, see chapter 6, [Cain’s Wife—Who Was She?](#)
 16. Contrary to popular belief, mankind does not share an apelike ancestor with other primates. To find out the truth behind the alleged apemen, visit www.answersingenesis.org/go/anthropology.
 17. W.C. Kaiser, Jr. et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1996, 150.
 18. Ref. 17, 644.
 19. J.C. Gutin, End of the rainbow, *Discover*, pp. 72–73, November 1994.
 20. Ref. 12.
 21. Ref. 13.
 22. Ref. 11.
 23. Ibid.
 24. Of course, melanin is not the only factor that determines skin shade: blood vessels close to the skin can produce a reddish tinge, while extra layers of adipose tissue (fat) in the skin yield a yellowish tinge. Exposure to the sun can cause increased melanin production, thus darkening skin, but only to a certain point. Other pigments also affect skin shade but generally have very little bearing on how light or dark the skin will be. The major provider of skin color is melanin.
 25. Ackerman, *Histopathologic Diagnosis of Skin Diseases*, Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1978, 44; Lever and Schamberg-Lever, *Histopathology of the Skin*, 7th Ed., J.B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1990, 18–20.
 26. The actual genetics involved are much more complicated than this simplified explanation. There are 4 to 6 genes with multiples alleles (versions) of each gene that operate under incomplete dominance, that is, they work together to produce an individual’s particular skin shade. However, simplifying the explanation does not take away from the point being made.
 27. Albinism results from a genetic mutation which prevents the usual production of melanin.
 28. For more information, see www.answersingenesis.org/go/red-hair.

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29. As they went, the family groups took with them the knowledge that had been passed to them about the creation and Flood events. Although these accounts have been changed over time, they reflect the true account found in the Bible. For more information, see www.answersingenesis.org/go/legends.
30. This assumes that each trait is independently inherited, which may not always be the case. Although there are many instances in which a certain trait shows up in a person of a different ethnic group (e.g., almond-shaped eyes in a woman with very dark skin, or blue eyes in a man with tightly curled brown hair and tan skin).
31. For more on how selection and mutations operate, see chapter 22 in this book.
32. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melanin.
33. See note on [Acts 17:26](#), in John Gill, D.D., *An exposition of the Old and New Testament*, London: printed for Mathews and Leigh, 18 Strand, by W. Clowes, Northumberland-Court, 1809. Edited, revised, and updated by Larry Pierce, 1994–1995 for Online Bible CD-ROM.
34. It is true that in some exceptional instances when a Christian has married a non-Christian, the non-Christian spouse, by the grace of God, has become a Christian. This is a praise point but it does not negate the fact that Scripture indicates that it should not have been entered into in the first place. This does not mean that the marriage is not actually valid, nor does it dilute the responsibilities of the marital union—see also [1 Corinthians 7:12–14](#), where the context is of one spouse becoming a Christian after marriage.
35. For more on this topic, see [The Genesis of a Legacy](#) by Ken Ham and Steve Ham, available from www.answersbookstore.com.
36. See [Genesis 9:18–27](#). Canaan, the youngest of Ham’s sons, received Noah’s curse. Why? The descendants of Canaan were some of the wickedest people on earth. For example, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for their sexual immorality and rebellion. It may be that Ham’s actions toward his father ([Genesis 9:22](#)) had sexual connotations, and Noah saw this same sin problem in Canaan and understood that Canaan’s descendants would also act in these sinful ways. (The Bible clearly teaches that the unconfessed sin of one generation is often greater in the next generation.) The curse on Canaan has nothing to do with skin color but rather serves as a warning to fathers to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We need to deal with our own sin problems and train our children to deal with theirs.
37. For example: “We know the circumstances under which the posterity of Cain (and later of Ham) were cursed with what we call Negroid racial characteristics” (Bruce McConkie, Apostle of the Mormon Council of 12, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 554, 1958); “The curse which Noah pronounced upon Canaan was the origin of the black race” (The Golden Age, *The Watchtower* [now called *Awake!*], p. 702, July 24, 1929).
38. Examples of such “mixed marriages” and their negative consequences can be seen in *Nehemiah 9* and *Nehemiah 10*, and *Numbers 25*.