



# WILDFIRE

## How Progressive Theology is Impacting the Church



### AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR CURRENT MISSIONAL REALITY

#### CLASS 1: WISDOM FROM ABOVE

A discussion of current church dynamics - where are ideas coming from? How can we understand the fruits of the world's wisdom v. God's? This class also describes the reality of Postmodern thought, and how it is influencing critical conversations about faith, especially among the younger generation

#### CLASS 2: PEACE THAT STIRS THE SOUL

This class discusses how many secular ideas are not designed to foster peace, but to disrupt the status quo, with the Christian faith in the crosshairs. It is also a reminder that deep down, we all desire a peace that society or culture can't provide - one that is given us directly by our Creator

#### CLASS 3: TOWARD A RESILIENT FUTURE

We all want to impact a broken world, so where do we go from here? This class offers solutions based in being "*Biblically Resilient*," with an eye toward how to coach the next generation toward strength and emotional security. It also discusses ways churches can provide clarity in these confusing times

#### CLASS 4: NAVIGATING CULTURE WITH GRACE & TRUTH

This is meant to be a Sunday Sermon, offering biblical advice for multi-generational churches on how to lovingly stand firm in a society that is growing increasingly intolerant of the Christian faith. Practical solutions for evangelism, interacting with family, neighbors, and workplaces

"Thank you for providing words & language to the things I've been feeling"

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING...

"I feel much more equipped to understand the issues we face as we grow in our Christian walk"

"This has helped build confidence as I interact with an increasingly complex culture"





# Biblically Resilient Parenting

In an Increasingly Complex World



## Class One: Our Current Reality

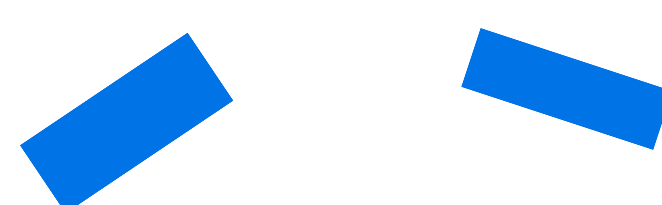
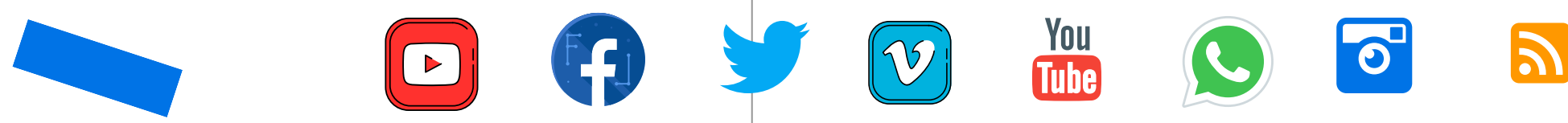
What are the reality our kids are facing these days? We'll discuss the pressures our kids are navigating within society and culture, and what it means to raise children that are biblically resilient, able to recover from difficulty or disappointment. We also talk about the limits of youth ministry, and what it will take for parents to lead their children in a world where there is enormous pressure to conform

## Class Two: Resilient Practices for Parents

In this class we discuss the role of the most formative relationship kids have - their parents. It's not an easy task, but when we know what it is that calls our children higher spiritually, we can see more success in helping them see the beauty of God's plans for their lives. This is designed to equip parents for the calling of raising kids in a confusing world, no matter where they are on the journey

## Class Two: Resilient Practices for Children

This class is a discussion of how children naturally develop, and encourages parents to better understand the world they live in, the way they mature as image-bearers, and how they understand the things that influence them. It also raises the importance of family discipleship, parents and children having spiritual voices that influence their Christian walk



*"38% of pastors have thought about quitting ministry in the past year"*

*"Only 1 in 3 pastors consider themselves healthy in terms of well-being"*

*"Most pastors don't feel prepared to teach cultural engagement"*

*Barna Research*



**"From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take."  
1 Chronicles 12:32 (NLT)**

**"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction"  
2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)**

## **BIBLICALLY RESILIENT LEADERS**

### **CLASS 1: JARS OF CLAY**

This class discusses the role of leaders, their limitations, and the challenges to their spiritual health. It will provide much needed perspective to spiritual leadership, and offer resources for soul care and spiritual balance

### **CLASS 2: UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES**

We live in what scholars are calling a post-Christian society. What does that mean? Where do prevailing ideas come from, and how do they enter the church? Most importantly, how can we understand society in a way that gives us all confidence in leading within today's complex world?

### **CLASS 3: GREAT PATIENCE & CAREFUL INSTRUCTION**

How can lay leaders and full time ministers lead today with grace and truth? This class will discuss how to teach and preach in a way that is biblically responsible, and also relevant to today's hearers



# Out of Season:

## Clear & Compassionate Preaching for Confusing Times



### **Class One: The Word**

The word of God is living and active (Heb. 4:12), and uniquely able to transform hearts and minds. In this class we will talk about what it means to have a high view of scripture, the dangers of syncretizing, and the importance of contextualization, just to name a few. The goal is to let the message spring from God's word, not the preachers plan or personality.

### **Class Two: The Preacher**

As God uses us, we do bring the truth through our unique perspective, personality and experience. We will discuss how to approach the craft of preaching, how to prepare yourself spiritually, and ways to find your own voice while proclaiming the powerful message of God's timeless truth.

### **Class Three: The Hearers**

Our preaching is done in real time and space. The Holy Spirit empowers us to passionately deliver the truth of God's word to the people under our care. This class will be a discussion about understanding your people, your context, and the challenges they face daily in a world that is growing increasingly hostile to their faith.

**"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."**

**2 Timothy 4:2-4**

Now more than ever, preachers and teachers in God's church need to bring a clear and compassionate voice to the pulpit. The thing is, it's growing increasingly difficult in a post-Christian society. This workshop serves as a series of classes and discussions around the craft of preaching, combining our current realities with a commitment to theological integrity.

**Jesus is a mentor or model, but it is important to diminish his LORDship**

Many progressive theologians reject the divinity of Jesus, while some prefer to downplay his lordship. Biblically, Jesus himself claimed to be much more than a moral example, but claimed to be God himself. His followers worshipped him as Lord of their lives.

**Open-ended questions are much preferred over answers or anything that resembles certainty or judgment**

Progressive theologians insist that since we are all on a journey, and that journey is unique, anything that resembles dogmatic conviction is out of line with the the human experience. The problem? There are clear commands about life and morality in scripture. They may not be unique to us personally, but God feels they are important for all mankind to obey.

**The INDIVIDUAL journey is more powerful than group unity or anything that resembles uniformity**

Much of postmodern thinking is built on the principle that calling for unity is calling for uniformity, so it must be resisted. Can uniformity of thought be stifling and wrong? For sure, but unity, self-denial and sacrifice for the sake of others is a large theme of the early church. We should not hesitate, where appropriate, to ask people to sacrifice their own needs for the needs of their fellowship.

**Love is more valuable than focusing on the details of sex and gender**

Progressive theologians teach that love is an enduring quality, sexual ethics or "norms" change and evolved over time, and in line with the prevailing norms of love in each generation. The scriptures actually teach morality as God's preferred vision for how humans thrive in each generation. We have no right, in the name of love, to call things normal that the Bible calls sin.

**Secular language and ideas are needed in order to clarify biblical ideas for today's audience**

Many progressive theologians consider the Bible outdated, some even go so far as to call it essentially irrelevant. At the very least, they believe it needs updating, current words need to replace Bible words in order for it to be relevant. We need to trust that God himself is the power behind the Bible. Let it speak for itself.

**Empathizing with people is more kind than pointing out their sin and brokenness**

In radical postmodern thought, judgment is the worst possible value. It needs to be avoided at all costs and replaced with affirmation and empathy. This is tricky, empathy, patience and honor are Christian values, but often calling people on sin or drawing lines around morality are the most loving things we can do, and can open doors to repentance and salvation

**Honoring and upholding peoples' personal journey is superior to doctrine and articulating beliefs**

Since the individual and their personal journey/needs are at the core of postmodern thought, a focus on doctrine or beliefs are considered an unmerciful way to relate to humanity. The church can learn something here - empathizing with people and their brokenness is a key part of being a Christian. However, doctrine, theology and belief are spoken about in scripture as important, and they for the foundation for healthy missiology

**Authority and power need to be flattened out in the name of equality and fairness**

For sure, power can be (and is) abused. The church needs to work hard at expressing biblical authority, not authoritarianism. The problem is, since all authority in postmodern thought is suspect, progressive Christians see authoritarianism is just about everything. We should humbly but confidently call people to submit to biblically authority, not because we want to, but because it is scriptural

**Hospitality is seen as honoring where people are at, not extending biblical dignity and loving boundaries**

A progressive view of hospitality demands all peoples' experience and behavior needs to be accommodated, even affirmed. Biblically, since all people are made in the image of God, we should treat them with the dignity of an image-bearer, with love and respect. However, loving moral boundaries, as created by God, are not ours to negotiate, but we call everyone to them in love

**Restoration of this present world is more important than focusing on the afterlife or salvation of souls**

Progressive Theology reframes the mission of the church as primarily achieving a better version of society on earth, repairing the damage done by oppressive human systems. The historic mission of the church involves reaching each soul with the good news of the gospel, something that necessarily emphasizes individual sin and unrighteousness

**"Progressive Theology is a Masterclass in half-truths"**  
Michael Kruger

Remember, most secular ideas or philosophies contain at least some truth. When compared with the wisdom of the Bible, it falls flat, which is why we need to carefully discern what enters into the church ...



# The Top 10 Ways Progressive Theology Enters Church Culture

There are more, but these represent some of the most common things to look out for

**"Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven, but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.**

**But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."**

James 3:15-18

Remember, this is largely a battle of wisdom, God's v. the world's. In the end, the fruit of God's perfect wisdom is clear. the wisdom of the world inevitably causes division and more problems. God alone holds the key for personal righteousness and human flourishing...

# The progression of language and ideas

To really understand the danger of progressive theology, one must understand the postmodern language that serves as its underlying idea of communicating beliefs and values. Things have changed, a lot. Many people who agreed with postmodern thought 20 years ago would not recognize it today. It has become militant. In a real way, it is becoming an angry tyrant, strong-arming you into believing what it says about truth, identity, and power dynamics in all human systems. To disagree is to invite scorn and abuse, to be in danger of being cancelled. **Take a look at just a sampling of how terms have changed over the last 30 years or so....**



WORD	TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING	POSTMODERN UNDERSTANDING	NEW POSTMODERN (PROGRESSIVE/TYRANNICAL) UNDERSTANDING
<b>Tolerance</b>	Accepting others without agreeing with or sharing their beliefs or lifestyle choices	Accepting that every individual's beliefs, values, lifestyles, and truth claims are equal	Accepting that every individual's beliefs, values, lifestyles and truth claims are equal is not enough. One must accept them, affirm them, and stand in support of them privately and publicly. To do otherwise is seen as bigoted and hostile.
<b>Truth</b>	There is an absolute standard of right and wrong	Truth is whatever is right for you, and may differ for others.	Truth is socially constructed. It is a product of one's feelings, opinions and experiences. It is fluid and can change, often multiple times.
<b>Moral Judgments</b>	Certain things are morally right and wrong, as determined by God and stated in scripture	There is no authority that determines any universal right and wrong, so to judge another's actions is inhospitable, unloving and harsh.	The only authority about moral judgments is the strongest and loudest voices in society or online. They get to choose what is moral or not, and if you disagree with them, they are determined to destroy you, which itself is a judgment! Ironically, dangerous progressive thought has created its own universal truth.
<b>Personal Rights</b>	Everyone has the right to be treated justly under the law	I have the right to do what I feel is best for me	I have the right to do what is best for me, and you must stand with me. Your silence about my freedom and right is interpreted as hate and violence
<b>Respect</b>	Giving due consideration to others	Wholeheartedly approving of others' beliefs or lifestyle choices	Participating in affirmation of all beliefs and lifestyle choices
<b>Acceptance</b>	Embracing people for who they are, not necessarily for what they do	Endorsing and even praising others for who they are as well as for what they do - including their beliefs and lifestyle choices and behaviors	Standing in support of other' beliefs and lifestyle choices - affirming them in public and online, being willing to march, protest and advocate for them.
<b>Personal Preference</b>	Preferences of color, food, clothing, style, hobbies, religious beliefs, all personally and privately determined	Preferences of sexual identity, behaviors, value systems and beliefs are personally and privately determined	All preferences of any kind are personally and privately determined, publicly affirmed. Any belief system, such as Christianity, that holds to an objective and absolute standard, is adjusted, or even deemed dangerous
<b>Freedom</b>	Being free to do what you know you ought to do	Being able to do anything you want to do	Being free to act in any way you choose, no matter how it violates the freedom of someone who disagrees with you

\*This list was copied and adapted from the book *The Disconnected Generation*, by Josh McDowell, p. 18

# The Basic ideas of Postmodernism

From rigid to fluid...



By nature, postmodern thought is tricky to define. Essentially, it is a movement that began in response to the rigid rationalism of the Enlightenment, or the principles of modernity. Modernity suggested everything had an answer and was knowable. Postmodernity is a rejection of a scientific and rational way of seeing the world. It values feelings and experience over reason. Truth is a subjective idea, not objective. Tradition and authority are not to be trusted. Since there can be no universal claim to truth, the Bible as an objective authority is discouraged or flattened out.

## The positive in postmodern thought...

- Discourages too much certainty about things that contain nuance
- Opens up doors to various ways of thinking, which is especially helpful in counseling & therapy
- Encourages humility around one's viewpoints
- Opens up pathways to more than one way of thinking
- Encourages creativity, especially when solutions or methods don't need to be black and white

"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."  
*Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy*

"I think; therefore I am"  
*Rene Descartes*

"Follow your own path, no matter what people say."  
*Karl Marx*

"There is a ubiquitous sense of live and let live, of you-do-youism, in the quest of young generations to find their identity - which is at odds with how the Scriptures portray what it means to be human."  
*Dave Kinnaman*

"Modernism is about space. Postmodernism is about communication. You should do what turns you on."  
*Architect Robert Venturi*

## The danger in postmodern thought...

- Truth is relative & unique to an individual's journey/experience
- There is no truth outside of who you are
- The past cannot be trusted, history has not shown progress
- Objective truth is not trustworthy - do not give authority for your life away!
- Sin cannot be defined or nailed down
- Freedom is found in self-actualization, not self-denial
- Identity is fluid, not anything scientific - can be chosen
- Judgement is evil - there is no one right way of doing things
- Feelings & experience are worth more than reason

## What is the fruit of postmodern thought for Christians?



- A crisis of identity. We are raising a generation of kids who are VERY confused about where they find meaning
- A crisis of truth. Truth is determined by an Almighty God, the primary way he communicates is through scripture. Remove that, who/what is right? Who says?
- Morality is open and fluid, a matter of opinion
- Judgement is a biblical theme. We are not THE judge, but are called to make judgments about many things. People today are afraid to draw any line, scared to offend anyone.
- Sin is watered down
- Salvation is about self-advancement, not self-sacrifice
- Conversions & baptisms can fade away. After all, who wants to confront another person on anything moral? Live & let live!

## Objective truth

"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."  
*2 Timothy 3:16-17*



## Morality

"Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you."  
*James 1:21*

## Identity

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."  
*Genesis 1:27*



## Truth

"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal."  
*Psalms 119:60*

## Judgment/Repentance

"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance"  
*Matthew 3:8*

# A High View of Scripture

A high view of scripture maintains that God's word is eternal, timeless, and always true in every generation. It is infallible, meaning it will accomplish what it intends to. It is absolute truth in a fallen society. It does not contradict itself, and certainly needs no help from human wisdom. It does not change or bend based on our feelings or experience. It is often hard to understand, which means we approach it with humility and patient study. If it has been misused by humanity, it is humans that need to repent. It stands above and over all worldly wisdom, and is a filter for every good idea or endeavor we bring into God's church. Most importantly, it reveals the heart of God toward a humanity that has rejected him. He is passionately in love with people, and wants all of them to come to his knowledge of truth and relationship.

# A Plain Reading of the Text

The Bible is perspicuous in nature, meaning that the message of scripture is clear enough for anyone to understand and grasp. This clarity leads to something called a Plain Reading of the Text, which simply means that if we take a common sense approach to the Bible, we can understand the vast majority of it. Any doctrine that requires some new and secret knowledge, or requires people to do some intellectual or mental gymnastics in order to really understand, should be avoided.

# Missional Creativity

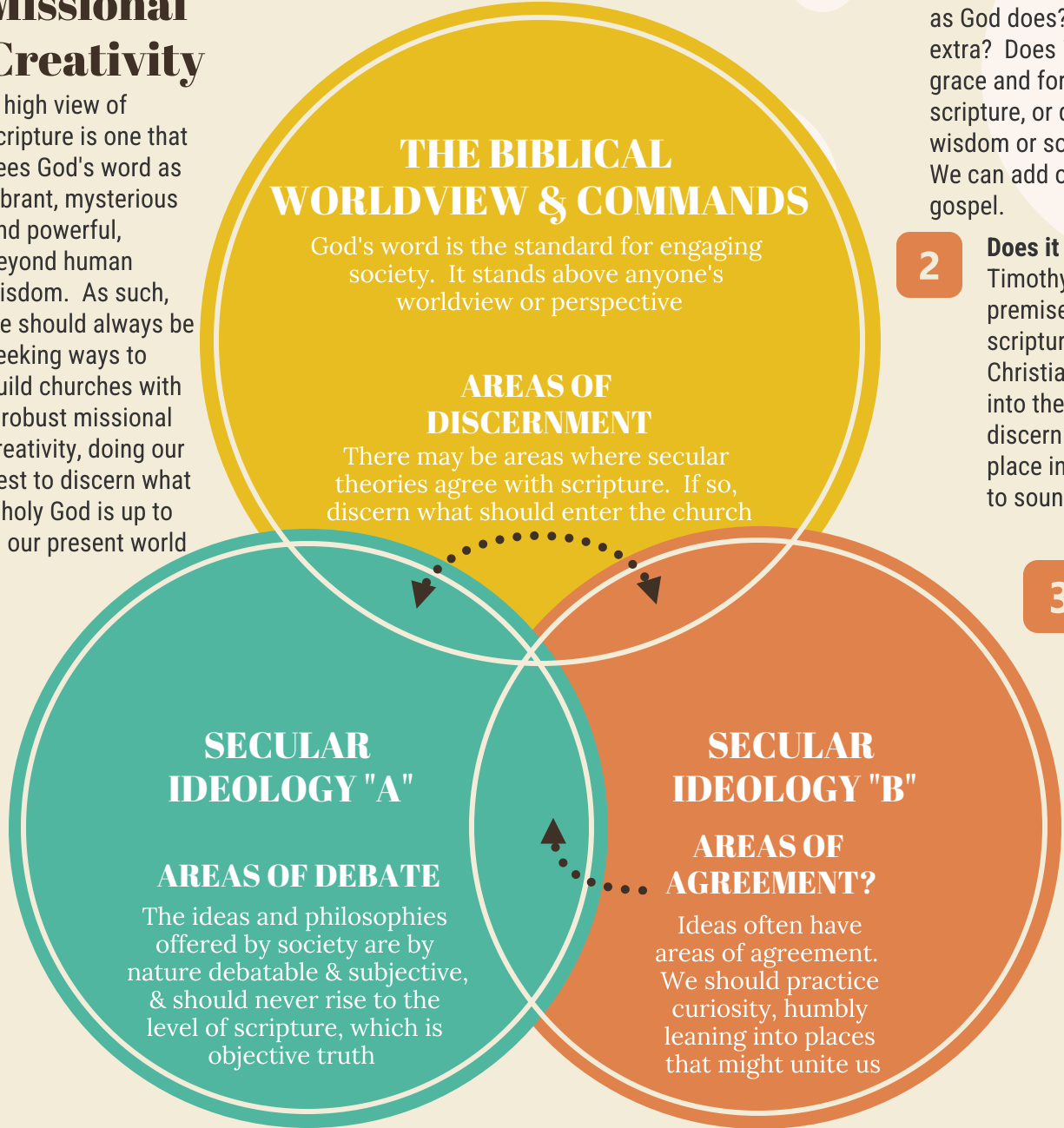
A high view of scripture is one that sees God's word as vibrant, mysterious and powerful, beyond human wisdom. As such, we should always be seeking ways to build churches with a robust missional creativity, doing our best to discern what a holy God is up to in our present world

3 steps for determining what teaching, ideas, programs, podcasts, books or committees make their way into the church:

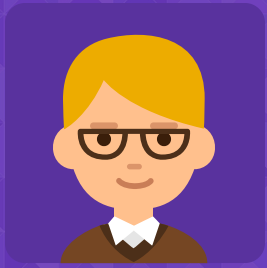
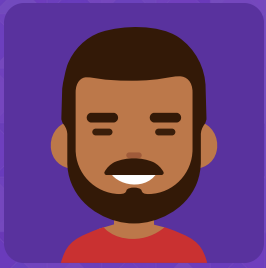
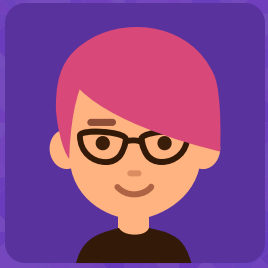
**1 Does it conform to the gospel of Jesus Christ?** (1 Timothy 1:8-11) Does it describe sin, repentance and redemption as God does? Does it add something extra? Does it ultimately lead to the grace and forgiveness taught in scripture, or does it rely on human wisdom or society's ideas of resolution. We can add or subtract nothing from the gospel.

**2 Does it align with God's word?** (1 Timothy 6:3-5) Do the basic ideas, premises or doctrine agree with scripture? As passionate Christians bring their favorite ideas into the church, much prayer, discernment and study must take place in order to ensure it submits to sound doctrine.

**3 Is it grounded in faith, love and unity?** (2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:1-2) Does it promote division or unite us? Does it make our relationships stronger? Are we closer to each other as a result, or does it amplify our differences? The church needs to be a light of harmony and unity to a lost world, which is steeped in division.







# Understanding Critical Theory

Critical Theory is a philosophy that attempts to organize reality by focusing on power dynamics. Initially developed by Karl Marx to explain inequities in economics, it was broadened by the Frankfurt School to apply to all power structures in culture. Essentially, people are categorized as either oppressed (held down by the power of others) or oppressors (those responsible for holding others down). It sees all problems of injustice and inequality as systemic and rooted in power. Accordingly, it assigns people into groups, based on measurable power dynamics. While it may serve a purpose in society at large, by assigning guilt or redemption based on group identity, it stands against the gospel of Jesus, which assigns sin and guilt to all, but by the grace of Jesus offers redemption to all, based on our standing before God, not our position in society.

## Oppressed or Oppressor?

- Gays/lesbians/trans are oppressed, heterosexual normativity is the oppressor
- Women are oppressed, men are oppressors
- Disabled people are oppressed, able-bodied people are oppressors
- People of color are oppressed, systemic white racism is the oppressor

## Intersectionality

- One can be more or less oppressed based on how their oppressions "intersect." For instance:
- Women in society are oppressed, but a woman of color is more oppressed
- A transgender woman of color is even more oppressed because she has 3 intersections

## Voice and Influence

- The more oppressed one is, the more weight their voice carries. The less oppressed one is, the less vocal they should be
- The oppressors have power, their voice needs to be diminished
- Power imbalances are reduced when oppressors become "allies" to the oppressed

## Are there strengths to be found in Critical Theory?

This is an important question, and I believe the answer is yes. There are 3 areas of strength to be found in CT:

- **Critical Theory highlights injustice and oppression.** Let's face it, both of these have existed in all generations of humanity. Some variation of the word "oppress" appears in scripture nearly 400 times. It is an important subject throughout the Prophets and Psalms, and gets God's attention through the entire biblical narrative. When striving to understand the heart of God, this should matter to us.
- **Critical Theory highlights the poor and marginalized in society.** In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus announces good news and freedom to both groups. They now have a just advocate in the savior of the world! Christians should do their best to advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves.
- **Identifying oppression as groups can at times be helpful.** Often, an individual voice can be ignored, whereas a group cannot. It is all too easy to overlook the real needs of a single person, but harder to do when a group is represented and considered.

"...a basic principle of justice is that we don't determine an individual's guilt based on group identity, be it through social patterns, statistics or others' enumeration of their painful stories. We don't remedy irrational discrimination with more irrational discrimination."  
*Noelle Mering*

"Christian minds have been conformed to the modern spirit: the spirit, that is, that spawns great thoughts of man and leaves room only for small thoughts of God."  
*J.I. Packer*

## Are there reasons for Christians to be concerned with Critical Theory?

- **It's truth claims are deeply flawed.** Truth about our human situation is derived from secular wisdom, but given much weight! Human sin is defined by being an oppressor, something you can never change. "Salvation" is a continual process of liberation, but no redemption. There is nothing farther from the heart of the gospel than that.
- **It is deeply disunifying.** Instead of reconciling humans back to a harmonious relationship with each other, it pits them against each other, developing barriers that scripture says are gone. By addressing imbalances of power, it creates winners and losers, not love and unity.
- **It slowly erases personal accountability.** People find meaning among groups and tribes, and if their tribe is part of an oppressed group, sin is often overlooked or tolerated. Each person must carry their own cross and make Jesus the Lord of their life, no matter their situation.
- **It advances an unbiblical view of power.** The goal of CT is to take power away from one group and give it to another. The biblical goal of power is to divest oneself of it, making sacrifices for the sake of others. It is found in losing oneself, not advancing one's needs.
- **Critical Theory has slowly replaced critical thinking.** Because of pain, we look for scapegoats, where we should be thinking deeply about what lies under the hood of secular theories.
- **Sadly, many who advocate for CT think they desire justice, when in reality they may desire vengeance.** Humans need to tread lightly on areas that belong to God.

## A more biblical response to race relations in the church

### Bear each other's burdens

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."  
*Galatians 6:2*



### Honor one another

"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."  
*Romans 12:10*



### Love one another

"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."  
*John 13:34*



### Practice biblical empathy

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."  
*Romans 12:15*

### Put others above yourself

"Rather, in humility value other above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others."  
*Philippians 2:3*

### Strive for biblical unity

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."  
*Colossians 3:13-14*

# Building Resilience: Ideas for churches

Building healthy and resilient churches does not happen by accident. It also is not a "quick fix," but rather is a result of intentionally building the right habits in the congregation. The following ideas are some that will help, over time, build biblical resiliency. It is certainly not an exhaustive list, and can be implemented in any order, at any time.



## Ideas explained in no particular order

### Develop a statement of faith

Church members crave a clear vision of what our church believes. People searching for a church do too. Develop a statement of faith that addresses core doctrines, but also the topics that people are addressing in society.

### Develop good theological training for members

People need help navigating the complexity of society through the lens of the Christian faith, and an increasing number of people are becoming Christians without a good knowledge of scripture. This doesn't need to be too deep, but good meat for spiritual nutrition. Teach people the fundamental basics of faith and life.

### Maintain a high view of scripture

Consistently teach a plain reading of the text, and that God's word is the ultimate authority of life and doctrine. If there are programs, classes, books or podcasts being advanced in the church, filter them through the interpretive lens of scripture. Uphold God's word as the absolute authority for life and faith, and make no apologies for it.

### Contextualize but don't compromise

Syncretism is the idea of blending scripture and worldly wisdom, which is dangerous. Seek ways to present the gospel in a way that speaks powerfully to people in all cultural contexts, but be careful not to add or subtract from it. Let the gospel message speak for itself.

### Avoid modern day Gnosticism

Ideas that claim to offer access into a higher level of understanding, or a more enlightened view of reality, are often new forms of Gnosticism (secret knowledge). Avoid these. Scripture is plain, and calls us to be humble about our opinions. It is easy to grasp, and offers solutions for society's ills.

### Discuss biblical social justice

Scripture has so much to say about oppression, injustice and caring for the needs of the poor and marginalized. Develop and maintain robust efforts to uphold these values, and discuss them in scriptural, not worldly ways. The Bible needs no help advocating for those who need it, but we must be devoted to it.

### Have an atmosphere of patience for doubters

Don't meet doubt with dismissiveness, harshness or frustration. And don't be content with shallow answers. Instead, engage questions deeply, and search for deep and nuanced answers for tricky subjects.

### Recommit to personal discipleship

Straying from vibrant one-another relationships has made it easier for false teaching to find traction. Christians grow with objective input in their lives, and conversations that challenge their viewpoints.

### Meet together

It is so much easier to resist progressive theology when we interact in person. Satan does his best work when people are in isolation, alone with their own thoughts, cable news, social media, and little human interaction. Use zoom only when necessary.

### Discuss a greater missional imagination

Too often we have ONLY defined the Christian mission as the saving of individual souls. That is a huge part of it, but partnering with God in service to this hurting world is also. Discuss ways to help serve your communities and express a greater level of care and concern for the felt needs around your church community. This really matters to the younger generation of Christians.

### Engage voices of all generations

Healthy church collaboration is important. People who feel valued and heard support the direction of the church. The church is not a democracy, but it is important to draw out the perspectives of church members, especially the next generation, who are not intimidated by talking about the complicated societal and cultural issues.

### Call people to follow King Jesus

Postmodern thought slowly but surely makes people the master of their own fate. Mark Sayers says progressive theology "is a kingdom without a king." Too many progressive theologians simply reduce Jesus to a good teacher or inspiring model. We need to teach people that any life worth living is lived within the Lordship of the real King!

### Re-evaluate definitions of success

It is not said enough, but gaining our notions of success from the business or corporate world is a dangerous form of progressive theology. It replaces God's idea of health with a human understanding. Dig deeper as a church and ask God to provide greater and more biblical ways to understand church growth and health.

### Seek more training in mental health

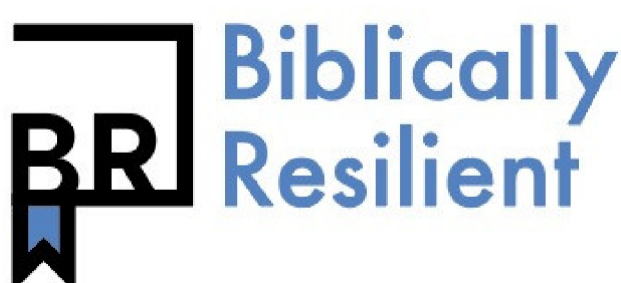
We are learning more about mental health these days than ever before. The strain of the last few years, coupled with the effect of COVID have taken a toll on people. Training the church to understand a balanced and biblical approach to mental health can go a long ways to resisting the urge to pull unhealthy cultural ideas into the church.

### Talk honestly about theological foundations

We live in an information superhighway. Books, podcasts, videos and articles come at us at an alarming rate. Do we understand what kind of theology they all espouse? Before engaging them in your church, dig deep and discern if they come from a healthy theological spot. If not, we cannot be afraid to not allow them traction within our churches.

### Get help from others

Each church is in a different spot and has different resources. Seek out those who understand societal topics and ask for help. Invite people into your church to provide training you cannot. We are all in this together.



"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly jewels, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work."

1 Corinthians 3:10-13