

Critical Theory

Biblical Christianity

<p><u>Assertion:</u> Being a part of certain identity groups automatically makes you either the oppressor or the oppressed. “If you are white, you are racist.”</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> Acknowledge that you are the oppressor (or the oppressed). If you are part of a privileged group, you must give up your right to speak and act (unless it is to condemn yourself and your group while simultaneously defending/promoting the oppressed group).</p>	<p><u>Biblical truth:</u> We all share a primary identity group: we are all fallen in Adam, corrupt in our entire being, and from our fallen natures we add further guilt through our willful disobedience against God (Rom. 7:18; 8:7; Col. 1:21; Matt. 15:19; WCF 6.4). This disobedience can take many forms, including racism and oppression. We are all sinners in need of the redeeming work of Christ.</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> The active and passive work of Jesus Christ: we are called to repent, believe, and trust in Christ alone for salvation. As the Holy Spirit indwells and transforms us, God enables us to turn from sin and to willfully obey Him.</p>
<p><u>Assertion:</u> True justice occurs through the redistribution of wealth and power. Unequal power is always oppressive. Only when that power is gone will the value of oppressed lives be truly realized. “Redistribute wealth and power now.”</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> Disrupt and dismantle wherever power might be unequal: the nuclear family, religious or cultural institutions, education, government, or law enforcement, even our very identity as male and female.</p>	<p><u>Biblical truth:</u> God is both all-powerful and perfectly just. He has established good and orderly structures of authority and power, in the family, in the church, and in civil government. These structures can be grievously distorted or abused by the wicked. But a response of “equal power” not only denies the good authorities established by God, it is utterly insufficient to change hearts. Christians look forward to true justice on the coming day of judgment (Eccl. 12:14; Heb. 9:27; Rom. 12:19). Then all will stand, either on their own “merits”, or robed in the righteousness of Christ.</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> Do not be conformed to the world, but turn to the Life-giver for the renewing of your minds (Rom. 12:2). Do not set aside God or his law if seeking earthly justice. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world yet forfeits his soul (Matt. 16:26; cf. Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1)? Honor “superiors, peers, and inferiors” according to their positions and relations (WLC 123-133).</p>
<p><u>Assertion:</u> Oppressor groups create truth and value, impose them in the present, and use them to distort the past. “White Western culture created and enforced their subjective truth at everyone else’s expense.”</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> “Decolonize history, education, business, art, culture...” Dominant voices from the past must be displaced or eradicated. If you do not prioritize or “center” voices and truths from oppressed people groups, you are guilty of oppression yourself.</p>	<p><u>Biblical truth:</u> God’s word holds objective truth, objective values, and objective beliefs for all nations. God calls all of us to repent, believe, and worship the living God in spirit and in truth (Acts 4:12; Mark 1:15; John 4:24).</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> All voices, beliefs, values, and opinions from all cultures must be subjected to the standard of God’s truth (John 16:13; Gal. 1:6-9).</p>
<p><u>Assertion:</u> We have a moral duty to help liberate all oppressed groups. “Silence is complicity. You must speak and you must act.”</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> All social structures where injustice is present in the least must be dismantled. Everyone must participate actively in this, and even acts of violence or civil unrest can be justified if they accomplish this.</p>	<p><u>Biblical truth:</u> Christians have a charge to love our neighbor as ourselves, and the greatest act of love is sharing the hope of the gospel. If our neighbor has genuine needs, we ought to seek an opportunity to offer “a cup of cold water in the name of Christ” (Matt. 10:42). But demanding particular actions or responses from “oppressors” is wrong. And the goal of a perfect heaven on earth is fallacious and futile while the spiritual forces of evil remain active among many sinners (Eph. 6:12).</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> Love God and love your neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40); rejoice that this love looks different according to giftings in the body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-8); submit to and pray for those who are in positions of authority over us (1 Tim. 2:1-3; Rom. 13:1-7); and understand that ultimate peace will never be found in this present age (Matt. 24; 1 Thess. 5).</p>
<p><u>Assertion:</u> Emotion and one’s personal experience outweighs truth; emotional arguments validate responses. “If you disagree with me and my experience, you are hateful, oppressive, etc.”</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> For those who have not had such experiences, your voice is just a privileged opinion, and any disagreement comes from either conscious hatred or unconscious oppression.</p>	<p><u>Biblical truth:</u> God’s word is truth (John 17:17), and that truth must inform and interpret all experience and all emotion. That which is opposed to biblical Christianity can be challenged on the basis of the word of God itself, not merely personal experience. “Truth claims must be evaluated on the basis of Scripture...” -Neil Shenvi Cornelius Van Til said that to reject biblical truth is to commit intellectual and moral suicide; the ultimate source of truth is in Christ alone (John 14:6 – “I am the truth”).</p> <p><u>Solution:</u> As we converse in wisdom and love (Prov. 25:11), we must be unwavering in our commitment and trust in Scripture and its necessity, authority, clarity, and sufficiency (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).</p>