

“A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW”

A Christian worldview is a way of seeing and making sense of the world that is Christian in perspective. A worldview is the conceptual framework, lens, or grid through which one views all of life. All men have a worldview. It reflects their understanding of the purpose of life, the value and worth of human beings, their moral compass, and their belief or disbelief in God. Believers have a consistent Christian worldview to the degree and extent their thoughts correspond to God's General and Special Revelation. The most important element of a Christian worldview is the intellectual dependence on the Bible for answers to the most important and fundamental questions in life.

I. Biblical Presuppositions

Every worldview is constructed from a set of presuppositions or ideas regarding God, the world, and life in general. The Christian worldview is the sum total and consequence of the believer's knowledge of and embrace of specific truths from the Bible. These truths are called biblical presuppositions and, while they may be learned and embraced one at a time, the cumulative effect will eventually cause the believer to view the world consistently and coherently.

A. Read the following scripture references and identify the biblical truths described.

Genesis 1:1-3

The explicit truth declared here is that God created the universe *ex nihilo*, or out of nothing. Implicitly, the doctrine of the Trinity, or the teaching that God exists in three Persons, is found here as well.

Genesis 1:26-27

Here the bible declares that man is created in the image of God, both male and female. The implicit truth found here is the sanctity of human life.

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6-7

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned.

Romans 5:12

The consequence of Adam's sin has spread through all subsequent generations and to all men.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

God has provided a way of reconciliation in the death of Christ for our sin and the righteousness of Christ imputed to our account.

II Timothy 3:15, 16

God has provided His Special Revelation, which instructs us regarding what He would have us believe about Himself and how we ought to live. Implicit to this truth is the authority of Scripture and the conviction that the bible is inerrant, infallible, and all-sufficient.

Note: The Scripture references above describe vital biblical presuppositions that ought to be part of the framework of every Christian's worldview. It is not intended as an exhaustive list but rather as an example of the theological benchmarks Christians must embrace in their view of the world and life.

B. Perhaps the most important building block in building a consistent worldview is one's *epistemology*. You may recall from Lesson #3 that *epistemology* can be defined as *how we know what we know*. The proper *epistemology* compels us to return to the bible each time we

are faced with difficult questions regarding the origin, meaning, or purpose of life. That does not mean that our experiences, observations, reason, or conscience are irrelevant, but it does mean that in an instance of conflicting answers, we rely on scripture for truth above all other sources.

Read the following Scripture references and comment on why it is so important that a believer rely on Scripture for his *epistemology*.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

Our minds are fallen — just as our wills are; hence, we are prone to self-deception. Scripture corrects us (2 Tim. 3:15-16)

Genesis 6:5

Without the mitigating influence of common grace and redemptive grace, men's thoughts would remain captive to their depraved nature. Once again, the Scripture acts as a plumb-line to correct wrong-headed thinking.

Judges 21:25

Men living autonomously (as a law unto themselves) will necessarily become relativistic and entirely subjective in their approach to truth. Epistemologically, the believer's king or ultimate authority must be the Word of God.

James 4:3-6

Man's fallen nature continues as a seductive force, even in the believer, causing him to listen to the lies prominent in the world.

Proverbs 3:5

This is not an indictment of being thoughtful and circumspect but rather a clear admonition that when reason or experience contradicts Scripture, we are to trust and rely on Scripture!

Proverbs 23:7a

A man's worldview is the sum total of his presuppositions (ideas).

- C. Developing a Christian worldview is an important aspect of sanctification. Read the following scripture references and discuss how they relate to sanctification.

Ephesians 4:20-24

This passage describes the process of sanctification as being a renewal or healing of the fallen image of God in man, especially in regard to "the spirit of your mind." This renewal moves the believer into "righteousness and holiness of truth." In verses 20-21, the process or renewal is described as a matter of teaching and learning — again calling our attention to the connection between our thinking and our sanctification.

Romans 12:1-2

Here it is explained that "the renewing of your mind" is essential to "prove what the will of God is." The "will of God" is declared in His Special Revelation, or the Bible. So then our sanctification requires the renewal of our minds, and that renewal can only occur as we read, study, and appropriate the truths of Scripture. These truths are biblical presuppositions!

1 Thessalonians 2:13

It is the Word of God and the truths it contains "which...performs its work in you who believe." This "work" is sanctification.

- D. A Christian who learns to think biblically or who develops a consistent worldview will come to certain shared conclusions with other believers. Contrariwise, men with a non-Christian

worldview, such as that of secular humanism, will find agreement on a variety of issues. Those unfamiliar with the impact of a man's worldview on the manner in which he views the world might suppose that this ideological consensus is the result of some nefarious conspiracy. Those given to a conspiratorial understanding of the world simply do not understand the power that ideas have to shape the manner in which men approach life.

In order to test ourselves in this regard, consider and discuss the following:

1. Socialism is the result of left-wing conspirators trying to take over the world.
Socialism is the result of secular humanism and the idolatry of the state. If you believed there was no God and no superintending providence — only men and their difficult lot in life, you would find that certain ideas common to the ideology of socialism might make sense. Socialism is of course wickedness, as is the worldview that produces it. But what is important for us now is that we recognize that secular humanists and socialists across the globe will come to the same conclusions even though they have had no contact with one another. Christians must learn to refute wrong thinking and bad ideas rather than looking for some conspiracy. As an aside, historically there have been conspiracies of course, but they almost never last beyond a particular generation, so silly notions about international Jewish conspiracies and the Illuminati are unproductive. Another motivation behind socialism is the oldest sin of all — covetousness.
2. There are certain political viewpoints that all Christians ought to share — certain important issues all believers ought to agree on.
The answer is “yes” and “no.” We tend to think all Christians ought to agree with us on every political issue, and that is clearly wrong-headed. However, there are specific watershed issues that all Christians ought to agree on and when they don't, it is evidence that some have an inconsistent worldview. For example, all believers should be pro-life and anti-abortion. The sanctity of life is so fundamental to the doctrine of creation (man created in the image of God) that a pro-abortion Christian is possibly not a Christian at all. Homosexual marriage is another issue that all Christians with a biblical worldview ought to agree is wrong simply because the Bible is so clear in condemning homosexuality — Old and New Testaments. The determination of what issues are non-negotiable for Christians requires biblical literacy, wisdom, and the ability to view issues objectively. Christians may not agree on the various points involved in an issue like environmentalism, yet they ought to be of one mind in distrusting any government or state that would seek to control the resources of the earth, since we know all men are sinful and tend to abuse power. That shared conviction was formative in the motivation of our Founding Fathers establishing a Republic with checks and balances and the rule of law.
3. Will a true believer always have a consistent Christian worldview?
Of course not, that is why the development of a biblical worldview ought to be seen as an integral aspect of sanctification. Developing a consistent worldview with sound biblical presuppositions is every believer's responsibility (Ephesians 4:20-24; Romans 12:1-2).
4. How would a Christian's worldview influence how he educates his children?
He would, first of all, recognize that everyone has a worldview, including teachers principals, and those who write the various curricula used in the classroom. Depending on the subject, the worldview influencing the way children are educated will have a profound and formative effect on them. At the very least, Christian parents who are informed regarding worldview thinking will recognize that education is not neutral either morally or epistemologically. In some educational settings, the curricula and teachers have a decided bias that can impact children negatively. Notwithstanding this, it may be better to have a

competent secular humanist teaching algebra and calculus to your children than an incompetent math teacher with little knowledge to impart. These are issues Christian parents must grapple with.

5. If a believer fails to understand that all people have a worldview, what will happen?
He will face the ideological and practical challenges of life as chaotic and disjointed bits and pieces. He will find himself dealing with symptoms of problems rather than root causes. He will necessarily be inconsistent and self-contradictory in his thinking.

6. Is it possible for an unbeliever to have a consistent Christian worldview?
This may seem a strange question. The answer is that it is not possible for an unbeliever to have a *consistent* Christian worldview, but it is certainly possible for non-Christians to hold certain presuppositions in common with Christians. Hence, they could have bits and pieces of a Christian worldview. This was much more common in America before the turn of the 20th century when there was still a moral consensus in the culture and the consensus almost always reflected Judeo-Christianity. Failing to understand this creates confusion for many who seek to understand our Founding Fathers. David Barton believes Thomas Jefferson was a Christian. This is nonsense. Jefferson shares the Christian moral consensus and thus many elements of a Christian worldview, but he was a Unitarian by his own admission.