

What in the World is a Worldview? Thinking Christianly About All of Life

Dr. Ligon Duncan

http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/Worldviews%202004/1a_duncan.htm

If you have your Bibles, I'd invite you to turn with me to Ephesians chapter 6 as we begin a new series. And as we do, I want to do just a couple of book plugs. You will see on the back of the bulletin the books that are on that recommended reading list we have available in the bookstore.

Suggested Reading.

One by James Sire called *Chris Chrisman Goes to College* I would recommend to every parent who has a college student or is about to have a college student, or if you're a grandparent with a college student, that you pick up this book. You'll read it in one sitting. It will take you about 1½ to 2 hours to read. It's a quick read. So much of it is done in story form. He tells the story of a young, evangelical kid named Chris Chrisman who goes off to a fictitious university called Handsome State University, which is a thinly veiled reference to UCLA Berkley. And it's subtitled, "And faces the challenges of relativism, individualism, and pluralism." And Jim Sire, who for many years has been the senior editor of Intervarsity Press America, writes this book. He's lectured on countless college campuses and he has seen the challenges that students face firsthand, and interacted with them and spoken to them and encouraged them, and I just think you'll find this a delightful book...but you'll also find it an eye-opening book.

One of the points that Sire makes in this book is that it is not just what you're students face in the classroom which often serves to undermine their faith; it's what they find and face in the dormitories and in their social relationships. You know, it's one thing to have a professor that's making fun of Christianity; it's another thing to have a roommate who is the nicest guy or the nicest gal you've ever known and she's a pagan or he's a pagan. And the impact of being at close quarters with a person whose really nice and likable and such and yet who has absolutely nothing in common with you spiritually can be a very jarring experience. And Sire does a great job of talking about the challenges that the student faces in the classroom, but he also does a great job of talking about the effect on this young, Christian guy at a major state university (which is an intellectual academic center) just bumping into the other weird kinds of students.

Chris Chrismon's roommate is named Ralph Imokay. And you guessed it, the first speech that Ralph gives Chris is this: 'I'm okay; you're okay. So as long as you don't tell me what to do, we're okay.' And he says, 'I'm going to get drunk every weekend. If you don't want to drink, that's fine. You're okay; I'm okay...as long as you don't tell me what I can do.' And this is sort of the first experience of that kind of relativism which pervades the culture that says, 'Whatever you believe is alright for you as long as you don't expect me to believe it, and whatever I believe is alright for me. I'm not going to expect you to believe it, so let's just live and let live.' And so...excellent book, and I think a book that will be helpful to you.

Now, a little more challenging than that is the same author, Jim Sire, *The Universe Next Door*. This is the third edition of this book, and in some measure this summer we're going to follow the outline of the contents. So even if you get into it and feel like, "Ooh, this is a little bit slow going," we'll cover the material in the course of our studying together God's word and looking at the world in light of God's word this summer. But he calls this "a basic worldview catalogue." What he does is he, first, explains what a worldview is, and then he begins to look at the various types of worldviews that exist out there—and there are a plethora in our own day and time. He gives a little bit of history and gives a... basically he asks seven questions of every worldview. And he will give you the answer that that worldview gives to those particular questions and he sets it over against a Christian view of the world.

Now along with these books that I've recommended, R.C. Sproul's book, somewhat along the same line of thought, *Lifeviews*, is available, as is this book called *A Compact Guide to World Religions*—and we'll make some reference to different types of religions. So those are available in the bookstore, and as other things come available as the summer goes on, we will bring them to your attention.

Overview

Now, if you'll look at your bulletin, let me try and give you an idea, a guided tour of where we are going to try and go. "**What in the world are you thinking?**" is the name of our summer series and our goal is to build a biblical Christian view of life and everything else. George Barna has suggested that only about 4% of Americans have something that could be called "a biblical worldview." And some of you may be asking the question, "Well, what is a worldview?" That may not be a term that you are used to using. In fact, oftentimes Christians who have been Christians a long time have a worldview without realizing that they have a worldview, and they have a basically biblical and Christian worldview without realizing that they have a basically biblical and Christian worldview. And so one of our goals for those folks who fit into that category this summer will be to help you be a little more self-aware of those biblical and Christian components of the way you look at everything else in life.

But we also live in a day and age where our students, from the time they are in junior high and high school at least, are bombarded not only from the media and from the civil sector but in education by worldviews which challenge and in some degree undermine their Christian commitments. And the quicker that we are aware of what those views are and how to engage with them, the better equipped we're going to be to have good conversations with our young people.

Now these are not problems that Christians have never faced before, but we do face some unique problems in our generation for western Christians. Primarily because for at least 400 years the general culture in the western world—and in the United States for the last 200 to 250 years—has in large measure adopted significant components of a biblical and Christian worldview.

But in our generation, and especially since the 1960s, there has been a concerted shift in the culture, in the mainstream, in the dominant intellectual part and leadership of the culture to a non-Christian and a non-biblical worldview. In many cases this is self-conscious and deliberate.

That is, in the 1960s there were people who were saying, ‘We want to remake this country and this world as it now exists and as people know it into something else.’ And the Christian worldview—or the Greco-Roman worldview or the Judeo-Christian system of thinking and ethics—will not serve to do the kind of radical makeover that we think needs to happen. And therefore, we’re going to come up with a new basis on which to build a society and culture. And so you’ve had people doing this since the 1960s.

Some of you have read Robert Bork’s book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, where he gives somewhat of an account of these kinds of things. Others of you may have read Robby George’s book, *The Clash of the Orthodoxies*. There are lots of books out on the market that attempt to give some account of the shift that we’ve experienced in the last thirty or forty years. There is a recent book out by a professor at a major US university named Jonathan Kirsch and it is called, *God Against the Gods*. And his thesis is that monotheism, the belief in one God triumphing over polytheism, which is the belief in multiple deities, has ruined everything in culture. Monotheism is to blame for everything today. In fact, according to Professor Kirsch, if we were polytheists, there would be no hunger; there would be no deprivation; there would be universal healthcare; there would be world peace; the lions and the lambs would be lying down next to each other...everything would be fine if we were only polytheists. It’s monotheism that has brought in narrow-mindedness, totalitarianism, tyranny, oppression, every bad thing that you can imagine under the sun.

Now Professor Kirsch is actually just reflecting a view that has been actively proponed in academic circles for at least forty years here in America. And what we’re seeing now is the people that you thought were a little bit loopy in the 60’s are now the dominant cultural voice in our society. They’ve had the last laugh. The people that were protesting, that you just thought were a little bit over the edge, have won the day in the mainstream of the thinking culture here in the West and in America, and so we’re in a little bit of a different situation than our grandparents were in.

And that makes what we’re doing this summer, I hope, an especially helpful thing, to clue some of you in who look at this...and you look at it and you know that something’s wrong but you can’t quite put your finger on what’s wrong; but also to help those of you who are talking to students who are perhaps teachers, educators, who are involved in government and other areas where this kind of mega shift in a worldview is having tangible impact. So I hope what we’re doing will help you.

In fact, let me suggest a few ways that what we are doing might help you. Let’s say that you’re talking to a high school student or a college student who comes home and says, “Look, Dad, in class we were having a discussion today. It wasn’t a religion class; it was a history class. And my professor just in passing in a respectful way...didn’t attack me for believing what I believe but he said, ‘Look, the reason I can’t accept the Bible is because it contradicts itself.’” And let’s say that son says, “You know, Dad, you’ve always taught me that the Bible is God’s word and that it’s without error and that it’s authoritative, and you’ve always taught me to answer questions in accordance with Scripture but now I’ve got a problem. I’ve got a professor whose saying that he can’t believe the Bible because it contradicts itself, so I can’t even begin to quote the Bible to him to answer his question. Gee, Dad, what do I do?”

Well, I hope that what we're doing this summer will help you know what to do in just that kind of a setting, because that professor's assumption that the Bible contradicts itself is a worldview, and it's a wrong worldview. And worldviews aren't just things that you can announce that you have, and they're untestable and unchallengeable. Oh yes, they can be tested and they can be challenged. You can measure the components of a worldview and you can ask and answer, "Is this valid, what this person is asserting is a part of his or her worldview?"

Well, there is a worldview behind this idea that the Bible is just filled with contradictions. You see, people, have known for 2000 years, since the whole of the Christian canon came together, that they're certain passages there were tough and hard to understand. You can find early Christians in the 2nd and 3rd and 4th centuries wrestling with how to answer questions raised by certain passages in the Bible, but what they didn't say is, "Ah! Well, you see the Bible is filled with contradictions." They didn't do that. Why didn't they do that? Because they did not share the worldview that moderns do who come to the Bible and say, "You know, the Bible is really a collection of different theologies compiled in an evolutionary fashion over the period of 2,000 years; and therefore as it was edited and put together, it was put together by people that didn't agree about God, about the world, about salvation, and about the Christian life, and so it's not surprising that it is filled with contradictions."

You see, if you know that a person who is claiming that the Bible contradicts itself has that as an underlying assumption, that is the basis of a beginning of a conversation, because his assumption can be challenged. I can tell you exactly where that idea came from, how long it's been around, and why it doesn't work. But it's the beginning of a conversation. I hope we'll be able to touch on some of those things.

On the other hand, you may have a university-aged-daughter, and she's gone through first and second semesters at a state university or at a liberal arts college where, as part of the core curriculum, some introduction to Western Civilization was required. Now you may have been puzzled when you found out that no longer in Western Civ do you read Shakespeare or Milton. No, you read Maya Angelou and other things, but you don't read the classics that you were introduced to. But the strangest thing is, is when she says, "Well, you know my World Civ professor, who is probably the best teacher I've had this semester, was telling us that all religions are basically the same. That Christianity and Judaism and Islam and Buddhism and Hinduism and Neopaganism and all the other spiritualities of the world are fundamentally the same. There is a fundamental core to all religion. What do you think about that, Mom? What do you think about that, Dad?" Well, I hope in the course of our conversation and our study over the summer that you will begin to have the basis of having a good discussion about that and giving a good answer to that incorrect assertion. How do you help a young person think through that?

How do you think through that, because you have friends that say the same thing? I've had conversations with a number of you here at First Presbyterian Church who have friends that attend other area church, protestant churches, where the pastor is saying that, where it's being said in the church publications. Some of you have sent me church publications from other churches, which shall remain nameless, which have asserted these sorts of things. And you've said, "How do I have a conversation with a buddy of mine in the law office who's saying this?"

He goes to church every Sunday, member of a protestant denomination; his pastor's saying this. What do we say in conversation?" I hope we'll help you in that area.

Or maybe, ladies, you're having a cup of coffee with a neighbor. You've got one of those rare moments where you have fifteen minutes to yourself and you get into a conversation with a neighbor you really like and the topic of conversation somehow, somehow, strays to salvation and eternal life and heaven and hell and your friend says to you, "I can't believe that God is going to send all non-Christians to hell. That's so narrow minded to think. Surely, surely God is more loving than that." How do you kindly and clearly get into a conversation with a neighbor on a topic like that?

Or maybe, maybe you've got a grandson who says, "How do we know there is a God? I was watching a program on the Discovery Channel and it said that God is a wish projection. God is something that we psychologically need and so we invented Him. We are now maturing as humans and we may be moving past God and not need Him anymore. We can find meaning somewhere else."

How should we talk about our faith and beliefs with friends who reject the authority of the Scripture? Questions about "same-sex marriage," *The Da Vinci Code*, and Islam. How can Christian students survive and thrive in universities, colleges and schools where Christian doctrine and ethics are rejected? What are the crucial things we need to know in order to understand our culture and its trends? If ever we needed a well-rounded biblical view of life, it's now. These are the sorts of things that I hope that our study this summer will help you with.

Different worldviews

Now if you'll look at the outline of what we're going to do, let me tell you what the method to this madness is. We're going to move in part historically looking at worldviews. We're going to go all the way back to halfway through the second millennium. We're going to go back to the 15th and 16th centuries, and we're going to look at the beginnings of a rationalistic view of looking at life, a way of looking at life apart from God, and a view of life which basically says, "Yes, there is a God but He is like a clockmaker that builds and winds up a clock and He just leaves it to tick. And He goes off to do His own thing and the world operates according to the patterns and principles which He has woven into the clock, but He has no personal relationship with the world." That's a worldview called Deism that began to show itself in the 1700s, but it has roots that stretch back into the sixteenth century. And so we'll look at Deism and the world as this sort of clockmaker universe, and we'll attempt to answer not only a description of what Deism believes; but we'll also try and give you some ideas of where deistic ideas still float around in the culture today, how it answers seven or eight or nine questions that every worldview has to ask and answer, and then how a Christian would respond to it.

Along the way we're going to take some breaks. We're going to take some breaks and look at figures and topics that will help you, I think, bridge theory and the practical. And very early on we're going to look at one of the master Christian defenders of the faith of the 20th century, C.S. Lewis. Brad Mercer has just about completed a Master of Philosophy degree, having done a dissertation on C.S. Lewis. So he knows just a little bit about C.S. Lewis. So he's going to do a "think break." We're going to call it a "think break" on C.S. Lewis.

Then we're going to go back and look at some of these other worldviews that have led to the dominant worldview in our own time. We'll look at Naturalism, the idea that all there is, is nature. The only thing—there is no god; there is no spirit; there is no soul. There's just nature; there's just matter. Look out at the world and with Carl Sagan we say, "The cosmos is all there is, all there ever was, all there ever will be." Some of you remember when his PBS mini-series came on many, many years ago and it opened with those famous words, "Billions and billions of years ago." And that's his theme: the cosmos, that stuff out there is all there is, all there ever was, all there ever will be. Well, that's Naturalism. That's a worldview. There is a history to that particular worldview. There's a reason why that worldview arose, and we'll talk about why and we'll talk about why it's wrong.

Some of you read Stephen Crane when you were in high school and college. You may remember the *Red Badge of Courage*. Stephen Crane was a naturalist. That doesn't mean that he likes nature; it means that he did not believe there was anything but nature. And he wrote one of the most searching, poignant, sad, deafening, depressive poems that I've ever read. And in the midst of that poem, he has a man say, "A man said to the universe, 'Sir, I exist.' The universe replied, 'That fact has not created in me a sense of obligation.'" In other words, here was man saying to the universe, "I am. I exist. I am here. I am in the state of being." And the answer from the universe is, "Who cares?" Can you imagine the loneliness of such a worldview?

Contrast that to Psalm 8, "When I consider the heavens, when I look at this universe which Your hands have made, what is man—? And yet You have created him just a little lower than Yourself." It's a glorious contrast to the depressing picture of the one who believes that there is only nature. That worldview colors everything that Stephen Crane thinks.

Just as the Christian's sense that "Yes, God is sovereign and He's so much bigger than us, but in His grace and mercy He has created us for fellowship with Him; He's made us in His image" makes all the difference in the world. That worldview, that conceptual scheme is a grid through which we view everything. Everything we believe, how we judge reality is related to that worldview.

For instance, some of you will have already heard that today, in San Francisco, a US district judge has struck down the partial birth abortion ban that was passed by both houses of our national congress, and signed into law by our President just in this last year. And here's what she said, "This law must be struck down because nothing is more fundamental than a woman's right to choose."

Now the origin of this in the Constitution is a mystical study because the Constitution does not contain the word *abortion* nor does it contain the clause "a woman's right to choose." So how is it that there are gobs of judges, intelligent people, learned people, with degrees hanging off their shoulders, and years of experience in law and litigation and in government—how is it that they come to this point and find rights in the Constitution which the founders not only never thought of putting there but would have opposed if someone had raised the suggestion?

Well, it goes back to a worldview that arose in the last quarter of the 19th century. The legal profession in the United States went through a worldview mega shift. Prior to 1875, the total

view of law in our culture was *theistic*. After 1900, the view of law in our culture was *naturalistic*, and the great change comes with the Supreme Court of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Oliver Wendell Holmes and a very small circle of legal experts convinced the legal community that all law is positive law and all law arises from the social unit. There is no transcendent law. There's not some transcendent moral norm against which all human and civil law must be measured. No, you make law as you go along by practicing law in the context of society. And therefore, according to Holmes, what the Supreme Courts says in the law is the law. Now that's a mega shift!

And in following Naturalism, because it didn't work, we'll look at a worldview that was in large measure put together and predicted by a crazy German philosopher named Friedrich Nietzsche. Some of you have been force fed some of Nietzsche's writings in high school and college. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, perhaps is one that you had to read or, *The Madman*, or many of his other pieces. But he came up with a philosophy that is known as Nihilism. And one of the things that we'll find out is that ever since Nietzsche the entire quest of all non-Christian philosophy in the western world has been to supply an answer to Nietzsche. And we will find out that western philosophy has not found an answer to Nietzsche yet. In other words, he's created a philosophical problem that nobody has yet come up with an adequate answer to outside of Christ and the Scriptures. And so we'll have an opportunity to explore some of the thoughts that float out there today influenced by this form of thinking.

We'll take a look, following that, at Existentialism because Existentialism was the first philosophy that tried to give an answer to Nihilism. Well take a think break, and we'll look at a current burning issue which is rooted in a worldview problem and that is this issue of same-sex marriage, which you see all over the newspapers and in the courts and in the US and local and state governments everywhere you turn. Then we will bring things up to today and we will look at how modern philosophies, philosophies that are hot and current in our own day and time, are attempting to engage with some of these worldviews that we will have already studied. We will look at this crazy thing that we started seeing from about the 1960s on, of people here in the United States looking to eastern philosophy and spirituality as the solution to all the problems of life. Many of you will remember when the Beatles first brought the wave of eastern philosophy into pop culture and that is one of the attempts to get around the problems that Nietzsche developed for philosophy.

We will look at Neo-paganism. We live in a day and age where Paganism is more popular in thinking culture, in the western part of the world than it has been since the days of the Vikings—that's ten centuries, folks. Paganism is more popular today than it has been at any time since maybe the 10th or 11th century in the western world. That's how crazy a world we live in right now.

We'll look at Post-modernism, which is the thing which your students in high school and in college - no matter what high school you're in in Jackson, with just a couple of exceptions, - post-modernism is the majority report both of the teachers and of the students that your kids are associating with. And unless you're going to a very unusual Christian liberal arts college or school, it is the majority of what you're going to be facing no matter where else you go to

university, whether it's a religious based school or a religious denominationally affiliated school or a state university. And we'll talk about that.

We'll take a think break in August and we'll look at J. Gresham Machen, a great defender of the faith. And then we're going to ask some questions about how the church is then impacted by all this crazy stuff. And then we're going to have two special sessions dealing with the Bible and with God, and that gives you a little bit of an idea of where we're going to try and go this summer.

Now let's go to God's word to begin with in Ephesians 6:10-13. One of the reasons we sang those songs about soldiers, Christians soldiers, "Soldiers of Christ, Arise" is because Paul reminds us that we are in a battle; we're in a war. And he explains that here in Ephesians 6.

Ephesians 6:10-13:

"¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."

Amen. This is God's word. May He add His blessing to it.

There's just one point I want to draw from Paul's words in Ephesians 6, and that is simply this: The reason Paul says we Christians need this armor is because we are in a war; we are in a battle. And the quicker we realize we are in a battle, the better. That battle on the one hand, of course, entails believing right doctrine. That's one reason we're concerned to teach biblical doctrine in the church. So within the church we have a concern to teach right doctrine, but this battle also means that we need to be aware of how Christians' view of everything, how a biblical view of everything is both similar and different from the world's view of everything. So it's obviously a concern for us in this battle to have right doctrine within the church, but as we relate to everybody else outside of the church we need to know how biblical thinking, Christian thinking is similar and different from the way the world views everything else.

What is a worldview?

Now I have a few points to make tonight as we introduce the subject, "What in the world is a worldview?" And let me just start off with a definition, and I'm going to give this definition about three different ways just to make sure that we're all tracking. What is a worldview? **A worldview is "a set of fundamental assumptions about the most important issues in life."** A *worldview* is "a set of fundamental assumptions about the most important things in life." Let me say it another way. A *worldview* is "a grid"; it's "a conceptual scheme"; it's "like glasses through which we view everything else." Everything we believe, and how we judge reality is based on our worldview.

So, all that to say is, that a worldview is a grid, or a conceptual scheme, through which we view everything: everything we believe, and how we judge reality is related to that grid, that conceptual scheme which we're calling for shorthand "a worldview", simply because it's the way you see the world, or look at the world, or the lenses through which you look at the world.

Everyone has a worldview.

And what I want to stress tonight is that everyone has a worldview, even if they don't know it. You know, oftentimes, we run into people and we're talking about something theological, and they'll say 'well, I'm no theologian...' implying that they are not experts and therefore they have no theological opinion. And one of the things that we learn as Christians is that in fact everyone is a theologian, whether they realize it or not, whether they're a good one or a bad one, they are theologians. Oftentimes we'll bump into people and they'll say, 'well, I'm no philosopher...' meaning they have no particular technical expertise in the art of philosophy. And yet, everyone, whether they realize it or not, has certain views of life that are based upon philosophical opinion.

Well, it's the same thing with a worldview. Everyone has a worldview, whether they realize it or not. The question is, is it a good one or a bad one? Have they thought through it or not? Do they realize that they have it? Have they really worked through the basic questions that every worldview needs to ask and answer? Are the answers that they have for their particular worldview compelling and useful, and logical and true? And so, everyone has a worldview. Now, I realize there may be a lot of people here tonight who'll say, 'well, look, I've never even heard of a worldview before. How can I have one?' And my response to that is just like when you're in fifth grade, and you've just learned in biology class that there is something on your body called epidermis, and you never knew that before. So you walk up to a friend and you say, after class, "Your epidermis is showing!" And they may have no idea what epidermis is, but they have epidermis. And it's the same way with a worldview. Everyone has a worldview whether they realize it or not, whether they put that label on it or not.

You'll remember Jardin in Moliere's, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, is stunned that he has been speaking prose for forty years, and he didn't realize it. And it's the same way with a worldview. A lot of people don't realize that they have a worldview, that do have a worldview, because everyone has a worldview. And to discover that worldview is a significant step forward toward self-awareness and understanding.

So let me say it again another way. A worldview is a set of presuppositions that we hold about basic make-up of the world. The minute that you admit there's something here, that there's something out there, you begin to ask the question "OK, what is here? What is that something? What is it that's out there?" And the minute you begin to formulate an answer to that, you are building the components of a philosophy and a theology. The way that you approach that is a worldview-ish way. **So, a worldview is a set of presuppositions that we hold about the basic make-up of the world, and it colors the way that we read everything else.**

A worldview isn't just like another fact that a person might know, like you might know about the average rainfall in Tanzania. Well, that might be true, and that might even be very relevant

for many subjects. You might be a climatologist, you might be a person that studies climates and knows the average annual rainfall in Tanzania may actually help you on some question. But, you know, most of the questions of life are not touched upon by the knowledge of the average annual rainfall in Tanzania. But worldview questions color the way you look at everything else.

Believing in God is not just another piece of information. It colors the way you look at everything in life. And that's the way a worldview is. A worldview is a set of presuppositions about the basic make-up of the world, and those presuppositions color the way we look at everything else.

What makes a worldview? How do we get one? Where did it come from?

And that's a harder question to answer than it is to ask. Our worldview may be composed of certain things that we just know intuitively--innate truths that we know intuitionally. Romans one talks about these things, that there are certain things that are just ingrained in us by the way that God has made us.

Our worldview may well be formed by the dominant opinions of our culture and our times. Just like the US District Judge that we were speaking about earlier this evening—you would never pick up a copy of the Constitution and, in a vacuum, derive from that Constitution a woman's fundamental right to an abortion. So where does that federal judge's idea that the Constitution guarantees a woman an inalienable right to kill her unborn child? The only place that that can come from is from some other place than the constitutional document. So, it's his worldview, it's not the Constitution that's supplying him with that outlook on life. It's a dominant opinion of our own culture and time that is moving him to that particular position.

Our worldview may be informed by the Bible and Christian teaching. We may have been impacted on how we look at the world because of faithful Bible teaching, and Christian teaching over the years.

Our worldview may be reflective, that is we may have thought about it. It may be pre-reflective, that is, we may assume it without having thought about it very much. It may be witting, that is, we may be conscious of it, or it may be unwitting: we may be unconscious of our worldview.

Our worldview may be right or wrong. Just because you have a worldview doesn't mean that it's right. A worldview isn't an un-testable thing. Worldviews can be tested and measured, and assessed and criticized, improved or jettisoned. So, our worldview may be right or wrong, or it may be a little of both. Most of us have a worldview that's a mixture of right and wrong. We're correct about certain fundamental things that we assume about the basic makeup of the world, and we're incorrect about others. So it may be right or wrong, or a little of both.

It may be a consistent or an inconsistent basic set of presuppositions. But every worldview, no matter what it is, no matter where it fits in the categories we've just talked about, every worldview has questions that it appears unable to answer satisfactorily. And one task of the Christian, then, is to understand the Christian worldview and to know enough of other worldviews so that: (1) you won't be intimidated in a conversation with another person who's

coming from a very different worldview; (2) so that you would be able to engage with them intelligently about that worldview; and, (3) that you would be able to show the superiority of the Christian worldview to that particular worldview.

What are the elements of a worldview?

Well, every worldview has to ask and give answers to basic questions about fundamental reality. Every worldview, for instance, has to ask and answer ‘what do we think about God’—or, if you’re an atheist and you think you’ve dispensed with that question, you still have to ask the question ‘what is prime reality?’ what is really real? What do we think about ultimate reality? What is really real? Every worldview has to ask that question.

Every worldview has to ask and answer the question ‘what do we think about truth and knowledge, and how do you know what is true, what is knowledge, what is wisdom, what is truth?’ Every worldview has to ask and answer that question.

Along with that, every worldview has to ask and answer the question ‘how is it possible to know anything at all?’ Every worldview has to ask and answer the question ‘what do we think about morality and ethics? How do we know what is right and what is wrong?’ Different worldviews give different answers to that question, but every worldview has to ask and answer that question.

Every worldview has to ask and answer ‘what do we think about human beings and humanity? What is a person? What is a human being? What is a human person—is that person something of inherent dignity? Is that person an evolved ape? Is that person the logical result of an inexorable sequence of evolution from the basic single-cell organism from a primitive protein?’ You know, what is the nature of a human being?

Every worldview has to ask and answer ‘what do we think about the nature of the world around us? What is it? Is reality material? Is reality impersonal? Is reality personal? What is it like?’

Every worldview has to ask and answer ‘what happens after human death?’ What’s the meaning of human history? Those are the kinds of questions that every worldview has to ask and answer.

Our job.

And, as we’ve said before, most people don’t even know they have a worldview. So part of our job this summer is to going to be to learn that we have a worldview, to learn what it is, to make sure that it’s biblical, to learn what others’ worldviews are, and to help others come to understand their worldview and what it is. And of course, most importantly, we want to look at this whole issue of a worldview Christianly. We want to think biblically and christianly about life and everything else. So I hope you’ll join me on this adventure this summer as Brad and Billy and others help us ask ourselves the question “What in the World Are You Thinking?”, and build a biblical and Christian view of life and everything else.

Amen.

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