

What Is Your Worldview?



I'll never forget the day I rode home from the doctor wearing new cat-eye, tortoise-shell glasses. Not only was I feeling very cute and stylish, I was in absolute awe of the details of the world outside my daddy's car. Up until that day, I had seen only a small fraction of the wonderful leaves, birds, flowers, and road signs. And I hadn't even realized it.

We all see the world through our own individual set of glasses, figuratively speaking. With the correct prescription, we can see the world as it really is. If our prescription is incorrect, we see the world in a distorted way, though we may or may not recognize that it differs from reality. Simply put, the way we view and interpret the world around us is our worldview.

Throughout history, people have

attempted to answer common questions about the world. Where did all of this come from? What happens to us after we die? Is there absolute right and wrong? If there is, how do we know? What is the standard for making moral, legal, and ethical decisions?

The very fact that we desire to answer such questions is a gift from God. According to Genesis, God created man in His own image, a fact that sets humans apart from all other created beings. As smart as our pets may be, they are not prone to ponder philosophical questions. Solomon wrote of humans, "He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

The Hebrew word used in this

verse is *eth-haolam*, which can also be understood as eternity. God has placed the awareness of and desire to understand life's deep questions in our hearts because we are eternal beings. He has placed eternity—a deep curiosity about our origins and our spiritual significance—in our hearts.

The northern island of Japan boasts some of God's most beautiful landscapes. As a Christian, I see the beautiful snow-capped mountains, deep blue lakes surrounded by emerald forests, and the vastness of the ocean, and I think, "What a great Creator we have!"

However, I have observed these same natural wonders with non-Christian Japanese friends and been startled to hear that their thoughts do not run in the same direction at all. According to their testimony, they think, "Wow! The meteor that created this lake really must have been something." Their thoughts are, "I wonder what these mountains looked like before the volcanic eruptions?"

It seems as if we are viewing completely different landscapes. Or, maybe we are wearing a completely different prescription in our "glasses," and the view seems different because of distortion. While

my worldview has been shaped by my knowledge of and belief in the Bible, theirs has been heavily influenced by their scientific studies and high level of naturalistic education.

We read in Psalm 19 that the heavens declare the glory of God and there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. God has indeed left a witness in nature, but it is not easily understood without the explanations given in His Word, and the right prescription applied to spiritual eyes.

Our worldview doesn't just matter in the overall quest for meaning and purpose. It also makes all the difference in how we feel about everyday issues of life: money, shopping, parenting, career choices, marriage, divorce, sex, abortion, same-sex marriage, entertainment choices, disabilities, sickness and death. In other words, our worldview affects pretty much everything.

Reflection and Response

Compare Romans 1:20 with Ecclesiastes 3:11. Can the witness of nature alone bring man into a saving relationship with God?

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Jot down some of your opinions concerning the everyday issues of life listed above. Do your opinions agree with God's Truth?

What Is a Biblical Worldview?

In an attempt to answer their deepest questions, humans have created a virtual pantheon of religions and belief systems. Even those who deny the idea of religion attempt to explain the world around them with complex systems of thought such as secular humanism, existentialism, deism, and postmodernism. While most of the world's people wouldn't put a particular label on their philosophy or worldview, they all have one.

Okay. So people living in other countries have a different worldview, and a lot of non-Christian Americans do, too. But what about Christians living in the United States? What about us? We all share a biblical view of the world, right?

According to a recent survey by the Barna Research Group, only 4% of Americans have a "biblical worldview." More alarmingly, results showed that the number

of born-again Christians holding a biblical worldview was only 9%. Here is a list of the questions asked by the researchers:

1. Do absolute moral truths exist?
2. Is absolute truth defined by the Bible?
3. Did Jesus Christ live a sinless life?
4. Is God the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe, and does He still rule it today?
5. Is salvation a gift from God that cannot be earned?
6. Is Satan real?
7. Does a Christian have a responsibility to share his or her faith in Christ with other people?
8. Is the Bible accurate in all of its teachings?

How is it possible that only 9% of Christians answered yes to all of these questions? Are we also in danger of letting our biblical worldview erode into a distortion?

The answer, quite simply, is yes! The world around us is sliding at an alarming rate into a godless mindset, which denies the validity of faith and morality. We are bombarded daily with attacks on biblical truth, both blatant and subtle. Like fish swimming in tainted water, we are taking in harmful thoughts and ideas simply by existing in our environment.

Simply put, any attitude, opinion, or moral judgment we encounter must be measured by the only unchanging standard of truth, the Word of God. In Hebrews 13:8, we are pointed to Jesus Christ the same yesterday,

If you answered yes to those questions, does your life reflect your beliefs?



today, and for ever. Truth and morality do not change. They are found in Christ, as revealed in God’s Book, the Bible. Any philosophy that does not agree with God’s truth is therefore not true, and to accept it would be to step out of a biblical worldview.

Reflection and Response

What is the basis for a Christian worldview?

What are your honest answers to the question asked by the Barna Research Group?

If you could not answer with a resounding yes: (a) search the Scripture for definitive answers* (b) seek help from a mature believer (c) discuss these questions with an accountability group.

How Do We Maintain a Biblical Worldview?

If we are like fish swimming in tainted water, how can we keep from ingesting harmful “substances” and thus endangering our biblical worldview?

Just like the ecosystem of an

aquarium, the key component is a good filter system. We must filter everything we encounter through the Word of God. As Paul states in 2 Corinthians 10:5, we should be “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

What we see portrayed by videos, television, advertising, and social media often will not stand the test of God’s

filter. If we are careful to keep the filter in

place, we will be able to discern error and catch it before it becomes a part of our thinking.

Bringing every thought captive implies that we are to set a guard on our thoughts and filter out everything that does not agree with God’s truth. Our culture is not neutral: it is openly opposed to God and His truth.

In Romans 12:2, we are warned that the world is trying to squeeze us into its mold. Never has this been truer. We are constantly assaulted with stories that

play upon our sympathies and, if we are not vigilant, we find ourselves cheering on evil behavior and causes that do not represent God’s truth at all. We are prone to condone evil behaviors if people we love exhibit them.

We are living in a pivotal time in history during which the spiritual battle is reaching a great crescendo, increasing in intensity each and every day. We must, as never before, remember the words of Romans 12:2. Sometimes, a change of environment is advisable. If the

water is too filled

with gunk to support the fish’s life, it is time for a water

change. If

your work, school, or social environment is no longer compatible with spiritual life, you may need to ask God to move you to another tank. It is better to admit that our filter is not up to the task than to overestimate our ability to deflect and catch every pollutant and die a slow death due to toxins.

It is also important that we not willingly add pollutants to our environments. While non-biblical messages and influences are unavoidable, we certainly have some control as to what degree of

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

–Romans 12:2

exposure we will have. No filter is effective enough to strain out a constant barrage of sin, dysfunction, violence, and immorality. Yet, if we are honest, most of us do at times willingly expose ourselves to a harmful amount of impurity.

We live in danger of becoming so immersed in and enamored with the world around us that we actually become captive to it, rather than to Christ. The first thing we start to question is our worldview. It is a story as old as the Garden of Eden, and we find ourselves thinking, “Did God really say...?”

What would happen if we ran our daily viewing, reading, and entertainment through the filter of “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Would it make a radical difference in our daily choices?

Reflection and Response

Take a few moments to let the Holy Spirit point out to you the ways in which you are endangering your biblical worldview and being conformed to the world around you.

How Should we Interact with Those Whose Worldview Differs From Ours?

While we live in an absolute battlefield, and the war is raging around us, we need to remember who it is we are fighting. The enemy of our souls and the souls of those we encounter is none other than Satan himself. People, on the other hand—even those with opposing worldviews—are not the enemy. Even our sensual, perverted, antagonistic culture is not the enemy. No matter how much our co-workers, neighbors, and public figures reflect the mindset of the enemy, they are NOT themselves the enemy. They are an opportunity to show the love of Christ and witness of Him.

Just as we would not get angry with a blind man for his helplessness, we need to guard against being defensive and mean-spirited to those who are, according to the Bible, spiritually blind. Second Corinthians 4:4 says, “Whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

A few years ago, while on furlough and living in Nashville, I helped out at an evangelistic event in my home church. At the registration table, other church members and I were passing out church brochures. When I offered

the paper to one Asian lady, she said, "I'm Buddhist." Without batting an eye, I said, "That's okay! You would be welcome in our church!" She looked a little shocked but took the brochure.

The others around me got a good laugh out of that, saying, "That poor lady didn't know who she was talking to. If you refused to share the gospel with a Buddhist, you wouldn't have anyone to talk to in Japan, would you?"

Jesus didn't come to heal the well but the sick. Your church is not only here to minister to Christians but to those with differing worldviews as well. They are one of the main reasons we exist.

It is easy to get riled up against all of the opposition we face. However, it is important to remember that people, even as they oppose God, are still valuable individuals created in His image with eternity in their hearts.

Just as the battle is spiritual, so are the only effective weapons. Studying opposing worldviews, arming ourselves with apologetics, and being prepared to defend our faith are all-important tools. But the most effective weapon we have is prayer. If it is Satan who blinds spiritual eyes, it will only be Christ who removes the blinders and allows them to see.

What was true thousands of years ago is still true today. The

battle will be won "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

Reflection and Response

Ask God to give you a deep respect for each person and a love that mirrors Christ Himself.

Sharpen your Christian worldview by researching these websites:

http://www.focusonthefamily.com/faith/christian_worldview/whats_a_christian_worldview.aspx

<http://ministry127.com/christian-living/what-is-a-biblical-worldview>

* Definitive answers found in Scripture:

1. Exodus 20:1-21; Deuteronomy 5:1-22
2. John 8:31-32; John 14:6
3. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21; Isaiah 53:4-10
4. Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Peter 5:8
5. Genesis 1; Colossians 1:15-18
6. Ephesians 2:8-9
7. Matthew 28:18-20
8. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:1

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