

Think Biblically!

CGC ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

WINTER 2018

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For Discussion

- A friend asks you to donate to a fund for stem cell research for Lou Gehrig's disease, which her father died of recently. Much of the research doesn't involve stem cells harvested from aborted fetuses, but some of it might. Would you donate to the fund?
- In 2 or 3 sentences, explain what a 'Biblical worldview' is.

Worldviews

What is a “worldview”?

- “The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world” (www.thefreedictionary.com)
- a framework for understanding or making sense of what’s going on in the world around you
- a way of “looking at the world”

Worldviews

A worldview is build on a set of basic assumptions, or axioms

- Foundational ‘truth claims’ that are typically argued ***from***, rather than argued ***for***
- Implications for how someone thinks about certain issues and how s/he behaves
- Different worldviews may share some basic assumptions, but differ at some (or many) points

Worldviews

Some questions that distinguish worldviews from each other include...

- Is there a god and what is s/he like?
- What is the nature & origin of the universe, and of mankind?
- What happens to us after we die?
- Where does knowledge come from?
- What is the basis of ethics and morality?
- What is the meaning of human history?
- What's wrong with the world, and how do we make it right?

Worldviews

“Formal” worldviews

- Major systems of thought/ideas
- Comprehensive in scope, offering adherents a way of understanding the world and acting accordingly
- May be derived from religious systems (e.g. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc.)
- and/or philosophical systems (e.g. atheism, Marxism, feminism, environmentalism, etc.)

Worldviews

Personal worldviews

- Typically not as well-developed or systematic as formal worldview systems
- Often incorporate elements of different worldview systems (often unwittingly)
- Some elements may be inconsistent / contradictory with other elements
 - People don't always think or act consistently!

Worldviews

Barna group poll, 2017

- “Other worldviews influence Christian beliefs about the way the world is and how it ought to be.”
- Of 1,456 “practicing [American] Christians” ...
 - 61% agreed with idea(s) rooted in ‘New Spirituality’
 - 54% agreed with idea(s) rooted in Post-Modernism
 - 36% agreed with idea(s) rooted in Marxism

Worldviews

Barna group poll, 2015

- Only 17% of “practicing [American] Christians” had a Biblical worldview, based on 7 questions:
 - Do absolute moral truths exist?
 - Did Jesus Christ live a sinless life?
 - Is God the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe, and does He still rule it today?

Worldviews

Barna group poll, 2015

- Only 17% of “practicing [American] Christians” had a Biblical worldview, based on 7 questions:
 - Is salvation a gift from God that cannot be earned?
 - Is Satan real?
 - Does a Christian have a responsibility to share his or her faith in Christ with other people?
 - Is the Bible accurate in all of its teachings?

Worldviews

Why do worldviews matter?

- Your worldview “is like an invisible pair of eyeglasses-glasses you put on to help you see reality clearly. If you choose the right pair of glasses, you can see everything vividly and can behave in sync with the real world.... But if you choose the wrong pair of glasses, you may find yourself in a worse plight than the blind man - thinking you see clearly when in reality your vision is severely distorted.”

Jeff Baldwin, Worldview Academy

Worldviews

On a societal level, a dominant worldview may shape the way a society thinks and acts

- influences all aspects of the society and its culture
 - law & policies
 - economics
 - ethics
 - art & literature
 - social institutions
 - etc.

Worldviews

Differences in worldview can result in misunderstanding, tension or conflict...

- between individuals or within families
 - e.g. Canadian-born kids vs. overseas-born parents
- within organizations or in a society
 - e.g. atheists vs. evangelicals
- between nations
 - e.g. Communist vs. capitalist nations

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Developing a Biblical Worldview

Biblical worldview

- Grounded on the truths of the Bible
- Seeks to see and understand the world as God sees and understands it
- Seeks to live in the world in accordance with God's instructions
- "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Ps. 119:105)

Developing a Biblical Worldview

Biblical worldview

- Requires understanding and application of Biblical teachings to all of life (more on this next week!)
- Importance of studying & meditating on God's Word

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)

Developing a Biblical Worldview

A Biblical worldview may conflict with other worldviews at many points

- Different underlying assumptions / truth claims
- Results in...
 - Different understanding of what's happening in the world
 - Different courses of action

→ Ideas have consequences!

Differing Worldviews...

e.g. Is there a God?

- Biblical worldview – YES!!!
- Atheism (& atheistic worldviews) – NO!!!
- Results in significant differences in answering many other questions
 - e.g. What's the nature & origin of the universe and of mankind? What's the basis of ethics & morality? What's wrong with the world and how do we make it right?

Differing Worldviews...

e.g. What's the nature & origin of the universe and of mankind?

- Biblical worldview – created by God (Gen. 1-2)
- Atheism (& atheistic worldviews) – various answers...
 - Universe is self-existing / self-generating
 - Universe came into being by random chance
 - Evolution (for origin of mankind)

Differing Worldviews...

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- Biblical worldview: Sin/rebellion against God, and all its effects/implications
- Marxism: The rise of private property, resulting in the evils of exploitation, class struggle, etc.
- Feminism: The rise of male domination & oppression of women, resulting in patriarchal societies

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- Biblical worldview: Salvation in Jesus Christ, with all its implications (for people and for the creation)
- Marxism: Revolution! The proletariat (working classes) must rise up to overthrow the capitalist oppressors & restore the original paradise of primitive communism
- Feminism: By rebellion and overthrow of patriarchal structures and liberating women to determine their own identities and destinies
 - e.g. sexual liberation; abortion on demand; etc.

Differing Worldviews...

A Biblical worldview may agree with other worldviews at some (or many) points...

- Common Grace - even fallen creatures have access to truth (Matt. 5:45)
 - Basis for potential dialogue / outreach
- But agreement may be on the basis of different underlying assumptions or principles

Differing Worldviews...

A Biblical worldview may agree with other worldviews at some (or many) points...

- e.g. sexual assault – Biblical & feminist worldviews both agree that this is wrong and cannot be tolerated
- Biblical worldview: This is sin against God and against a person created in the image of God
- Feminist worldview: This is an example of male oppression & domination

Differing Worldviews...

...but differ at others

- e.g. abortion – Biblical & feminist worldviews differ on whether this is wrong
 - Biblical worldview: This is murder, and is sin against God and against a person created in the image of God
 - Feminist worldview: A woman has the right to choose, and to control her own body.

Differing Worldviews...

...but differ at others

- e.g. prostitution / pornography – Biblical & feminist worldviews may differ on whether these are wrong
- Biblical worldview: This is sin against God and against a person created in the image of God
- Feminist worldview: This is wrong if a woman is forced into it (male oppression & domination); but may be OK if a woman freely chooses it (sexual liberation; right of control over own body)

Differing Worldviews...

A Biblical worldview may agree with other worldviews at some (or many) points...

- The agreement may be on the basis of different underlying assumptions or principles that may lead to disagreement on other issues
- Need to remain vigilant → agreement on some points doesn't imply other elements of another worldview should be accepted

Developing a Biblical Worldview

Worldview development is not a static process

- For Christians, this process can go in 2 directions...
 - Increasing conformity to the God's Word and the way Scripture views the world, or
 - Increasing conformity to other worldviews or philosophies present in the society in which we live
- Importance of transformation by the constant renewal of our minds through God's Word

Developing a Biblical Worldview

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom. 12:2)

“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ....” (2 Cor. 10:4-5)