

## *Class 1, "Overview of Worldview Thinking"*

### **Questions:**

- **What is a worldview?**
  1. Worldviews are explanations
    - 1) Of where everything comes from and how everything comes to be
    - 2) Of what is real in the present
    - 3) Of what should be, and what will be, and why
  2. Worldviews are windows/lens through which we see
  3. Worldviews are compasses that chart the course
  4. Worldviews are a platform upon which you base all on aspects of reasoning upon
  5. Therefore, worldviews include the following characteristics:
    - 1) Worldviews are religious in nature, even for those who claim to be irreligious, because worldviews seek to make sense of ultimate reality and the world in which we live, including our own lives.
    - 2) Worldviews are moral and ethical in nature, determining how we view right and wrong.
    - 3) Worldviews form the basis of judgment of people, ideas, and situations.
  
- **How does a worldview operate in a person's life; what does it do?**
  1. It helps to make sense of information and situations
  2. It forms categories for logical grasping of life
  3. It serves to help with ethical decision-making
  4. In a culture a worldview forms the social fabric that brings cohesiveness to society
  
- **Does a worldview need to be formal to be operative? No. How can we determine what our operating worldview is?**
  1. No, often people have not thought through a comprehensive and deliberately chosen worldview.
  2. No, often people absorb passively the worldview of those whom they value or the culture they embrace that they might fit in with society.
  3. No, often people operate practically with a contradictory worldview, meaning that they choose to believe and accept thoughts and ideas that don't make sense, or are even contradictory to each other.
  4. Whether we know or not, we operate by a worldview, implied or intentional.
  5. Test for becoming aware of your worldview; how can we see what our worldview is?  
Answer the following questions:
    - 1) Ultimate Reality: what is ultimately real? Do you believe anything is eternal, and if so, what is eternal to you?
    - 2) Moral Foundation: How should people think to determine what is right and wrong; what is the basis upon which people should do ethical decision-making? What is the basis for your own ethical decision-making? If you see yourself as a passive person without concern for making ethical decisions, ask yourself why you feel that way; should everyone feel that way, why? What OUGHT people do? How do we know?
    - 3) Meaning and Goals: What is the meaning of all things? What does meaning mean? What is the goal (destiny?) of the earth and human history? Do you believe there

is a goal? If so, why? If not, why? If you believe everything is arbitrary, why do you think this?

- **Is Christianity a worldview?** If so, in what way is Christianity a worldview, how does it operate as a worldview, and what happens if a Christian/church does not embrace Christianity as a worldview?
  1. Christianity IS a worldview; it is a worldview because it does the following things:
    - 1) Christianity gives explanation of where everything comes from, what is the reality of the present, and where everything is going ultimately.
    - 2) Christianity declares exclusive truth assertions:
      - (1) Doctrines to be believed
      - (2) Ethical behavior to be lived
      - (3) Relationships with God and others
  2. Modern failure of Christianity as a worldview: How has Christianity departed from its worldview biblical roots?
    - 1) De-emphasis concerning the Bible: In pastors and churches where the truth of the Bible is not taught.
    - 2) Separating Bible and the Christian Worldview from Ministry: In most churches today, there is no practical effort made to be Christian in a worldview sense in the ministry of the church. The church has so bought into pragmatism that it no longer sees the value of truth in ministry (I once had a pastor of a large church tell me: "One cannot build a big church on doctrine; so I don't emphasize it."). In worship, preaching, evangelism, discipleship, even Bible study often is conducted outside of the biblical worldview.
    - 3) Most churches no longer see a unified whole in who they are and what God has called the church to do. This leads to a de-emphasis of biblical theology and the holiness of God in all aspects of the church. In failing to give a cohesive unified Christian belief system that embraces all aspects of Christian thought and doctrine, the church consequently becomes an amalgamation of separate groups, teachings, and activities not centered around a core belief system.

**Christianity Operating as a Worldview** – But Christianity IS A WORLDVIEW! Any type or form of Christianity without the comprehensive worldview aspect, in a fundamental sense, IS NOT CHRISTIAN! How is Christianity a worldview (generally speaking)?

1. Christianity explains ultimate reality in the Person of God
2. Christianity explains material reality and time in Creation:
  - 1) Establishing the framework for understanding what the universe is
  - 2) Establishing the purpose for the universe
  - 3) Establishing the nature and meaning of life
  - 4) Establishing the nature and meaning of human life
  - 5) Establishing the nature of the connection between created reality and ultimate reality
  - 6) Establishing the lens by which we understand the destiny of creation
3. Christianity establishes a categorical understanding of life and reality. Christianity as a worldview gives four major categories:
  - 1) The nature and meaning of creation (time and space)

- 2) What is wrong now
- 3) How can wrong be made right
- 4) The ultimate hope of destiny for history and creation

### **Worldview Thinking and the Soul**

1. All of life centers on the soul; every aspect of life relates to spiritual reality and God at some point. It is important to remember that a person's perception of reality and the development of a specific worldview to be embraced comes from a total integration of the individual's life, centered on the state and condition of the soul.
2. This involves two extensions, one vertical and one horizontal; thus, all things eventually come down to the soul. Specifically, there are two aspects of this matter:
  - 1) The relationship of the soul to God in the context of salvation
  - 2) The present spiritual state of the soul in relationship to sin and self
3. The soul of unsaved people and how this affects their worldview: Why does a lost spiritual condition affect one's perspective on life and its great issues? It is because of the slavery to sin which impacts the person's engagement with Christian worldview thinking. The person controlled by sin and selfishness lives by WISH PROJECTIONS, meaning that they believe what they wish is true, or what they want to be true. Thus, they live by predilections and prejudice. This they do while all the time claiming to be free and untethered by God's truth and will. In fact, they are enslaved and deceived!
  - 1) Enslaved to sin: Unsaved people are enslaved people, driven by their sinful WISH FULFILLMENTS. Worldviews of unsaved people always derive from sinful wish fulfillments, prejudice, and opinions.
  - 2) Darkened in understanding and life: A lack of spiritual life results in darkness of contemplation and perception. Sin is degenerative in the soul and life, resulting in the inability to see, understand, and desire truth and goodness. The ultimate stage in this process of sin's destructive effect is REPROBATION. At this stage the deception is complete, and the person no longer has any ability left to detect right from wrong, truth from falsehood. At this point, all that is wrong seems right; all that is right seems wrong. This is tragic to see in a person's life, but it is catastrophic to see in a society.
    - 1 Corinthians 2:12-16, a text that explains the relationship between the spiritual state of the individual and the acceptance of the Word of God.
    - John 8:31, continuing in Jesus' teaching is the sign of discipleship/salvation

The ancient Greeks in their study of elocution called this ETHOS. In public speaking, the Greeks taught that there are three important aspects: LOGOS, PATHOS, AND ETHOS.

  - Logos – the message given in the speech
  - Pathos – the emotion of the speaker and the emotion elicited in the hearer
  - Ethos – the predisposition of the hearer to the speaker or topic that causes the hearer to listen

In ethos, applied to our topic tonight, we come to see that people listen to what they want to listen to. If they have a bent against an idea or speaker, they will not listen. This is soul driven. Our ability to listen is driven by the state of our soul.

So, how does a person come to hear the Word of God and receive it?

- When the mind decides to listen
- When the mind decides what is said is important
- When the emotion yearns to know what is said
- When the will agrees to change because of what is said

So, how can a sinner ever listen to God's Word? This is a good question...the answer is when the soul is organically changed to:

- Fear God
- Awareness of the need for God and His Word
- Desire to obey God and follow His Word
- Hatred of sin and disobedience

### **Final Thoughts on Worldviews and Christianity as a Worldview**

Beginning next week, we will begin to ponder the inner aspects of Christianity as a worldview. This will take weeks. But in closing tonight, I want to say the following:

1. Worldview thinking is a natural and necessary aspect of our humanity; we do not need to choose a worldview to think in keeping with a worldview. Often our worldview thinking is unknown to us.
2. Unless a person's life is transformed by God's saving grace, and this person begins in discipleship to learn from Jesus, by studying the Bible and its coherent message, then an unsaved person's worldview is derived from and driven by sin and self.
3. When one becomes a Christian, then this person commits himself or herself to following all the teachings of Christ and the Bible as expressions of obedience and love for Christ and the kingdom of God.