

“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

Genesis 1:26-27

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

Romans 5:12

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

II Timothy 3:15, 16

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

Genesis 6:5

Judges 21:25

James 4:3-6

Proverbs 3:5

Proverbs 23:7a

- 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

Romans 12:1-2

1 Thessalonians 2:13

- 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 nonChristian 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.

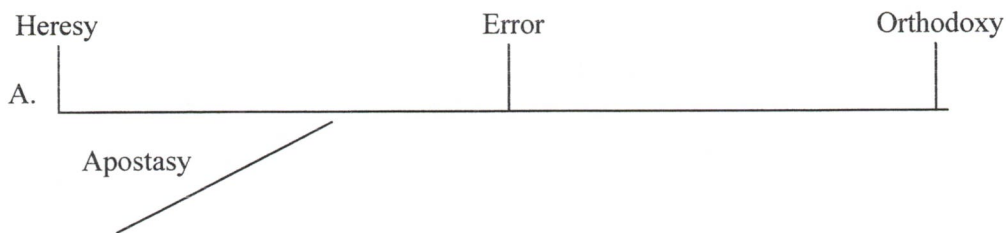
In order to test ourselves in this regard, consider and discuss the following:

1. Socialism is the result of left-wing conspirators trying to take over the world.
2. There are certain political viewpoints that all Christians ought to share — certain important issues all believers ought to agree on.
3. Will a true believer always have a consistent Christian worldview?
4. How would a Christian's worldview influence how he educates his children?
5. If a believer fails to understand that all people have a worldview, what will happen?
6. Is it possible for an unbeliever to have a consistent Christian worldview?

Note: There is some danger in attempting to reduce the essential truths of the orthodox Christian faith to some sort of minimum. Notwithstanding that, it is often necessary to have concrete particulars in mind as we try to make sense of what various groups and sects profess to believe. While no man can judge another man's heart, we can certainly make judgments regarding whether or not a person identifying himself as a Christian believes what other orthodox Christians have believed since the earliest days of the Church.

B. Error vs. Heresy

There is a valid distinction to be made between error and heresy. Error is found in all churches. To understand this is to acknowledge that believers are fallible (though God's Word is not) and thus liable to misunderstanding or wrongly applying what the Bible teaches. Heresy occurs when *an essential or vital* Christian doctrine is rejected or distorted, or when extra-biblical writings (writings apart from the bible) are viewed as authoritative in the same way as the Bible. The continuum below reflects the difference between orthodoxy, error, and apostasy.



As we move left on the continuum, we cross over from error into heresy, or we fall into apostasy. (Apostasy means *falling away* from the faith.)

Read the following statements and comment on whether or not each reflects an *error* in doctrine, *heresy*, or *apostasy*.

1. The bible is without error when it speaks of salvation, but when it addresses historical, geographic, or scientific truths, it often is wrong.
2. The doctrine of election is simply that God looked forward in time, recognized who would respond positively to the gospel and who would not, and declared those who would trust Christ as the elect.
3. Jesus is the spirit brother of Lucifer and thus at the top of the hierarchy of angelic beings.
4. In order for a believer to live a victorious life and have access to the power of the Holy Spirit, he must be baptized with the Holy Spirit as a separate and subsequent experience to conversion. Those who are baptized with the Holy Spirit will speak in tongues.
5. The resurrection of Jesus ought to be understood as a spiritual rather than physical resurrection, giving men hope as they face the challenges of life.