

What Is a Worldview? (And Why Do Worldviews Matter?)

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A worldview is a set of related beliefs (assumptions or teachings) that one wears, like a pair of glasses, through which life is viewed. A worldview gives a specific understanding of life and answers important questions, often at odds with answers from other worldviews.

You can look at life one way by wearing one pair of glasses and then see the world differently when you wear a pair glasses of a different prescription or darker shade. They lead to different views.

A worldview helps determine what you believe about nature, what you value, how you view social issues, what you think about sin, where the universe came from, if God exists, whether truth can be known, who Jesus is, what man is like, and so on. In short, a worldview shapes how you see every aspect of life.

Consider two answers given to the question, “What is man?” The Darwinian or evolutionary worldview answers that man is just one of many genetically complex life forms, due to millions of years of purposeless forces, subject only to the laws of chemistry and physics, not accountable to any timeless moral law or God (for there are none), and, in the big picture, has no more value than an insect, a blade of grass, or a piece of dung.

The biblical worldview answers that man is a unique creation of a real Creator, set apart from all other creatures since he alone is made in the Creator’s image, accountable to a timeless moral law, and who, though fallen, still recognizes there is a meaning to life and a destiny that go beyond mere chemistry and matter. Most significantly, this worldview recognizes that even though man failed miserably in his accountability to God’s law—having completely lost his holiness—righteousness is restored and man is forgiven through faith alone in Jesus, God’s Son, and his sacrificial work. Being created by a Creator and being redeemed by this same Creator give man actual and infinite value.

Worldviews make a world of difference in our lives, but the typical person probably does not even know he holds to a certain worldview. And if he does know, he will likely not think critically about

it. He will not ask himself whether his worldview might be false, where it comes from, why it was rejected a generation ago, and, very importantly, how it may conflict with certain religious teachings—another worldview—to which he also holds.

Whether a person can define “Darwinism,” “existentialism,” “postmodernism,” or other names of worldviews, everyone risks being influenced and even swept away by such deceptive ideologies without even realizing it. That is why Paul warned, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

False worldviews are deceptive; they can look good but are inwardly misleading. Christian discernment is needed. This is why Christian apologetics is important where Christian truths are defended and the assumptions of other worldviews can be shown to be false.

People can and do change their worldview. It can happen when they go off to college, encounter a crisis, or are immersed in another culture. But remarkably, in all places in every generation, millions and millions embrace the Christian worldview.

St. Paul, who had violently opposed the little sect known as Christianity, did a complete turnabout. Jesus Christ grabbed Paul, converted him, and appointed him to tell everyone that the Christian worldview is unquestionably and demonstrably true, in spite of knowing he would have to die for it. Though he was martyred, he now lives, as will everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of sinful man.

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