

Christian Education Class – Following Jesus on Campus

Sept 18, 2011

Class I – Developing a Biblical Worldview – Part 1

I. Why Worldview?

→ The purpose of this class is to study the Scriptures to know God’s commands and principles but more importantly discuss how to live them out in dealing with some common issues that students face

→ Before we do this, we need to deconstruct the way we think; going to take the next 3 sessions doing this

→ Why is this important?:

-need to recognize that we are each coming here today from a different background, with different experiences, are and have been influenced by different things (whether you know it or not)

→ Need to examine our worldview and check to see if it aligns to how the Bible dictates that we should think and act; secular worldview will come and go and change, but God’s worldview for us will never change

II. Discussion questions:

→ your friend Chris (a Christian as far as you know) is signing up for an environmental rally at Queen’s Park in front of the parliament building... you know it’s probably going to be pretty hard core... signs, placards, megaphones, human chains. Chris explains that we need to do our part in restoring the planet to what God intended it to be and this rally is just one way to show this. What would be your response? Could you think of any Scripture references that you’d use to back up your response?

→ one of the Christian groups on campus called “The Good Samaritans” hosts soup kitchens every Friday. While sharing the gospel is encouraged, there isn’t really any structure or program in place that deliberately enables opportunities to talk about Jesus with guests. The group is focused on social justice issues... eliminating poverty, advocating for the poor and oppressed, etc. On their website, it says that the group is with a Christian parachurch organization, and their mission statement reads... “Redeeming the poor... one mouth at a time”. What would be your thoughts on a group like this? Would you agree with their mission? Why or why not?

III. Developing a Biblical worldview

³“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.” – 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

“Worldview”:

1) **A way of looking at the world; a framework for understanding/making sense of what’s going on in the world**

2) **“The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world or, a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.” (American Heritage Dictionary)**

→ a worldview is grounded on a set of basic assumptions/axioms

-these assumptions have implications on how a person thinks about a wide range of issues → shapes that person’s thoughts and actions

→ on a societal level, a dominant worldview (e.g. held either by those in power, or by a majority of the people) may come to shape the way a society thinks and acts – e.g. popular culture: movies, music, celebrities, video game themes, etc.)

-influences all aspects of the society and its culture – e.g. laws & policies, economics, ethics, art, literature, social institutions

→ every generation has their own worldview and sets of assumptions that shape decisions, thought directions, choices... most times we aren’t even aware of this fact... we just act according to what we feel is right

→ walking onto the campus the basic assumption from your friends and the people you meet is that the way you think will and should conform to what and how society thinks

-various clubs, organizations, etc. will inundate you with their agendas and urge you to jump onto their cause... you may have already felt the pressure of this

→ The most simplistic definition for a biblical worldview is **to have the mind of Christ**.

-1 Corinthians 2:16 → “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?”
But we have the mind of Christ.”

-That would mean that one would think like Christ; love like Christ; act like Christ; walk like Christ: have the humility, patience, longsuffering and all of the other [Galatians 5:22–26](#) fruit of the Spirit.

-Christ would not only be the model but the individual’s worldview would be an exact copy. That is the final target of the committed Christian’s process of sanctification.

→ The entire Bible itself is a presentation of the correct worldview because it is the world as God created and acts within it

→ e.g. not only do Paul's letters give direction to the various churches about their need to have a mind-of-Christ worldview, he uses his letters to prepare Timothy as a co-worker by inculcating into him those beliefs and practices necessary to be a devoted follower of Christ

-Paul would not have been satisfied if his readers only followed his teaching to the point of owning the Spirit of Christ without also proceeding on to cultivate and claim the mind of Christ.

-He not only wanted them to know and acknowledge Christ, but he demanded that they claim Christ's point of view, own His values and desires and gloriously suffer for His kingdom.

IV. A Basic Framework to Consider Worldview:

→ Every philosophy or ideology needs to answer the same fundamental questions:

1. Creation: How did it all begin? Where did we come from?

2. Fall: What went wrong? What is the source of evil and suffering?

3. Redemption: What can we do about it? How can the world be set right again?

→ useful basic framework for developing Biblical worldview and applying it to a wide range of issues; useful also for analyzing positions taken by others with potentially different worldviews – what points can be agreed on and what points cannot (without a shift in worldview)?

i. Marxism's answer to these three questions

1) Creation: Where did it all begin? Who are we, and where did we come from?

A: Self-creating, self-generating matter – i.e. the universe is self-originating

-the material universe is self-existing (and eternal)

-it is the ultimate source of all things

“We may regard the material and cosmic world as the supreme being, the cause of all causes, the creator of heaven and earth.” – Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, quoted in Pearcey, p.135.

-mankind is defined by its relationship to the material world (not by its relationship to God), and in particular, by the way we manipulate it and make things out of it to meet our needs (i.e. the means of production)

→ thus, Marxism's emphasis on economics and economic relations

2) Fall: What went wrong? What is the cause of the problems we're facing?

A: The rise of private property, which results in the evils of exploitation, class struggle, etc.

3) Redemption: How can the world be set right again?

A: By revolution. The proletariat (working classes) must rise up to overthrow the capitalist oppressors and restore the original paradise of primitive communism

ii. Feminism's approach to these three categories

1) Creation: Where did it all begin? Who are we, and where did we come from?

A. Various answers within secular feminism

-from self-creating, self generating matter (probably most common)

-created by a goddess

2) Fall: What went wrong? What is the cause of the problems we're facing?

A: The rise of male domination and oppression of females, resulting in patriarchal societies

3) Redemption: How can the world be set right again?

A: By rebellion and overthrow of patriarchal structures and liberating women to determine their own identities and their own destinies

→ Inherently there not much about the Marxist or Feminist worldview that is common with answers to these questions according to a biblical worldview...

→ But do you see semblances of either of these worldviews in your thinking? Would you say there are at least some commonalities between how you think (assuming you believe that you follow the Bible) and what these two worldviews teach

-Feminism: we may not believe that the world was created by a goddess but what about our view of the other things that feminism espouses?

-most of us would say that women in the history of the world have been oppressed and that this may be the cause of some problems, but what is the remedy for this? How do we adopt biblical principles in our response?

-Marxism: Are we not consumed by materials and manipulating things to create things obsessively for our enjoyment

-don't we see oppressive regimes all over the world? Don't we cheer for the underdog citizens of Sudan or Iran when they rise up and overthrow their corrupt government?

→ We are to some degree a product of our society (environment); we can't be completely unaffected by popular culture that's so prevalent and runs throughout the course of our days

→ not all aspects of other worldviews are bad... all truth is God's truth, and God's common grace enables everyone – Christian or not – to do good things and abide by good convictions

→ but we need to pray for God to root out what our convictions truly are at the core... and at the core of how we view the world, we must have the mind of Christ (we'll talk more about this in lesson 3)

V. A biblical worldview and its answer to these three questions

1) Creation: Where did it all begin? Who are we, and where did we come from?

A: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1)

-the universe is not self-existing (only God is!), but was created by God

-Mankind was created by God, in the image of God, with a specific design and specific purposes in mind (Gen. 1:26-2:25)

-mankind is defined first and foremost by our relationship to God, not by its relationship to the material world (although our relationship to the material world is something that God included in His design)

-very different starting point from materialistic worldviews

-in creating the world then, to try developing a Biblical worldview perspective, we need to ask the question, *What was God's design/intention in Creation?*

2) Fall: What went wrong? What is the cause of the problems we're facing?

A: sin entered the world when Adam & Eve sinned (Gen. 3)

-resulted in God's Curse on the creation and on mankind

-death, sickness, suffering entered the world with/as a result of sin

-the creation was subjected to bondage to decay (Rom. 8:19-22)

Questions to ask: How did the Fall change/affect things? How does sin change/distort things, and how does that affect the world in which we find ourselves now?

3) Redemption: How can the world be set right again?

A: Through the redemption that is found in Christ, both for individual people, but ultimately for creation itself as well (Rom. 3:21-24; 8:19-25)

-In Christ, we have forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God; also, eternal life in a new heaven and new earth

-Question to ask: How does the Redemption we have in Christ affect the way we live in this fallen world?

-seeking to live in obedience to Him, as revealed in the Word of God

-seeking to live in accordance with God's design and purposes in creation

-the necessity of knowing and applying God's Word so that we can live in obedience to Him, to be "...transformed by the renewing of our minds" (Rom 12:2)

VI. We make decisions everyday based on our worldview

→ Since we all adopt one worldview or another, we need to recognize what the starting point is for each of our decisions, especially significant decisions

-Simple example – Psalm 90:12 → "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom"

-Some young people live like they are immortal – as you're a student you may already be planning your whole life out before you. There's nothing wrong at all with planning (in fact, it is wise), but if you understand that God has numbered your days, you'll likely go through each day living in some way for the Lord because you don't want to allow one day to go wasted

-coming onto the campus, recognize while you may desire to follow God and obey His Word, we need to pray for the Holy Spirit to make clear to you where your convictions truly lie – do they align to with Scripture?

-this requires actually knowing the Bible – God's character, where His heart is, and his commandments on how we ought to live so as to please Him

→ Do you strive to have the mind of Christ?

Next class: Developing a Biblical Worldview – part 2 → Men of Faith