

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW II



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CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW (II)

HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

In *Christian Worldview I* and *Christian Worldview II*, you will learn how to take Christian knowledge and Christian piety and apply it to all of your life—from the workplace, to the voting booth, to the family life, to the movie theater on a Saturday night. You will develop a worldview—a grid through which you will analyze and understand the world. Based upon the truth of Scripture and the redemption story of Christ, this course will help you to answer life’s big questions and combat the false philosophies of the world through Christ’s truth and love. This course will equip you to influence culture and point others to Christ.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will apply biblical teachings to all of life, forming a Christian worldview.
2. Students will develop knowledge of our culture’s competing false worldviews and learn to analyze them from a Christian worldview.
3. Students will write comprehensive and thoughtful short answers and essays analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information presented in the text, *How Now Shall We Live?*
4. Students will incorporate Scripture in their work throughout this course, applying personal knowledge of Scriptural texts to questions and interacting with Scriptural texts provided in lessons.
5. Students will summarize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize extended quotes from theologians, authors, philosophers and other influential thinkers.

COURSE STRUCTURE

There are 13 lessons in this course, and each lesson follows the same basic format. Each lesson is based on a chapter or group of chapters from the book *How Now Shall We Live?* by Charles Colson. The lessons require you to summarize, synthesize, analyze and evaluate information from this book. The lessons also require you to take knowledge and concepts covered in the text and apply them to new situations. You will be challenged to think critically, write reflectively and apply thoughtfully. This may involve drawing from the knowledge you gained in other CBI courses, and it may involve finding your own Scriptures to answer questions.

Each lesson begins with a fill-in-the-blank section of quotes taken directly from the text, and each lesson ends with a recap of key terms and concepts. Some lessons also have matching or multiple choice sections. Each lesson also contains a lengthy section of essays; essays must be answered in complete sentences and in paragraph format. As you learned in previous Center courses, a structured essay is not simply your thoughts written randomly. In a structured essay, you are expected to write in a planned and organized manner. Be sure to think over your answer before you begin writing; you may find it helpful to jot down notes or to create a brief outline.

We hope that you are enriched, encouraged and empowered through your studies in *Christian Worldview I* and *Christian Worldview II*. Please take some time right now to ask God to help you as you do these lessons. Pray that He will help you work to His glory as you develop a Christian worldview and learn more of the treasures of His Word.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lesson 1.	Redeemed to Serve.....	1
Lesson 2.	Don't Worry, Be Religious	15
Lesson 3.	It All Starts at Home: Christianity in the Family	25
Lesson 4.	Christianity in the Classroom	37
Lesson 5.	Christianity in the Community.....	47
Lesson 6.	Virtuous People, A Virtuous Society.....	59
Lesson 7.	Christianity in the Workplace	71
Lesson 8.	Government Governed by God	81
Lesson 9.	Science and Christianity Are Not Oil and Water	93
Lesson 10.	Art to the Glory of God	103
Lesson 11.	Whatever Is Noble, Whatever Is Pure.....	115
Lesson 12.	How Now Shall We Live?.....	127
Lesson 13.	Christian Worldview in Review.....	137

Lesson 1

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REDEEMED TO SERVE

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “When GOD makes us new CREATIONS, we are meant to help create a new WORLD around us.”
2. “Every CHOICE, every ACTION, either expresses a false worldview and thus contributes to a DISORDERED and broken world, or expresses God’s truth and helps build a world that reflects His CREATED order.”
3. “When we are redeemed, we are not only FREED from the sinful motivations that drive us but also RESTORED to fulfill our original PURPOSE, empowered to do what we were CREATED to do: to build SOCIETIES and create culture—and in doing so, to RESTORE the created order.”
4. “Redemption is not just for INDIVIDUALS; it is for all God’s CREATION.”
5. “The world is a spiritual BATTLEGROUND, with two powers contending for the same TERRITORY.”
6. Justin Martyr wrote, “CHRIST is the fulfillment of the partial TRUTHS embodied in PAGAN philosophy and culture.”
7. “Christian UNITY is the key to EVANGELISM and cultural RENEWAL. Much of the church’s weakness can be traced to its inability or unwillingness to OBEY the command to strive for UNITY in CHRIST.”
8. “Christianity is not only TRUE...it is humanity’s one great HOPE.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. What is wrong with the belief that “Christianity is merely a personal experience, applying to one’s private life”?

The Bible calls believers to be salt and light in a world of darkness and sin. Our lives, through actions and words, should be a witness to the world around us, and our private decisions have an impact upon the culture in which we live. We are here on earth to commune with the Lord privately, and to serve as His ambassadors in the world.

2. A. According to your reading, what are the three “worldview categories”?

1. CREATION 2. FALL 3. REDEMPTION

B. What questions do these categories answer?

1. **Creation tells us where we came from and who we are.**
2. **The Fall tells us what has gone wrong with the world.**
3. **Redemption tells us how it can be fixed.**

3. What Scripture passage is commonly called the “cultural mandate”? Look up this passage, and record what it says.

Genesis 1:28 says, “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”

4. Salvation is pardon from the wrath of God for sin; it is freedom from bondage to sin. As a result of a believer’s freedom from sin’s bondage, what other effects does salvation have?

When people are saved, their lives change—not just their private inner lives, but also their public lives. A person who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit should take his/her faith into every sphere where the person has influence. A Christian should work to bring a Christian influence to the culture so that more might come to know Christ.

5. In your personal faith, what means does God use to work out your spiritual restoration (i.e. your sanctification)?

God uses the preaching of His Word, prayer, the sacraments, worship and the exercise of your spiritual gifts within a local church to make you more into the image of His Son, restoring you spiritually to your intended purpose.

6. Can you think of places where you live, work or play where you could have a Christian influence?

Answers will vary.

7. What historical event assures Christians that we are already victorious in the battle against the forces of evil?

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ assures us that we are already victorious because He has already paid the price, won the victory and crushed the head of the serpent.

8. What does Tertullian mean when he says the “blood of the Christians is the seed of the church”?

Under persecution, Christians had the opportunity to stand in the limelight, while the world watched how they responded. Because first-century believers withstood torture and martyrdom with stellar testimonies, others were convinced of the truth and were converted to Christianity.

9. A. Read Matthew 5:13-14. What do you think it means for a Christian to be salt and light in the world?

It simply means obedience.

- B. Does this mean you have to have a powerful political position? Does it mean you have to have many degrees and a famous name? Does it mean you have to do something that changes the entire world or affects a major national movement?

It is not necessary for a person to be a politician, great scholar or famous figure in order to influence the culture. It can be tempting to feel that unless you radically change the world or begin some big movement, you are not “making a difference.” Many students may feel discouraged about their ability to impact the world. However, God has placed all Christians exactly where He wants to use them. Every Christian can have a great impact on those around him/her. This doesn’t have to mean starting a revival or changing all of society. It just means that he/she can show others the changes that Christ brings to a person’s life. God can use a shy Christian talking one-on-one with a few friends, or God can use a dynamic leader who starts chapel services and rallies others to come. The point is simply to be obedient to the call to be “salt and light.” God honors obedience in whatever way He sees fit.

10. A. In John 17, what did Jesus pray?

Jesus Christ prayed that all believers would be one, that they would be united.

B. Why did He pray this?

He prayed that there would be unity in order that the world would know Jesus is the Savior.

IDENTIFY

In your own words, define the following terms from your reading.

1. Special revelation:

Special revelation is the Holy Scripture of God recorded by holy men of old in the words of the Bible; there is nothing that can be added to special revelation and nothing that can be taken away.

2. General revelation:

General revelation is the revelation of God as found in nature through the order of the universe, the beauty and functionality of things and the glory of God displayed in the heavens; His handwork throughout the earth.

3. Cultural commission/mandate:

The cultural mandate is the command of God that humanity fill the earth and subdue it; this includes developing culture.

ESSAY

1. In *Christian Worldview I*, you learned about the dangers of the social gospel, the movement that cast aside the Gospel message in order to minister to people's "felt needs." Why is it important that Christians' "redemption of culture" never marginalize the need for atonement?

These chapters entreat believers to engage culture in order to be ambassadors for Christ. It is right that Christians shouldn't hide their faith in the corner, allowing worldly men to take culture further and further away from biblical norms. It is also true that the goal of Christian ministry isn't merely to get people to become nominal Christians while their lifestyles never change. As Colson reminds us, Christianity affects all of life and influences the environment everywhere it goes.

However, the goal of cultural engagement isn't merely to make the world a healthier, happier, more outwardly moral place. The goal of cultural engagement is the furtherance of the Gospel—explicitly by words and implicitly by actions.

2. Chapter 30 tells the testimony of how God drew Danny Croce from darkness into light. Explain the story of Croce's incarceration and how he became a Christian.

Danny was imprisoned for committing a crime that plagued him with guilt to the point that he could not sleep at night and was anxious during the day. The Holy Spirit was beginning to convict him of his sin. Then someone in the prison invited him to the vehicular homicide group, but confessing his crime to the group didn't get rid of his guilt. He knew that he was still a murderer who didn't deserve forgiveness. After the meeting, a man approached Danny and asked if he had ever prayed to God. Later that night, Danny tried praying to God for the first time since he was a kid. He asked God to grant him sleep, a simple prayer, and God answered his prayer. The Lord led Danny to ask the man for a Bible.

Danny then began reading the Bible. In the past, he had always compared himself to others. When he sat in a bar and looked around at other people, He didn't look so bad, but when he compared himself to Jesus and His teachings, he was miserable.

The next Sunday, Danny went to chapel. After chapel, he decided to take the chaplain's advice and pray again. He prayed that God would forgive his sins, and he trusted Christ as his Savior. Now he identified himself as a Christian and decided to stand up for his new faith. He began to look to the Bible to answer his questions about sin and other issues in his life. When Danny couldn't seem to gain victory over certain sins, he persistently prayed to God for deliverance. Eventually, his old habits started to fade, and he learned to rely on Christ's blood every day. He was so thankful for his forgiveness in Christ and so full of joy for the gift of new life that he wanted to share it with others. He ended up serving as the chaplain at the prison where he used to be incarcerated.

3. Share with your Instructor how God led you to saving faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Students may write as much as they feel comfortable. Feel free to share powerful testimonies with CBI.

4. After God changed Danny’s heart, Danny didn’t take his salvation and hide it “under a bushel.” Out of his conversion flowed his passion to minister to others. What can you do to have an impact in the environment where God has placed you? How can you serve the kingdom of God by influencing the world around you?

Answers will vary. If your student struggles to believe that God could use him/her, encourage your student with Scripture that he/she has a new identity and purpose in Christ. Remind your student of gifts, abilities or experiences you know he/she has, and help him/her imagine how to use them for the glory of God.

5. In chapter 31, Colson mentioned the Evangelicals and Catholics Together group. At the time the first document of this group came out, many concerned Christians feared that the document failed to adequately address essential doctrinal differences. Their concerns were primarily about the potential of doctrinal compromise. Read the following comments by contemporary theologian R.C. Sproul on this controversy:

The publication of ECT sparked a serious controversy precisely as the point of the declaration of a unity of faith and mission. Historic evangelicals were distressed that such a unity of faith could be declared without a unity of the Gospel itself, especially with respect to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Pleas were made to the Protestant signatories to clarify this declaration. These pleas were responded to by the 1997 joint declaration entitled “The Gift of Salvation” popularly referred to as “ECT II.”¹ In this document points of agreement were articulated that the signatories believe set forth a unified agreement on sola fide itself, while issues such as the language of imputation, merit, indulgences, purgatory, etc., were left on the table for future discussion. Many professing evangelicals have lauded this new initiative as a remarkable achievement that at long last resolves the historical antithesis between Roman Catholics and evangelicals so that the two groups can now see themselves as enjoying a unity of faith in the Gospel.

As I have always considered myself an evangelical, I was distressed that other evangelicals were declaring to the world something about me that I knew is not true. I know that as an historic evangelical I do not share a unity of faith and mission or a unity of faith in the Gospel with Rome. To be sure there are members of the Roman Catholic Church who do believe the biblical Gospel and as such are my brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the ECT affirmations there is declared a three-fold unity between Roman Catholics and evangelicals. This unity includes a unity of faith and mission and a “unity of the Gospel.” Perhaps no aspect of this accord has provided more discussion than the declaration of a unity of the Gospel. The controversy on this point recalls the heart of the Reformation debate, which gave definition to the historic meaning of the term “evangelical.”¹

¹ R.C. Sproul, *Modern Reformation Magazine*, “What ECT Ignores,” 7 no. 5 <http://www.modernreformation.org/rc98ect.htm> 1998 (accessed December 22, 2006).

Can you see any risk of compromise in an organization like ECT? How do you suggest encouraging unity among believers without compromising the truth of Scripture and the doctrines of grace?

Answers will vary, and student's opinions may differ vastly on this subject. This topic is very controversial and very complicated to answer. However, there are some guiding principles to maintain in approaching ecumenism.

There is nothing wrong with Christians of various denominations working together to fight abortion, pass moral legislation or support various social agencies. In fact, Christians can even work with non-Christians in those things. Joining together for these purposes does not mean that all participants must join hands about Scriptural teachings.

Furthermore, some doctrinal issues are more essential than others. There are some issues that are important, but peripheral to salvation (for instance, style of worship). There can be brotherly Christian unity despite disagreement on these issues. Other doctrinal issues, like justification by faith, the deity of Christ and the Trinity, divide Christians from non-Christians and truth from heresy.

Never should the sound doctrines of grace be compromised, muted or diminished. The doctrines of grace are essential and can never be placed in a peripheral position—even for the sake of unity. For instance, a Christian cannot compromise on the belief that justification comes by grace alone through faith alone, simply for the sake of agreeing with another denomination. Disagreement doesn't mean violence, name-calling or unkindness. On the contrary, holding the true doctrines of grace should compel a believer to speak with love to others.

6. Chapters 30 and 31 remind us not to sever the sacred and the secular. This subject has been addressed before in the course *Christian Worldview I*. Drawing from what you learned in *Christian Worldview I*, is there a difference between earthly things and heavenly things, between things sacred and things secular? If so, is this difference a *dichotomy* (i.e. a separation of two mutually exclusive, contradictory ideas that have no affect upon each other)?

There are two ditches to avoid in answering this question. One ditch is to assume that there is absolutely no difference between the sacred and the secular. Some have taken this position to such an extreme that they threw personal piety out the window, claiming that if a Christian does all things to the glory of God, then there is no need for prayer, Bible study or church attendance. Beware of this ditch, for there is an important need for a Christian to feed his/her soul with spiritual disciplines.

On the other side of the road is the ditch of saying that the sacred and the secular are so distinct that church-going and personal faith are divorced from practical life. Bible study becomes the "holy and spiritual" part of the day, and working and playing become the parts of the day when spirituality can be cast aside. Beware of this ditch as well, for spirituality permeates every part of life, and the actions of the physical body affect the personal spiritual life.

7. In what ways did the Irish missionaries and other Christians of the fifth to the eighth centuries, beginning with Patrick, affect the culture around them?

After his conversion, Patrick returned to the pagan land where he was enslaved. He brought with him Jesus' message of salvation. Everywhere he went, he established monasteries and countered the values of war, brutality and thievery with a sanctified value system that honors labor, service and education. These monasteries were places of refuge for Christian scholars and monks who were fleeing the barbarians. From within the safe haven of the monasteries, people had a place to read Scripture and to learn about the Lord. Consequently, a flood of missionaries poured across Europe.

Just as they had learned in Ireland, these missionaries continued the practice of establishing monasteries wherever they went. In these monasteries the Bible was copied and preserved for future generations. They also taught music, language and art in the monasteries. Eventually, the converts from these monasteries began schools where more people could hear the message of the Gospel. Thus, Christianity had an influence on virtually every venue of creative human thought in European culture.

8. Chapter 31 says, "The monks' first concern, of course, was to nourish the inner life of faith. But spiritual reform inevitably led to social change as they fulfilled the call to defend the oppressed and to speak boldly against evil in high places." Why is it important that the *first* concern is nourishing the inner life of faith? Why should spiritual reform inevitably lead to social change?

From the moment the Holy Spirit quickens the heart of a person, the believer nourishes that "inner life of faith" because Christ dwells in our hearts. Christ died for our souls, and He commands us to develop spiritual gifts, to store up heavenly treasures and to worship Him in spirit.

However, out of a heart that is grateful to the Lord for salvation from sin, a Christian can't help but want to live his/her life in accordance with Scripture. And a Christian can't help but want to influence the culture around him/her in order to lead others to the Gospel. The life of a Christian revolves around the Gospel and stands on the Gospel and points to the Gospel. What motivates a believer? The fact that he/she has been forgiven of sins by the God of the universe! What is a Christian motivated to do after being changed by the Gospel? Spread the message all around and preserve the culture so that it is not hostile to the Gospel in future generations. In other words, building a "Christian culture" is not the goal. The goal is to share the Gospel that more might be saved; a by-product of that goal is that culture will be profoundly influenced.

9. Why does Colson call Christianity “humanity’s one great hope”? Do you believe that statement is true?

As has been discussed earlier, Christianity is the only religion that speaks the truth of God. It is the only religion that addresses sin and forgiveness and salvation by grace. Other religions have “good” moral codes. Other religions like Judaism and Mormonism and Buddhism promote family values, moral lifestyles, education and hard work. What sets Christianity apart is its *spiritual* truths. You are a sinner facing the wrath of God. There is just one God, and He sent His Son to die for sins. If you repent and believe, you can have eternal life through Him. His Word contains the message of salvation and instructions on how to live to please Him. Other religions can put a Band-Aid over the problem of sin by imposing rules and codes that change outward behaviors. Only Christianity changes the heart.

10. A. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. Based on this passage, what is a Christian’s motivation for ministry?

The love of Jesus is our motivation. His love is shown through His death for those who believe in Him, and our love for Him is shown in how we no longer live for ourselves. We obey His commands, and we serve others, not out of heartless duty, but out of love for Him.

- B. What does verse 17 tell you about yourself?

Verse 17 teaches us that if we are in Christ, then we are a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come. Not only are we forgiven of all our sins, but also we are no longer slaves to sin. Like Danny Croce who was enabled by God to put away sinful habits, we are now able to renew our minds and change our habits. We have a new identity in Christ. Once enemies of God, now we are new creatures called friends of God!

- C. From verses 17-21, what is the calling of every Christian?

The calling of every Christian is to work in the ministry of reconciliation. The Father has given us the message of reconciliation: be reconciled to God. We are the mouths and the feet He chooses to use to speak and bring His salvation to the world. It is our calling to speak the Gospel with our words and our actions; we become a part of His plan to reconcile the world to Himself.

- D. Verse 17 says those who are in Christ are new creations. Can you see areas in your own life where you have become a new creation?

Answers will vary. This question is a great opportunity for you to encourage your student. Some may be feeling depressed or frustrated about their present circumstances, but assure your student that he/she has a calling given by God! And God is sanctifying and restoring your student more and more each day. Tell your student that this is the hope he/she can cling to because it is a hope incorruptible.

REFLECT

1. Francis Schaeffer, a twentieth-century Christian theologian, writes what he believed to be the problem of modern Christianity:

The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so, in regard to society and in regard to government, is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals. They have very gradually become disturbed over permissiveness, pornography, the public schools, the breakdown of the family, and finally abortion. But they have not seen this as a totality—each thing being a part, a symptom, of a much larger problem. They have failed to see that all of this has come about due to a shift in worldview—that is, through a fundamental change in the overall way people think and view the world and life as a whole. This shift has been away from a worldview that was at least vaguely Christian in people’s memory (even if they were not individually Christian) toward something completely different—toward a world view based upon the idea that the final reality is impersonal matter or energy shaped into its present form by impersonal chance. They have not seen that this worldview has taken the place of the one that had previously dominated Northern European culture, including the United States, which was at least Christian in memory, even if the individuals were not individually Christian.²

- A. What does Schaeffer call the “the basic problem of Christians in this country”?

According to Schaeffer, many Christians fail to apply their Christian worldview to all of their thoughts and life. They see the world in bits and pieces rather than as a whole. They borrow the popular worldview of the culture, which is founded on evolutionary and naturalistic theories, and they isolate their Christianity to small parts of their “moral” lives. Not recognizing that their Christian worldview has been replaced with humanistic evolutionary thought, Christians isolate moral issues like abortion, the break-down of the family, and pornography; calling these issues the problem. What they fail to see is that these issues are merely symptoms of a bigger problem. The problem is that Christian thought is no longer the American framework for life and philosophy. It has been replaced with the man-centered belief that we simply “happened,” and now we are the gods of our own destiny.

² Francis A Schaeffer, *The Abolition of Truth and Morality*, *The Highway: a Repository of Historic Christianity and the Reformed Faith*, n.d. <http://www.thehighway.com/articleOct01.html> (accessed July 6, 2006).

B. What has been the result of this problem?

Rather than combating ideas with ideas, worldviews with worldviews, Schaeffer believes that Christians have given up and allowed worldly ideas to dominate. The result is that our culture has drastically shifted from a Christian influence to a humanistic influence.

2. Abraham Kuyper, a Christian theologian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, spoke about the Christian worldview in a series of lectures at Princeton University in 1898:

The leading thoughts that had their rise in the French Revolution at the close of the last, and in German philosophy in the course of the present century, form together a life-system that is diametrically opposed to that of our fathers. Their struggles were for the sake of the glory of God and a purified Christianity; the present movement wages war for the sake of the glory of man, being inspired not by the humble mind of Golgotha (Jesus sacrifice on the cross) but by the pride of Hero-worship. And why did we, Christians, stand so weak, in the face of this Modernism? Why did we constantly lose ground? Simply because we were devoid of an equal unity of life-conception, such as alone could enable us with irresistible energy to repel the enemy at the frontier.³

A. According to Kuyper, when did worldviews arise in opposition to Christianity? What is the focus of the present movement against Christianity? What is the contrasting focus of Christianity?

Christianity's opposing worldviews arose during the French Revolution and the German philosophies of the nineteenth century. These movements combined to influence the rise of modern thought: a worldview that focuses entirely on man. It is the proud worship of mankind and the denial of submission to God. Christianity, on the other hand, focuses on the glory of God. It is Theo-centric rather than anthro-centric, i.e. God-centered rather than man-centered.

B. Why does Kuyper believe that Christianity has failed to stop these opposing worldviews?

Kuyper says that Christianity lost ground in the battle with opposing worldviews because Christians were not united in motivation and in worldview. When Christians are united, Kuyper writes, we will be filled with "irresistible energy to repel the enemy at the frontier."

³ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: the Stone Lectures of 1898*, [The Kuyper Foundation](http://www.kuyper.org/main/publish/books_essays/article_17.shtml?page=all), 17 July 2003, http://www.kuyper.org/main/publish/books_essays/article_17.shtml?page=all (accessed July 6, 2006).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Sacred:** of or connected to spirituality, religion or the divine
2. **Secular:** of or related to worldly things, separate from religions and divine things

KEY CONCEPTS

1. As Christians, we are called to be salt and light in the world. We must have a Christian influence upon others and upon our culture. The goal of our influence is that the Gospel would go forth today and in future generations.
2. Unity among brothers and sisters in the church is important; however, doctrinal purity is equally important. For if there is unity but no truth, then what is the point of unity? In a kind and loving attitude, Christians should strive to work together and care for each other without compromising the truths of the Gospel.
3. The calling of every Christian is to be the voice and the feet and the hands for God's ministry of reconciliation. We must show and tell all people to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, praying God will soften their hearts and give them the gift of faith.
4. The Christian faith is first a private spiritual renewal in a person's heart. But Christianity isn't just private; it is also meant to influence the world around. As Christians, we must live by example, work to influence the culture and speak the Gospel to all people.

Lesson 2

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DON'T WORRY, BE RELIGIOUS

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. "How do we REDEEM a culture?... The answer is simple: from the INSIDE OUT."
2. "We must begin by understanding what it means to LIVE by Christian worldview principles in our own BEHAVIOR and CHOICES."
3. If we do not live by a Christian worldview, "we will INTERPRET the BIBLICAL commands according to the spirit of the age and will therefore be CONFORMED to the world rather than to GOD'S WORD."
4. "Whenever he read scripture, it was FILTERED through a MENTAL grid set by a non-Christian worldview, resulting in a DISTORTED understanding of DOCTRINE and personal ETHICS."
5. "If we want to TRANSFORM our pagan CULTURE as the monks did in the Middle Ages, we must first start with OURSELVES, understanding what a Christian worldview means for our own MORAL and LIFESTYLE choices."
6. "Christianity claims that God created the universe with a definite STRUCTURE—a MATERIAL order and a MORAL order."
7. "SCIENCE seems to be confirming the teaching of Proverbs: 'The FEAR of the Lord adds LENGTH to life.'"
8. "The most MISERABLE person of all is the one who KNOWS the truth yet doesn't OBEY it."
9. "When we incarnate the TRUTH of God in our LIVES and families, we help bring new life to our NEIGHBORHOODS and churches, our cities and NATION..."

SHORT ANSWER

1. How did Paul (the young man mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) allow a secular worldview to influence his perspective on Scripture? How did this perspective affect his lifestyle?

Paul believed that the Bible was an outdated book written so long ago that its teachings could not be applied to his life. Like the relativists of his culture, he believed he could create his own truth. Consequently, he was caught in immorality with his girlfriend and felt that he could rationalize his sin.

2. How has the postmodern worldview affected people's sense of individual responsibility? (Hint: in the previous course, we referred to this as an "entitlement attitude.")

Many people feel they have the right to live any way they choose, and society must "pick up the tab" for any negative consequences that result. For instance, a person can have casual sex with multiple partners and then expect that the government will cover the medical cost for bills from sexually transmitted diseases. Colson writes, "Americans have fallen into the trap of expecting someone else to pick up the costs of their own irresponsibility."

3. In your own words, explain the "value-free lifestyle." What kind of effects has this lifestyle had on our culture?

The value-free lifestyle is the concept that nothing in the world is objectively wrong and there is no such thing as real guilt. Guilt only comes from false feelings resulting from social disapproval. People then try to eliminate any shame attached to certain behaviors and live life as they please, with no values or morals as a guide. Anything goes: sex, drugs, alcohol abuse, etc. These people may be able to bury their guilt, but our culture still suffers. Abortion, crime and teen pregnancy rates are up, and the welfare system is over-extended.

ESSAY

1. From what you have observed in the world and learned in your reading, why do you think it is important that we look to the early church fathers and orthodox doctrinal creeds as we interpret and apply Scripture?

This is important in order to avoid being deceived by the "spirit of the age." If we interpret Scripture through our natural worldview, we may find ourselves in great doctrinal and moral error like the young man named Paul mentioned earlier in the chapter. As a result, we will justify certain sins and make poor decisions. God wants us to live according to His Word, not according to popular trends and worldly thinking. The church fathers dedicated their lives to studying the Word and interpreting Scripture. Often they did so in response to certain doctrinal controversies that arose. Many trends, philosophies, heresies and movements are simply old controversies reborn. We can learn much by looking to previous church leaders who may have dealt with the same lies we face today.

2. The postmodern world rejects the biblical idea of creation, Fall and redemption. Use the text to explain what happens when each of these truths is rejected.

“If we reject the biblical teaching about creation,” writes Colson, “we end up with nature as our creator. Morality then becomes something humans invent when they have evolved to a certain level. There is no transcendent source of moral standards that dictates how we should live. Each individual has the right to chart his or her own course. And if we reject the idea of sin and the Fall, nothing is objectively wrong, and there is no real guilt; there are only false guilt feelings that arise from social disapproval. The logical conclusion of this thinking is that redemption means freeing ourselves from false guilt and restoring our natural autonomy by eliminating the stigma from all lifestyles. And the role of public authorities is to mobilize resources to make sure that no negative consequences follow from the choices any individual may make. For if all choices are morally equal, then no one should suffer for the choices he or she makes.”

3. A. What is the “modernist impasse”?

When people find themselves in despair after living as if they were free from the restrictions of morality and religion, they reach the modernist impasse. They know what they have been doing isn’t working any longer, but they do not know where to go next. Their “freedoms” have led to social and family breakdown and a sense of hopelessness. Many have begun to understand that morality is not simply a constraint on personal freedom, but it is protection against social breakdown. “That’s why,” writes Colson, “after decades of public rhetoric about individual rights, we now hear cultural leaders struggling to find some common secular language to revive a sense of civic duty and virtue.”

- B. How does it provide an opportunity for Christians to share biblical truth?

Christians have a great opportunity because our biblical worldview offers a solution to the modernist impasse. Living according to the morality of the Bible is healthier for the individual, society and the family. Even science and medicine have proven this. Ever since the world began to abandon the morality of the Bible, society has been falling apart. This proves that Christianity is not simply some old-fashioned, irrelevant religion based on arbitrarily-created absolute morals. Rather, a sovereign God, for our protection and guidance, set absolute morality in place. The solution is in the Holy Bible, incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

4. What is the difference between practicing religion extrinsically and practicing religion intrinsically?

Extrinsically religious people use religion for external purposes. They use religion to achieve a personal goal; for them, it is a means to an end. The text uses the examples of politicians who attend church to gain votes from the religious community and people who pray only for material gain. On the other hand, “Intrinsically motivated religious people serve God without ulterior motive,” writes Colson. “They pray in order to commune with Him and understand His truth.” They selflessly give without thinking how it will benefit them. Religion only benefits those who *genuinely* believe without selfish motive. Those who use religion (rather than practice religion) are often plagued with guilt. Refusing to follow what they know to be true, they become miserable. Only sincere, obedient, intrinsically-practiced faith brings fulfillment and communion with God.

5. Based on your reading, describe several ways in which living “according to the biblical moral order is healthier and happier for both individuals and society.”

The text cites numerous examples of biblical lifestyle choices that result in a healthier life for the individual and for society. Your student may choose to mention any of the statistics and studies linking reduced alcohol abuse, drug abuse, crime, depression, stress and suicide with religious practice and church attendance. Or your student may choose to mention any of the studies linking family stability, marital and sexual satisfaction and physical health to religious affiliation.

6. Christian author C.S. Lewis writes an interesting analogy of humanity living without God and His moral order:

The reason why it (humankind finding happiness apart from God) can never succeed is this. God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.

That is the key to history. Terrific energy is expended—civilizations are built up—excellent institutions are devised; but each time something goes wrong. Some fatal flaw always brings the selfish and cruel people to the top and it all slides back into misery and ruin. In fact, the machine conks. It seems to start up all right and runs a few yards, and then it breaks down. They are trying to run it on the wrong juice. That is what Satan has done to us humans.¹

- A. According to Lewis, what is the reason for the lack of peace and happiness in our world?

The lack of peace and happiness comes from humans trying to find peace and happiness apart from God. He says that humans are “designed to run on God” the way that cars are designed to run on petrol. There is no other substitute for the healthy functioning of a car, likewise when men do not depend on God and fail to look to Him for peace and happiness, they also fail.

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 50.

B. What does Lewis call the “key to history”? Why does he call it that?

Lewis believes that all of history shows civilizations attempting to function without God. They replace Him with power, science, another deity, cultural practices, etc. But none of those things work because none of those things are meant to work. They aren't the right “fuel.” Understanding this is the key because it gives you the answer to all of history's big questions.

7. Pastor and theologian, James Montgomery Boice, summarizes the answer Christianity provides for the misguided selfishness of postmodern society:

Yet Christianity shines out against any merely secular analysis (of humanity's problems). It goes on to speak of the church and history as a further and fuller answer to the human dilemma. The human being has many needs: to know God, for salvation, of a power able to overcome the sinful and debilitating tendencies of his or her nature. But in addition there is a need for relationships on the highest level and a sense of purpose and belonging within history.

The contemporary pursuit of the self erupts in two main agonies: isolation (with its accompanying sense of cosmic loneliness) and meaninglessness. According to the Bible, God has dealt with the first through creation of the church, to which a believer in Christ automatically belongs, and with the second by the incorporation of the Christian into the meaningful flow of biblical history.²

A. Based on this quote, what is the problem with postmodern, individualistic thinking, and what answers does Christianity provide? Have you experienced this sense of belonging in your life?

The self-centered attitude of the postmodern world ultimately leaves a person lonely, believing that life is meaningless. People feel isolated after turning away from the God of the Bible and the fellowship of the Christian church. They think that they will be free and independent, cutting their own life path. But they do not have communion with their Creator and thus they lack meaning, purpose and direction. Also, they lack communion with people who have soft hearts of flesh, the only people who truly love without selfish motivation. True peace and happiness is lacking outside of Christianity due to the deeply embedded guilt that results from sin.

Christianity promises the only real fellowship and sense of belonging because God created us as social beings meant for fellowship and true communion. As biblical history unfolds, God's kingdom advances, and Christians know that they are a part of it, each one contributing according to the gifts God has given. Believers can look back on history and see how other Christians have served, spread the Gospel and defended the faith. Through this, they can know that they belong to the same long history of Christians being used by God for His glory and purpose. Answers to the last question will vary.

² James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1986), 533.

8. The early Christians applied their Christian worldview in such a way that they gave a powerful witness to Jesus Christ. Read Acts 2:41-47; then describe the life of these early Christians.

The first Christians devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to fellowship, to breaking bread (which seems to indicate ordinary meals, but may also include the Lord's Supper) and prayer. They were strongly united and mutually loving. This is evident in their sharing of possessions and selling of goods to provide for the needy. They met daily in the temple courts and ate meals together. These early Christians had sincere hearts and were full of joy and gladness, praising God and enjoying fellowship with one another. Because of their unity and love, the congregation grew daily.

9. Read Acts 4:32-37. What does this reveal about the first Christian community?

The Christians were humbly united—one in heart and mind. They shared everything; all of their possessions were community property. They continued to testify about Jesus' resurrection. Those who had wealth and assets sold what they had and gave their money to those in need. This included giving to the apostles so they could continue their missionary endeavors. The money being placed at the apostles' feet reveals the humility and oneness of the group.

10. What can we learn from the first Christians described in Acts? Have you ever experienced the joy of true unity and fellowship with other believers? What can you do to encourage that kind of unity?

Answers will vary. If your student is bitter or angry about a past experience with other believers, try to encourage him/her with the commands and promises of Scripture.

11. Read John 13:35. Describe how you and the Christians around you can be a witness to the world.

The passage in John says, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Your student may be part of a fellowship or Bible study in prison, or your student may be part of a church on the outside. Whatever the case, your student should describe how he/she can encourage love among the brothers so that non-Christians can see and know that God is love.

12. How can being a part of church fellowship with other Christians help you to overcome temptation?

Answers will vary.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Impasse:** a difficult situation with no apparent solution
2. **Placebo effect:** the result of taking a fake element (oftentimes a sugar pill), and convincing oneself that the false element is causing physical or mental changes; often a person does not know that the element is fake and thus the effect is self-induced in ignorance

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Living according to a Christian worldview affects the life of an individual and thus society at large. A Christian lifestyle (i.e. living according to God's plan) encourages health and contentment because it avoids self-destructive choices.
2. The spirit of the age will sweep up thoughtless Christians into its selfish and hedonistic lifestyle. Christians must intentionally live according to the teaching of Scripture.
3. Holding a religious belief without practicing it causes physical and emotional turmoil.
4. The unity of faith is God's gift to believers to experience true love, unity, fellowship and partnership in the battle against sin.

Lesson 3

Name _____
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IT ALL STARTS AT HOME: CHRISTIANITY IN THE **FAMILY**

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. In public libraries today, “you’ll find a rainbow of children’s BOOKS that downplay the IMPORTANCE of an intact MARRIAGE.”
2. Many popular college textbooks today “WARN women that MARRIAGE is likely to be psychologically stifling and even physically THREATENING.”
3. “This systematic DECONSTRUCTION of the oldest, most basic SOCIAL institution [the family] is a prime CAUSE of the social CHAOS in America in recent decades.”
4. “Many Americans retain TRADITIONAL ideals but regard them as matters of personal CHOICE, refusing to insist on them as OBJECTIVE, universal NORMS.”
5. “It’s important that we cut through the rhetoric and get to the root of this CONFLICT, which again hinges on our basic assumptions about CREATION, FALL and REDEMPTION.”
6. “In modern LIBERALISM, the only ‘sin’ is hemming others in with oppressive RULES and artificial MORAL codes; ‘REDEMPTION’ means restoring the freedom once enjoyed in the original state of NATURE.”
7. “The dominant social PROBLEM in America is MALE flight from the FAMILY.”
8. Shere Hite mistakenly claims that “the breakdown of the FAMILY is a good thing,’ because it LIBERATES us from RESTRICTIVE roles and RULES.”

9. “As husband and wife come together, they form a FAMILY, the core institution of human SOCIETY—the TRAINING ground...for all other social INSTITUTIONS.”
10. Marriage is not only for sex, “it was designed as a powerful bond between HUSBAND and WIFE in order to form a secure, stable ENVIRONMENT for raising vulnerable CHILDREN to adulthood.”
11. “We must explain what it means to live within an objective, created MORAL order instead of perpetuating the CHAOTIC reign of the AUTONOMOUS self.”
12. “Believers should be encouraged to treat their FAMILIES as a MINISTRY—a mission to the surrounding CULTURE.”
13. “Divorce is a COMMUNITY issue, not just a RELIGIOUS matter.”

RESPONDING TO QUOTES

1. Read the following quote by David Popenoe found at the beginning of chapter 33, and answer the questions that follow.

If the family trends of recent decades are extended into the future, the result will be not only growing uncertainty within marriage, but the gradual elimination of marriage in favor of casual liaisons oriented to adult expressiveness and self-fulfillment. The problem with this scenario is that children will be harmed, adults will probably be no happier, and the social order could collapse.

- A. What are the “family trends of recent decades”?

Popenoe alludes to the cultural breakdown of the family. Divorce and abortion rates have skyrocketed; more teens are pregnant, and more couples live together before marriage. Parenting has been cast aside as people pursue careers and wealth. There is a growing population of homosexual and bisexual people, and they are pushing for legislation to redefine the family.

- B. What does Popenoe believe will be the end of these trends?

Popenoe predicts that these trends will end in the total breakdown of marriage, which will be replaced with casual sexual exploits. Ultimately, children will suffer as will the adults involved in impersonal sexual experiences.

2. Read the following quote by Rev. C. Matthew McMahan, and answer the questions that follow.

The Family is a God-ordained institution, a spiritual and organic unity that was established for the cultural mandate of 1) glorifying the Creator, and 2) subduing the earth. In this mandate (Genesis 2), the duties of the husband, wife, children, masters and servants are encompassed, and the Scriptures readily set forth a theology of domestical duties. Husbands, wives and children have specific, God-honoring duties to perform in their respective stations in the economy of God's redemptive plan. Their goal as a family is to 1) honor God, 2) edify the church and 3) promote Christian values in their respective stations of society. All this stems from the moral and spiritual values enumerated in the home and functioning to honor Christ Jesus. In this regard was the Puritan conception of the family or household. Dr. William Perkins described the family as a "little church", Dr. William Gouge called it the "seminary of the Church and commonwealth..." and Rev. Richard Baxter characterized the home as "a church... a society of Christians combined for the better worshiping and serving God." Rev. Lewis Bayly taught that "what the preacher is in the pulpit, the same the Christian householder is in his house." He was quoting Augustine. The family, then, is the most important institution in society paralleling the relationship of Christ and the Church.¹

- A. According to McMahan, why was the family established by God?

The family was established to glorify God and subdue the earth.

- B. What are the goals of the family?

The goals of the family are as follows: to honor God, to edify the church and to promote Christian values.

- C. Why do you think he calls the family the most important institution in society?

McMahan calls the family the most important institution in society because each family is like a mini-church mirroring the relationship of Christ and His church and influencing society by an example of God-honoring love and worship while holding the standard of Christian morals, values and familial duties.

SHORT ANSWER

1. According to the text, in what ways are marriage and the family being redefined?

Popular thought often views marriage and family as restrictive institutions from which individuals should be liberated. Much of society today believes that divorce has no moral significance. Some even go so far as to claim that marriage is psychologically and physically damaging for women. As a result, marriage is redefined or tossed out the window. Fathers are absent, mothers abuse their children, children rebel and society crumbles.

2. What public policies discourage marriage?

There is a tax penalty for married couples, while some companies grant spousal benefits for people who aren't married. Also, some courts have ruled in favor of homosexual unions, putting them on the same level as heterosexual marriages.

¹ Matthew C. McMahan, *The Christian Family, A Puritan's Mind*, n.d., <http://www.apuritansmind.com/TheChristianFamily/ChristianFamilyMainPage.htm> (accessed July 13, 2006).

3. Based on your reading, compare and contrast the postmodern attitude regarding the family with that of nearly every civilization of the past.

Colson writes, “Out of sheer self interest, if for no other reason, nearly every civilization has protected the family both legally and socially, for it is the institution that propagates the human race and civilizes children. Yet in postmodern America, the family is being assaulted on many fronts, from books to popular magazines, on television and in movies, through state and federal policies. This systematic deconstruction of the oldest, most basic social institution is a prime example of the social chaos in America in recent decades.”

4. A. Read Genesis 2:18-25. Explain why the idea of marriage and family must be firmly rooted in the doctrine of God’s creation.

God created man and woman for each other. It is so clear from the physical, emotional and intellectual makeup of men and women that they are meant to complement each other and parent children together. This contradicts homosexual and bisexual ideology. Furthermore, God commands Adam and Eve to cleave to each other, leaving their father and mother and uniting for a lifetime. This defies the cultural practice of casual divorce and remarriage.

- B. Read Matthew 19:4-9. Explain how Jesus further supports the idea that marriage is rooted in the doctrine of God’s creation.

Jesus says that “from the beginning” husbands and wives were not meant to divorce. They were meant to covenant with each other for a lifetime. When Moses allowed his people to divorce, it was because the people were in rebellion with hardened hearts, but from the beginning God did not create marriage with that intention. Furthermore, Jesus says that people who thoughtlessly divorce and remarry become adulterers because they break a lifelong bond that, from the beginning, was not meant to be broken.

5. Why do you think it is necessary that Christians treat their own families as a ministry?

Student answers may vary. The following is a suggested answer: Christian families are a kind of mission to society. As children grow, they become the next generation of leaders, teachers, parents, voters, etc. Also, Christian families serve as a light to those around them, witnessing through their actions. People in the world watch how Christians raise their children, function as a family, keep house, become involved in the community, etc. If a family functions according to biblical teaching, non-Christians may become Christians and society may be influenced. The best way to redeem the culture for Christ is to educate our children with a biblical worldview.

6. What is the philosophy of the “unencumbered self”?

This philosophy is the belief that each person is a rugged individual entirely unattached to other people, and absolutely not defined by familial roles. In this philosophy, family titles such as “mother,” “wife,” “father” and “husband” negatively confine and restrict a person. The unencumbered self breaks free, tearing apart families. The mother aborts her children, the father runs off with a younger woman, the children reject the counsel of their parents—and all these things are viewed as positive actions because they “free” the individual.

7. The text explains how the image of God is reflected in both genders. Explain other ways that marriage a “mystic mirror.”

Marriage is a living picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church. The husband, like Christ, leads and nurtures and sacrifices. The bride, like the church, loves, serves, respects and responds. Just like the covenant between Christ and His church, the marriage union forms an unbreakable covenant bond of faithfulness and forgiveness.

ESSAY

1. Rev. Dave Hatcher, a Christian preacher from Washington, spoke about the importance of a committed, Christ-centered home:

Faithful parents confess their shortcomings, and give the glory to God alone for every fruit that is given. There is no back-slapping and no sidelong glances. Faithful parents begin and end their work by faith—faith in the promises of God.

Most of what your children will become will not be due to those super-memorable moments, special events, and carefully thought out teaching times. Most of what your children will become will be due to the atmosphere, the aroma, of your home. Does it smell of fear and love for the Lord? Does it explode in joy, forgiveness, grace, and love because of all that Christ has done for you? Is the standard of God’s law central in discipline and discipling because the love from and for God is central and objectively noticeable in all that you say and do? This is how you live in the promises of God. This is how you train and admonish your children in the Lord.²

- A. Were you raised in a Christ-centered home? How did your upbringing affect you and the way you view the family?

Answers will vary. Some students may choose to write personal answers, and others may not feel comfortable. If you feel compelled, share with your student about your own upbringing and how it affected you.

² Dave Hatcher, *A Home of Loyalty*, Sermon, Eastside Evangelical Fellowship (Kirkland, Washington, 3 August 2003) http://www.eefweb.org/sermons/topical/Family_Issues/Family_issues.htm (accessed July 13, 2006).

- B. If you were raised in a non-Christian home, what do you think you can do differently to reclaim your family for Christ? If you were raised in a Christian home, what patterns did you learn that you can incorporate in your own family? After reading this chapter, are you inspired to change things about the way your family lives?

Answers will vary.

2. Jonathan Edwards, theologian and leader of The Great Awakening (an eighteenth century revival in America), preached this powerful message to his New England congregation:

We have had great disputes how the church ought to be regulated; and indeed the subject of these disputes was of great importance: but the due regulation of your families is of no less, and, in some respects, of much greater importance. Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules. And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual. If these are duly maintained, all the means of grace will be likely to prosper and be successful.

Remember that, as you would not have all your instructions and counsels ineffectual, there must be government as well as instructions, which must be maintained with an even hand, and steady resolution, as a guard to the religion and morals of your family, and the support of its good order. Take heed that it not be with any of you as it was with Eli of old, who reprov'd his children, but restrained them not; and that, by this means, you do not bring the like curse on your families as he did on his.³

- A. Why does Edwards say that regulation of families is of no less importance than the regulation of the church?

Every family is to be a little church consecrated to Christ—fully influenced and governed by His rules. Parents must regulate and educate their families in Christ’s teachings, just as church leaders do likewise with a congregation. In fact, Edwards even calls family education some of the chief means of grace, a phrase typically reserved for preaching and the sacraments.

³ Jonathan Edwards, *On the Family and Grace*, Sermon, *A Puritan’s Mind*, n.d., <http://www.apuritansmind.com/TheChristianFamily/EdwardsJonathanFamilyGrace.htm> (accessed July 13, 2006).

- B. Read 1 Samuel 2:12-36. What parenting error did Eli make? What does Edwards say will be the result of such an error?

Eli told his children their errors, but he did nothing to restrain them from their sin. He allowed them to desecrate the temple and make a mockery of the priesthood. While they blasphemed God, he did not restrain them. This resulted in a curse upon his family, and Edwards warns his congregation to regulate their families that the same may not happen to them.

3. Read Ephesians 5:18-6:4. According to verse 18b, what is the source of a healthy family life? Explain.

The source of happy family life comes from its members being filled with the Holy Spirit. When parents are filled with Him, they love, lead, teach and sacrifice by His power. When children are filled with Him, they obey, love and honor by His power. His Spirit binds together the whole family, making them one in purpose. When the Holy Spirit is present, family members are bound by something stronger than blood.

4. According to verse 21, what happens when Christians are filled with God's Spirit? How did Jesus demonstrate this toward His disciples in John 13:1-5? How did Jesus demonstrate this toward His Father in Philippians 2:6-8?

When Christians live together, filled with the Holy Spirit, they submit to one another. To submit means to be humble, to respect, to serve and to be selfless, to regard others as more important than oneself. Christ didn't submit to His disciples in the sense that they were His authority or head. But He did lay aside His own desires and needs for the care of others. The God of the universe, great and mighty, took up a dirty rag and washed His disciples' filthy feet. This would have been considered the task of a lowly servant, not the job of a great teacher, which is why Peter recoils in horror telling the Lord not to wash his feet. But Christ was teaching them submission and lowliness in spirit.

In Philippians, we read how Jesus was submitted to His Father. His Father was his head, His authority. Jesus obeyed Him without complaint or grudge, even to the point of greatly humbling Himself. He obeyed when He was born as a lowly man in a lowly stable. He obeyed when He was misunderstood, mocked and ridiculed by mere men. He obeyed to a painful, humiliating and spiritually torturous death on a cross.

5. According to Ephesians 5:22-24, how does a wife submit? According to verses 25-33, how does a husband treat his wife?

A wife shows that she is submitted to God by submitting to her husband. She regards her husband as her head, just as Christ is the head of the church. The church looks to Christ as her head, her leader. So also a wife ought to obey her husband. In turn, husbands are to love their wives, as their own bodies. They are to love her as Christ does His church. Just like Christ did for His church, a husband loves his wife, sacrificing himself for her and forgiving her. Christ looks at His church as holy and blameless because He sees them washed by His own blood. So also a husband presents his bride to Christ. He helps his wife to be washed with the Word.

6. Read Ephesians 6:1-4. According to this passage, what responsibilities do Christian parents have toward their children? What are the responsibilities of children toward their parents?

Parents must avoid being unreasonable toward their children. Fathers in particular are mentioned; Paul cautions them not to exasperate their children. Instead they are called to educate and raise their children according to the Word of God. Children must obey and honor their parents in the Lord. They are to obey with their actions and their hearts, not harboring grudges or carrying anger, but obeying because it is right.

7. Throughout Scripture, God is revealed in different family roles. See how many of these you can name. Explain the significance of each. For example, God is revealed as our Father so that we picture Him as a leader, provider, trainer, corrector and authority.

Jesus Christ is called the Son, so that we see Him in obedient and loving submission to the Father. He is also the Son of Man so that we think of Him as a fellow human. Jesus Christ is also called our elder brother because He is the first-born in our family, the family of God. He has set the example and is now seated at God's right hand. God is also called our husband. Like Song of Solomon reveals, He loves deeper than a passionate lover. He woos us to Himself and cares for us tenderly; He first loved us. He forgives us each time we are unfaithful, and He welcomes us back into His arms.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Empirical:** relying on experience and observation
2. **The Enlightenment:** the American and European movement that began during the eighteenth century, and focused on reason and experience rather than religious beliefs and tradition
3. **Cohabitation:** living together as husband and wife while not legally married

KEY CONCEPTS

1. The family has been redefined by the postmodern worldview in recent years. Marriage, monogamy, submission, respect and faithful child-rearing have become rare as individuals have chosen to “free” themselves from the confining roles of the family.
2. The family is the foundation of society. Without biblically-informed parenting and marital strategies, we harm our own lives and society as a whole.
3. A committed marriage and family life is not an inconvenient restriction; conversely, it is a God-ordained, fulfilling responsibility that is also a picture of the covenant God who we worship.
4. The family is God’s training ground where children are prepared to enter society. A family living in accordance with biblical principles is able to share the good news of Jesus and transform society for the glory of God.

Lesson 4

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CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLASSROOM

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “American public EDUCATION is no longer successful at its two historic tasks: ACADEMIC training and MORAL education.”
2. “Schools have replaced time-tested methods of TEACHING with TRENDY techniques.”
3. “Future TEACHERS do not take courses on the subject matter they will be TEACHING; instead, their schedules are crammed with courses that focus on SELF-ESTEEM and social EQUITY.”
4. “A faulty view of CREATION has led directly to the conceptual and moral RELATIVISM that plagues modern PUBLIC EDUCATION.”
5. “Many children know more about ACID RAIN and GAY RIGHTS than they do about SHAKESPEARE and George WASHINGTON.”
6. “Students who are taught to look only to their own FEELINGS soon lose all sense of ACCOUNTABILITY to any external MORAL standard.”
7. “The decline in American PUBLIC EDUCATION is not due to poor TEACHING or lack of FUNDING; it is due to educational THEORIES that deny the existence of transcendent TRUTH and MORALITY...”
8. “The goal of LEARNING ... ‘is to REPAIR the ruins of our first PARENTS.’”
9. Youth group LEADERS need “to go beyond volleyball and pizza parties and begin to teach APOLOGETICS and WORLDVIEW issues.”
10. “What the SCHOOLS do today determines what SOCIETY will be tomorrow.”

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. “A Nation at Risk” is a startling assessment of **B** .
 - A. American politics
 - B. American education
 - C. global warming
 - D. the threat of nuclear war
2. An education professor told some future teachers that students’ **D** are more important than content or thinking.
 - A. lifestyles
 - B. parents
 - C. wardrobes
 - D. feelings
3. In Froebel’s utopian vision, education is seen as the means for humanity to pass to the next stage of **A** .
 - A. evolution
 - B. peace
 - C. civilization
 - D. democracy
4. “Old standards of **D** must be cast off to give freedom to the New Man.”
 - A. pride and strength
 - B. love and acceptance
 - C. ignorance and selfishness
 - D. truth and virtue
5. Today, students are often instructed in **B** .
 - A. patriotic themes
 - B. political radicalism
 - C. classical literature
 - D. anger management
6. “God has communicated with us through the Bible, revealing an objective standard of truth and morality for all **C** .”
 - A. Christians
 - B. unbelievers
 - C. people
 - D. children
7. “If we are going to restore order and justice throughout the culture, we must restore **B** .”
 - A. theocratic rule
 - B. high-quality education
 - C. world peace
 - D. Jewish law

8. **B** education teaches that students make up their own truth, constructing their own meaning.
- A. Classical
 - B. Constructivist
 - C. Greek
 - D. Pragmatic
9. Christian education “means teaching students to relate every **A** to God’s truth and his self-revelation in Scripture.”
- A. academic discipline
 - B. physical action
 - C. political issue
 - D. emotional sensation
10. “Individual Christians working within the **D** system can also have an enormous impact.”
- A. world trade
 - B. global marketing
 - C. television broadcast
 - D. public school

ESSAY

1. According to this chapter, what are the two traditional duties of American education? Explain how these duties are/aren’t being carried out today.

The two duties of education are academic training and moral education. The text cites several studies reporting a deficiency in American students’ knowledge of academic disciplines. One study even reported that American students placed nineteenth out of 21 countries in math and science and last in physics. Even our prized Ivy League colleges showed students lacking knowledge in history and civics.

Moral education has been cast aside as well. Instead of teaching absolute values and moral standards, students are encouraged to discover their own standards and beliefs. At other times, the subject of character training isn’t even approached. Instead, it is replaced by multiculturalism and liberal political ideologies. The result has been a nation of children in moral decline, and these children are growing up to be our country’s leaders.

2. How has American education’s focus on self-esteem affected the way teachers are being trained in American universities?

Many future teachers are required to take courses focusing on student self-esteem and social equality rather than courses on the subjects they will teach. Teachers are trained to think of students as morally pure beings, innocent and creative. The teachers begin to see themselves not as teachers, but as a facilitators leading each student to discover his/her own truth. The text even cites one professor who taught that students’ feelings are more important than their mastery of content or their ability to think and answer questions correctly. Colson writes, “No wonder American kids score at the bottom in terms of skills but at the top in terms of self-esteem. We’ve made them feel good about doing badly.”

3. What is a “constructivist” view of education? How does it differ from traditional educational theories?

Constructivist educational philosophy is basically the view that each student is responsible to construct his/her own truth. For instance, students can make up their own spelling and math rules and interpret history and literature however they see fit. As Colson writes, constructivist education is, “based on the idea that knowledge is not objective but a social construction; therefore, children should not be given the right answers, but should be taught to construct their own solutions through interaction within a group...teachers are urged not to tell students whether their answers are right or wrong.” In constructivist education, the “teacher” is there to watch the students and to help them “clarify,” but the students are basically their own teachers.

On the other hand, traditional education teaches that there are right and wrong answers. There are undisputed facts and there are discernible truths. There is a moral standard, and there are methods and truths to each academic discipline. Traditional education views the teacher as an expert and an authority, placed in the classroom to impart knowledge and morals.

4. Read Proverbs 1:7. Where does the biblical view of education begin? How is this educational view unique?

The starting point of a biblical view of education is the understanding that the Bible is God’s communication to us. It is the absolute standard of truth and morality by which we are to guide our lives. It is God’s Word to us, and the study of it transforms our minds and hearts. Proverbs teaches that knowledge must begin with the fear of the Lord. If a man rejects God, he becomes a fool, despite all his education. Biblical education is unique because it acknowledges that our lives are guided by a Supreme Truth outside of our own feelings and imaginations. Biblical education also provides a comprehensive view of learning for academics and morals. Though the Bible is not an algebra or geology textbook, it does teach us who made the earth and the rules of nature and mathematics. It also teaches us what to do with our learning: glorify God and acknowledge Him in all our ways.

5. Explain some ways that Christians can begin to improve public schools.

Christians can support curriculum reform that directs education toward a Christian worldview. Christians can also be involved as teachers, board members, principals or classroom aids in public schools where our input, teaching and leadership will influence the schools. Furthermore, we can work to support charter schools, supplemental programs and vouchers so that parents have the option of sending their children to a school that recognizes biblical morals and philosophies of teaching.

6. Why must Christians be active in the task of reforming the education of children and restoring our communities' schools?

From the text: "The future of any society depends on the way it teaches its children. That's why one of the first measures taken by revolutionary governments is to place all educational agencies under the direct control of the state, giving schools a central hand in building the new society. That's also why one of the fiercest battles in today's 'culture war' is over education. If Christians are going to be 'salt,' if we are going to restore order and justice throughout the culture, we must restore high-quality education."

7. Drawing from your knowledge of evolutionary theory in *Christian Worldview I*, how do you think evolutionary theory has influenced the way the American public school system views students? Contrast this with the Christian view of a child/student. Explain how this damages effective education.

In a Christian worldview, a child is seen as created by God with a soul and a body. The child is a moral agent capable of making right and wrong choices, responsible for his/her own actions. But this is not the view held by American public schools where children are viewed through the lens of Darwin's evolutionary theory. Under this view, children are nothing more than biological organisms that evolved from natural processes without meaning or reason, over millions of years. Consequently, students are not affected by the Fall, and there is no absolute truth. Children are free to discover their own values and to determine their own truth while the teacher imparts no purpose, meaning or responsibility to the students. In fact, the teacher is actually there to get out of the way so that a child can develop as an autonomous self.

This has resulted in the rejection of academic and ethical standards. Rather than teaching students hope and meaning and truth within each academic discipline, students are taught radical political agendas and relativistic multiculturalism. Students do not graduate with a comprehensive understanding of the natural world, humanity and the future. Nor do they have character and discipline. Instead, they become irresponsible, sometimes immoral and ignorant adults.

8. Today families have many schooling options. Explain each of these options, and then explain the strengths and weaknesses of each option.

A. Public schools:

Public schools are supported by the federal and state government, and they are available and free to all American children. Often these schools are large with many subject offerings and extra-curricular options. However, they are also full of evil influences and packed with secular ideology.

B. Christian schools:

Christian schools come in all shapes and sizes, some of them offer nothing more than secular textbooks and prayer before class, while others offer a comprehensive biblical worldview. Some use classical curriculum, emphasizing Western ideas. These schools typically have higher academic and behavioral standards and teach students biblical knowledge. Students usually get more attention in smaller class sizes, and students also may avoid the negative influences experienced at public schools. Unfortunately, Christian schools are often very expensive and may not provide as many academic opportunities in the areas of math, science and foreign language. They also may lack extracurricular options.

C. Homeschooling:

Another option is homeschooling where parents teach their own children at home. This option eliminates the worldly influences at schools and avoids the tuition costs of Christian schools. Parents are able to tailor curriculum to the needs of their children and have the flexibility to teach holistically with themed units and frequent educational trips. However, homeschooling takes much time and dedication on the part of the parents. More difficult subjects in high school may be a struggle for parents to teach from the home, and home-schooled children may lack effective social skills (unless they have been exposed to various social activities).

D. Charter schools:

Charter schools are considered public institutions (and are thus tuition-free); however, they are not required to use state-sanctioned curriculum. At these schools, parents and teachers may draw up a charter to determine how and what students are taught. Charter schools can also avoid behavioral issues by regulating which children enter their institution. These schools may not have a definitive Christian worldview, and they are not available to parents in every area of the country.

E. Supplemental programs:

In addition to these schooling options, there are supplemental programs available to students. These programs may include after-school programs, clubs and mentoring programs. Christians may choose to get involved in these programs to influence reform in the public school system.

9. If you were a parent (or perhaps you are), which option would you pick and why?

Answers will vary. This question is intended to provide your student the opportunity to think about how to be active in his/her child's education and how to ensure that his/her children receive the best Christian education possible.

10. Read Psalm 78:1-8 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Who do these passages say are responsible for educating Christian children? What are they responsible to teach?

In both of these passages, parents are responsible to teach their own children, and the people of God as a whole are responsible to collectively teach the children of the church. The people of God must teach their children the love and fear of God. Psalm 78 encourages the people of God to tell their children about the works of God—His power, laws, deeds and statutes. Deuteronomy 6 teaches the church to constantly teach their children that there is but one God, and we must love Him with all our hearts, souls and strength.

11. Reread Psalm 78:6-8. Why were the people of God instructed to teach their children in the ways of the Lord? Read Judges 2:10. What happens when Christians do not teach their children?

The passage in Psalms says to teach the children of believers so that none would forget Him, so that none would reject His statutes and go astray. Because of human nature, man's tendency is to forget the Lord, to cast Him aside and ignore His laws. As verse 8 says, when God's people do not teach the ways of the Lord to their children, the generation that arises is stubborn and rebellious with hearts and spirits that are not faithful to Him. But when Christian adults teach the children of the church, then the faith is passed on to a new generation. Judges 2:10 is a tragic passage. The faith of the patriarchs was lost with a new generation who displeased the Lord and rejected His covenant. The God-fearing adults of Israel failed to teach their children, and as a result, a generation arose who did not know the Lord.

12. What do verses 6-7 of Psalm 78 say regarding the long-term goals of educating our children?

The ultimate goal of teaching our children should be that their hearts would be soft toward Him. Christians instruct their children so that they would grow to trust in God and know His deeds and commandments. Then, when they are grown, they will pass these truths on to their children and grandchildren, and more generations will live and die in the fear of the Lord.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Romanticism:** a philosophy focusing on nature, emotions, feelings and the freedom of the individual; this philosophy rejects principles, truths and dogmas of the past and emphasizes the value of man in his natural state
2. **Objective:** a conclusion or answer *unaffected* by personal opinion or emotion
3. **Subjective:** a conclusion or answer that is *affected* by personal opinion or emotional bias; allowing for variation and individual interpretation
4. **Pragmatism:** a philosophy that says whatever works for the moment or the situation is right; the consequences of an action determine its worth; there is no overarching truth or moral authority

KEY CONCEPTS

1. The best way to judge any educational program is to analyze how it answers the three biblical themes of creation, Fall and redemption.
2. “The decline in American public education is not due to poor teaching or lack of funding; it is due to educational theories that deny the existence of transcendent truth and morality, that renounce standards of excellence, and ultimately render children unteachable.”
3. The Christian theory of education teaches more than Bible stories and Scripture memorization; it teaches all subjects—science, math, literature, art, music, history—from a Christian worldview.
4. Christian adults are obligated to teach the ways of the Lord to the children of the church so that a generation will not arise that rejects the Lord. The children of the church must be taught of the deeds of God, His laws and His statutes. This involves teaching biblical truths and stories and teaching all areas of life from a biblical worldview.

Lesson 5

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CHRISTIANITY IN THE COMMUNITY

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “It wasn’t just INSUFFICIENT manpower and firepower that allowed CRIME to flourish. It was also a flawed WORLDVIEW.”
2. “In the 1970s and 1980s, the courts introduced a novel concept of civil LIBERTIES that transformed disorderly and disruptive public BEHAVIOR into a civil RIGHT.”
3. “Vagrants and drifters were no longer regarded as a DANGER to social STABILITY but as a PERSECUTED class deserving protection.”
4. “Civil liberties came to be defined in excessively INDIVIDUALISTIC terms, denying the right of COMMUNITIES to promote their VALUES or to insist on standards of public behavior.”
5. “The solution, therefore, is NOT simply a matter of building more PRISONS and incarcerating more alleged CRIMINALS. Indeed, America has tried that route. The 1970’s saw the biggest PRISON-BUILDING boom in our nation’s history... Arrests arose, prisons became OVERCROWDED... and yet crime continued to RISE.”
6. “A city that allows pockets of public DISORDER, starting with graffiti and litter, sends a message that authorities are either UNWILLING or UNABLE to enforce standards of BEHAVIOR.”
7. “The best way to reduce CRIME is not to react after the fact with PUNISHMENTS and REHABILITATION but to discourage it before it happens by creating an ordered and CIVIL community life.”
8. “The biblical basis for this approach is the doctrine of CREATION, which tells us we were created for COMMUNITY.”

9. “Only an ORDERED civil life allows FALLEN human beings to ‘live and work TOGETHER.’”
10. “Although our CITIZENSHIP is in the ‘City of GOD,’ we know that God has placed us in our cities and neighborhoods to REFLECT His character and to RESTORE His righteous dominion in the midst of a FALLEN world.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. Explain the concept of shalom.

Shalom is biblical peace—the peace that results from moral and social order. This peace can only be achieved through following God’s plan for morality. If all the members of a society were righteous men and women, then the result would be shalom—civil harmony and spiritual peace.

2. What is Augustine’s theory of tranquillitas ordinis?

This term refers to the tranquility that is produced by order. It means a community will enjoy peace and harmony only by following the moral order. Therefore, tranquillitas ordinis goes hand-in-hand with shalom.

3. After the first day on his beat, what was the first thing Sal did to restore order to his community?

Sal was so overwhelmed after the first day of work that he decided to start with the most basic thing he could find to do. He got rid of an abandoned car that was littering the street.

4. How did this action reflect Sal’s belief in the “broken-window theory”?

The broken-window theory is the belief that when communities are allowed to outwardly decay, crime follows. For instance, when a building does not repair its broken windows, then chances are all the windows will be knocked out, and soon the building will be a hide-out for criminals. Sal began his work by getting rid of a community eyesore because he believed that this would discourage disorderly conduct among the residents of the community.

5. Explain at least two things Sal did to encourage relationships with the people on his beat.

Sal helped children finish their homework, and he played basketball with the guys in the neighborhood. He tried to know the names of the people in the neighborhood, and he tried to keep abreast of what was happening in their lives. He took the time to escort old women home from the store, and he checked in on shopkeepers and small-business owners.

6. How did enforcing minor traffic violations help Sal to catch people guilty of bigger violations?

When Sal tracked down people speeding and running red lights, he often caught speeders with expired tags, missing licenses, or even illegal drugs or alcohol in their vehicles. Sometimes he even caught people with warrants out for their arrest. But most of all, he sent a message of “zero-tolerance” for law-breaking. He let the community know that laws—all laws—would be strictly enforced because he cared about the health and stability of the community.

7. Establishing and maintaining shalom in our communities is one way Christians can be “salt and light”—preserving influences. Why is this necessary if we are members of a “heavenly kingdom”?

Because humans are totally depraved, society will always tend toward moral and social decay. People need laws and restrictions; they need order preserved and enforced. Christians can work to keep evil in check, stemming its tide and keeping society from overflowing with disorder and decay by obeying, supporting and enforcing standards of morality and order.

8. How did Supreme Court rulings in the 1970s and 1980s increase the problem of American crime?

During this time, the Supreme Court struck down statutes against vagrancy and loitering. Instead of viewing these things as unproductive habits that affect a community, the court decided that the “real culprits...were the uptight middle-class moralists who were trying to force all dissenters to conform.” These rulings started a chain reaction of public disorder. “Before long, the streets, parks, and subways of our major cities were filled with panhandlers, prostitutes, drunks urinating on the sidewalks, and people sleeping on heating grates.” In the name of freedom, communities were encouraged to spoil and criminals had more hideouts, more excuses and more leeway than ever before.

ESSAY

1. Contrast the biblical concept of community with “extreme individualistic license.”

The Bible teaches that, from the beginning, humans were created to live together in community. The concept of a biblical community requires citizens living together in cooperation, peace and order. Every individual obeys the laws, keeps up the community and considers the needs of others for the good of the whole community. No one person is an island, nor may any one person put his/her needs and wants above the needs and wants of others. Furthermore, the laws and moral standards of the community respect a transcendent moral order.

Conversely, individualistic ideology says that each person is free to do whatever he/she desires, regardless of how it affects other individuals or the community as a whole. Bums may loiter the streets, homes and buildings may fall into disarray and loafers may wander about. Individualists believe that the habits of individuals have no effect upon the community as a whole, but they fail to recognize that men are tied together, and the actions of one affect the lives of all.

2. Read Romans 13:1-7. These verses sum up a proper Christian attitude toward civil order and earthly authorities. Groen Van Prinsterer, a nineteenth century politician, historian and theologian, explains his view on this passage:

All power¹ is ordained of God. It is not permissible, whenever something seems too strong to us, to water it down by means of some insipid interpretation that conforms to what we consider acceptable. Therefore, we may in no wise try to evade the intention of these words, for example by pointing to the care of Providence which brings forth good out of the evil that it tolerates. The powers that be are not just tolerated. They are willed, instituted, sanctified by God himself. This is the only plausible meaning of ordained.

We must be equally on our guard against a distortion of Scripture invited by miscomprehension or inspired by base design. All power must be understood as referring to every kind of legitimate power, in the sound sense demanded in the context by the reminder of God's righteousness and holiness. Power here is not synonymous with might or force. . . . Nevertheless, I will not subscribe to any interpretation that would oblige us to be obedient to the villain who holds a dagger under our nose, or to hail today as a power ordained of God the crowned robber who yesterday banished our legitimate prince. . . .

All power is of God. A civil power is God's lieutenant and God's minister. In this duality of the relation, its twofold direction, upwards and downwards lies the whole theory of divine right. We are to obey the higher power for the Lord's sake; he is to be obedient to God. "For he is the minister of God to thee for good," writes the apostle [Paul in Romans 13:4]. The supreme power is a gift of God which must be employed in His service, for the benefit of others, and to His honor.²

Based on this passage, and Van Prinsterer's writing, how does a Christian relate to civil authority?

All authority figures are placed by God; therefore, Christians are obligated to obey kings and princes and presidents with a spirit of humble submission. Legitimate authority figures must be obeyed for the Lord's sake. These figures are used by God for the benefit of others and for His own glory. Sometimes this occurs unbeknownst to the authority who does not recognize Jehovah as God. Since governments have been placed in authority to maintain order, peace and morality, there is no place for rebellion or tossing out governments. Sometimes this means that even immoral kings must be obeyed.

However, Van Prinsterer points out that this passage does not suggest Christians mindlessly obey evil men against their own consciences. Christians always answer to a higher authority. For example, we have no obligation to submit to a murderer who commands us to do evil or a usurper who overthrows legitimate authority.

3. Saint Augustine of Hippo, an early Christian church father, teacher, philosopher and theologian, wrote the following selection taken from his book, *The City of God*. The City of God, also called the City of Heaven, is made of true Christians. The City of Man, also called the earthly city or the City of Satan, is made of non-Christians:

I have described in such detail as I judged adequate the historical course of the two cities, the heavenly and the earthly, intermingled as they have been from the beginning and are to be until the end of time. The earthly one has made for herself, according to her heart's desire, false gods out of any sources at all, even out of human beings, that she might adore them with sacrifices. The heavenly one, on the other hand, living like a wayfarer in this world, makes no false gods for herself. On the contrary, she herself is made by the true God that she may be herself a true sacrifice to Him.

¹ Van Prinsterer used the King James Version, which here translates the Greek into the word "power." The NIV and several other versions of the Bible use the word "authority."

² Groen Van Prinsterer, *Unbelief and Revolution*, translated by Harry Van Dyke, (2000), All of Life Redeemed: Christian Philosophy for All of Life. <http://web.archive.org/web/20040222183254/capo.org/lecture3.html> (accessed July 24, 2006).

Both of these cities alike make use of temporal goods and both are equally afflicted by temporal ills—but how different they are in faith, how dissimilar in hope, how unlike in love! This will go on until they are to be separated in the Last Judgment, when each shall achieve its appointed end—an end which will have no end.³

The earthly city which does not live by faith seeks only an earthly peace, and limits the goal of its peace, of its harmony of authority and obedience among its citizens, to the voluntary and collective attainment of objectives necessary to mortal existence. The heavenly City, meanwhile—or, rather, that part that is on pilgrimage in mortal life and lives by faith—must use this earthly peace until such time as our mortality which needs such peace has passed away. . . she has no hesitation about keeping in step with the civil law which governs matters pertaining to our existence here below. For, as mortal life is the same for all, there ought to be common cause between the two cities in what concerns our purely human living. . .

The heavenly City knows and, by religious faith, believes that it must adore one God alone and serve Him with that complete dedication. . . As a result, she has been unable to share with the earthly city a common religious legislation, and has had no choice but to dissent on this score and so to become a nuisance to those who think otherwise. Hence, she has had to feel the weight of their anger, hatred, and violence, save in those instances when, by sheer numbers and God's help, which never fails, she has been able to scare off her opponents.⁴

A. Explain the differences between the City of Man and the City of God.

Those in the earthly City of Man worship many gods, but not the true God of Heaven. They do not live by faith, and they pursue earthly peace and civility because their earthly existence is the ultimate reality of their lives. In contrast, those in the City of God also pursue earthly peace and civility, but so that they can go on to another life in another world. They worship the true God alone, living by faith in His promises. Their peace, pleasure and treasures are stored up in a heavenly place.

B. What do these two cities have in common? Contrast how these two cities use material goods for different goals.

Both cities exist side-by-side in the earthly world. Both experience pain and suffering. Both maintain a form of government for the justice and order necessary for daily living. They both use temporal goods such as foods, products, etc. in their day-to-day life. However, the citizens of the City of God use these things as means to end, for their life is but a pilgrimage. On the other hand, the citizens of the City of Man make social peace and material goods their god.

³ Augustine, *City of God* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), 425.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 464-465.

C. According to Augustine, why is there civil tension and disorder in the world?

The both cities live side-by-side in the world, but they have different purposes, different goals, different spiritual states. The members of the City of Man hate those in the City of God, and they set about to make their lives full of suffering.

D. Does Augustine excuse Christians for civil disobedience? Why or why not?

Augustine says that the members of the City of God must obey the powers that be because they are placed in authority by God. Christians also obey the laws of the land in order to preserve the earthly peace and order necessary for healthy existence.

4. Read Matthew 13:24-30 and Matthew 13:36-43. Explain this parable, and tell how it relates to Augustine's concept of the City of God and the City of Man.

These verses tell the parable of the weeds, sown by a man in a field. Along with wheat, there grew weeds. The weeds represent the sons of Satan, or, to use Augustine's analogy, the members of the City of Man. The wheat represents the sons of God, or the members of the City of God. In the parable, the weeds and the wheat grow side-by-side in the field, which represents the world. The planter says not to root up the weeds because the wheat may be torn out along with the weeds. In the same way, Christians and non-Christians live together in the world. Their lives and histories are intermingled, often causing tension and disorder. Jesus explains that it is not until Judgment Day that the wheat will be separated from the weeds.

5. Read Acts 6:1-6. What problem arose in the church? How was this problem an example of civil disorder and discrimination? What did the church members do to restore shalom?

The church members were concerned because the Greek widows were being neglected by the Jews in the daily distribution of food. The Jewish believers were not thinking spiritually, for their neglect was solely on the basis of ethnicity. This problem caused such unrest among the community that the church members brought it before the disciples. Rather than ignoring their needs, the disciples put in place a system for caring for the physical needs of the church. This system didn't replace the spreading of the Word. On the contrary, it allowed the disciples to continue in prayer and the ministry of the Word while other Spirit-filled leaders could continue their watch over the needs of the people. As a result, the people were treated with fairness and kindness, the Word of God spread and the number of Christians increased.

6. Read the following selection by Thea B. Van Halsema from a biography of John Calvin. This selection discusses Calvin's efforts to influence the Swiss town of Geneva with the Word of God:

Everywhere the preachers walked, the sins of the people rose up to taunt them. Loaded dice and dirty packs of playing cards were always in motion. In the noisy taverns men tossed off tankard after tankard and came reeling into the streets, ready for a wild night of brawls and cursing. Prostitutes flirted in the broad daylight. And what went on by night—!...How could Calvin bring into the lives of these rebellious folk the faith and life of which he had written brilliantly in his *Institutes*?⁵

Well, he could preach the Word, couldn't he? And preach it he did. Looking down into the sea of faces below the high pulpit in Saint Pierre [Church], he stretched out a long bony finger and laid the sins of the people upon their hearts. He minced no words. Farel did not mince any words either as he thundered forth to the people gathered in the church of Saint Gervais, across the river from Saint Pierre.

And the ministers could push the councils to enforce the laws of the city. They beat a path to the door of the council chamber, demanding that the laws lying idle on the books be put to work. There were hundreds of such laws. Each city of that day had detailed laws about the private lives of its citizens...

But the laws had no teeth in them. Like the laws of many other cities, they gathered dust until the preachers pounded on the council door and demanded action. They were asking action against any offender, whether he was rich or poor.⁶

When Calvin and Farel began their work, what was the state of the community? How did they begin to restore shalom?

The town of Geneva was in moral disarray. People were drinking, loitering, prostituting and gambling. Calvin and Farel began by preaching; they boldly set out to solve the problems of the city by preaching the Bible without apology, and their preaching became the impetus for change. The Word also became their standard for enforcing the regulations of the land.

7. What are some problems you see in modern society that threaten the establishment of shalom?

Answers will vary.

⁵ *Institutes* refers to John Calvin's book, *Institute of the Christian Religion*, a detailed explanation of biblical Christianity.

⁶ Thea B. Vanhalsema, *This Was John Calvin*, (Grand Rapids: I.D.E.A. Ministries, 1998), 89-90.

8. In what ways can you help to restore shalom to your community?

Answers will vary.

9. What do you think will happen if Christians fail to become involved in their communities? If shalom is established in a community, may Christians rest from their labor of influencing the culture?

If Christians fail to get involved, there will be no element of preservation in society. Instead, there will be an increase in disharmony and civil tension. Furthermore, evangelism will be difficult as men's hearts will be hardened to the Gospel, and the ministry of the church will be difficult as church members will suffer grievously at the hands of a wicked society.

A peaceful society does not mean that Christians may relax from their labor of influencing the society. As Augustine points out, civil peace is not the ultimate goal for Christians. Our pilgrim journey through life ends in our heavenly home, and we work to call as many into His kingdom as we can. We do not merely influence schools and laws and neighborhood atmosphere, we want to share the Gospel with those around us that they may join us in the City of God.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. The only way for human beings to live in peace and harmony is for all men and women to live according to a moral order.
2. The more a community decays aesthetically, the more likely it is that the community will become a haven for crime. This is called the “broken-window theory.”
3. Human beings were created to live in community with each other. The actions of one member affect the lives of all. Christians should work to preserve healthy communities where they live out of deference to their fellow citizens.
4. To establish shalom in our communities, “we begin with our personal lives and habits, move out from there to our families and schools and then into our communities—and from there into our society as a whole.”

Lesson 6

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VIRTUOUS PEOPLE, A VIRTUOUS SOCIETY

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “If you thought your NEIGHBORS had no clear definition of RIGHT and WRONG, would you SLEEP at night or let your CHILDREN play in their yard?”
2. “But with the ENLIGHTENMENT, intellectuals began to argue that since GOD was no longer needed to explain CREATION, he was no longer needed to establish MORAL LAWS.”
3. The great question is, “Can MAN be GOOD without GOD?”
4. “Today ETHICS has degenerated into RELATIVISM, with each INDIVIDUAL carving out his or her own private TRUTHS to live by.”
5. “If we cannot GOVERN ourselves, then we invite OTHERS to GOVERN us.”
6. “CREATION tells us that we owe our EXISTENCE to a holy GOD, whose character is the STANDARD of all RIGHTEOUSNESS, the measure of all MORALITY.”
7. “The FALL tells us that we are prone to EVIL and thus need moral RESTRAINTS for SOCIETY to function.”
8. “A VIRTUOUS society can be created only by virtuous PEOPLE, whose individual CONSCIENCES guard their BEHAVIOR and hold them ACCOUNTABLE.”
9. “MORAL crusaders with zeal but no ETHICAL understanding are likely to give us SOLUTIONS that are worse than the PROBLEMS.”

10. “Only the Christian worldview offers REDEMPTION from SIN, giving power to OVERCOME the single most powerful obstacle to becoming VIRTUOUS: the rebellious human WILL.”
11. “The SECULAR view of ETHICS offers no salvation, no power to CHANGE the human HEART.”
12. “When we turn to GOD, the Holy Spirit EMPOWERS us to do what we CANNOT do on our own.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. Based on your reading, what does it take to create the good life?

Colson writes that the good life is found in “a firm sense of right and wrong and a determination to order one’s life accordingly. Not out of a grim sense of duty, but because it is what fits with our created nature and makes us happiest and most fulfilled. When men and women act in accord with their true nature, they feel a sense of harmony, contentment, and joy. This is happiness, the fruit of virtue.”

2. Why does relativism destroy a safe, orderly society?

Relativism says that there are no absolute standards of right and wrong. Each person may create his/her own moral code and choose whether or not to follow it. There is no absolute standard of ethics, morality or law that all men share in common except the necessity of tolerance. Some people may choose to live by a lawless violent moral code; others may choose to live by a code of dishonesty and stealing. Still others may choose to live by a utilitarian code determining that the ends justify the means. Obviously, in such a society, no one can trust anyone else, and living and working together becomes chaotic and dangerous.

3. What was the purpose of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion? Did the conference achieve their object? Why or why not?

This conference was held during WWII to “devise a universal code of ethics to provide the moral foundation for democracy.” However, though the conference met for years, they never reached any consensus on a universal ethical code because the members of the committee had differing presuppositions. Some held to traditional ethical and moral standards while the rest believed that science is the only absolute and ethics is the result of cultural constructions. The only thing that was determined by the conference was that, above all, every society should maintain tolerance. Without tolerance, there is potential for a totalitarian regime to oppress citizens.

4. A. Why is it necessary for a virtuous society to be made up of virtuous people? If the individuals of a society do not have consciences, what holds a society in check?

Without citizens of integrity, society would become chaotic and violent. If individuals do not hold a personal moral code, then the government steps in to impose a code upon them through a totalitarian regime. Only force or coercion can keep a society within the boundaries of morality when individuals do not have consciences. On the other hand, if a society is made up of virtuous people, then virtuous officials are elected, and virtuous laws are upheld. Individuals who hold themselves to a high standard of morality do not require government to become the conscience of the people.

5. How has the separation between public life and private life affected the morality of Americans? How does the Christian worldview respond to this erroneous division?

A public life/private life dichotomy has led many Americans to carry on private lives of immorality while keeping façades of virtuosity in public. The Christian worldview says that morality runs through all aspects of life—public and private. In Matthew 7:17, Jesus said, “Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.” Corrupt and immoral practices make you a corrupt and immoral person, whether or not anyone else is looking. It is impossible to keep two standards of morality (one for public and one for private) because you are accountable to God for your actions everywhere you go.

6. Define integrity, and explain why it is important.

Colson writes, “Integrity comes from the verb to integrate, which means to become united so as to form a complete or perfect whole. Scripture teaches that spirit, mind, and body all come from the hand of God, and thus they ought to be united, functioning together as a whole. Our actions must be consistent with our thoughts. We must be the same person in private and in public.”

7. Why did Colson tell the master sergeant that integrity was more important than loyalty? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Colson believes that integrity is more important than loyalty because a person can be loyal to a bad cause. For instance, many people were fiercely loyal to Hitler. They obeyed his orders unquestioningly. Yet, they obeyed orders to carry out wicked deeds that harmed others and transgressed God’s laws. Loyalty is important, but integrity comes first. Answers to the last two questions may vary.

8. A. According to the text, what is the “single most powerful obstacle to becoming virtuous”?

A rebellious human will

B. How can this obstacle be overcome?

Only a new heart in Christ can break man's rebellious will. We will always transgress the law and shake our fists at God until He bends our wills to align with His. We will always have hard hearts and stiff necks until He makes us soft and pliable.

9. Describe the two ways the text says people can encourage virtuous behavior. Which (if any) is used in America?

“Historically, societies have encouraged virtuous behavior positively through custom and convention, and negatively through social stigmas, taboos, and shame. Admittedly, the latter are difficult to exert in a culture where no moral stigma is permitted for fear of damaging someone's self-esteem.” Currently in America, there are few customs and conventions which have not been eradicated in order to “liberate” the people. Furthermore, some Americans are fighting tooth and nail to get rid of stigmas and taboos as well. What was once considered improper and unthinkable (cohabitating before marriage, gay marriage, abortion, running a business on the Lord's Day) is now accepted—many times even in the church.

REFLECT

1. The Humanist Manifesto II was developed in 1973 by several intellectuals as a representation of the developing humanist/secular worldview. Read the portion of the Humanist Manifesto II printed below:

As in 1933 [when the Humanist Manifesto I was released], humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival...

We affirm a set of common principles that can serve as a basis for united action—positive principles relevant to the present human condition. They are a design for a secular society on a planetary scale.

For these reasons, we submit this new Humanist Manifesto for the future of humankind; for us, it is a vision of hope, a direction for satisfying survival.

RELIGION

FIRST: In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. The cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination is an expression of genuine “spiritual” experience and aspiration.

We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so. Even at this late date in human history, certain elementary facts based upon the critical use of scientific reason have to be restated. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.

Some humanists believe we should reinterpret traditional religions and reinvest them with meanings appropriate to the current situation. Such redefinitions, however, often perpetuate old dependencies and escapisms; they easily become obscurantist, impeding the free use of the intellect. We need, instead, radically new human purposes and goals.

We appreciate the need to preserve the best ethical teachings in the religious traditions of humankind, many of which we share in common. But we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny

humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities. Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities. Such institutions, creeds, and rituals often impede the will to serve others. Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage. More recently they have generated concerned social action, with many signs of relevance appearing in the wake of the “God Is Dead” theologies. But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

SECOND: Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the “ghost in the machine” and the “separable soul.” Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture.

Traditional religions are surely not the only obstacles to human progress. Other ideologies also impede human advance. Some forms of political doctrine, for instance, function religiously, reflecting the worst features of orthodoxy and authoritarianism, especially when they sacrifice individuals on the altar of Utopian promises. Purely economic and political viewpoints, whether capitalist or communist, often function as religious and ideological dogma. Although humans undoubtedly need economic and political goals, they also need creative values by which to live.

ETHICS

THIRD: We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stem from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures. Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, individually and in shared enjoyment, are continuous themes of humanism. We strive for the good life, here and now. The goal is to pursue life’s enrichment despite debasing forces of vulgarization, commercialization, and dehumanization.

FOURTH: Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute: neither faith nor passion suffices in itself. The controlled use of scientific methods, which have transformed the natural and social sciences since the Renaissance, must be extended further in the solution of human problems. But reason must be tempered by humility, since no group has a monopoly of wisdom or virtue. Nor is there any guarantee that all problems can be solved or all questions answered. Yet critical intelligence, infused by a sense of human caring, is the best method that humanity has for resolving problems. Reason should be balanced with compassion and empathy and the whole person fulfilled. Thus, we are not advocating the use of scientific intelligence independent of or in opposition to emotion, for we believe in the cultivation of feeling and love. As science pushes back the boundary of the known, humankind’s sense of wonder is continually renewed, and art, poetry, and music find their places, along with religion and ethics...¹

- A. Based on this selection, what is the source or starting point of the humanist worldview? Why is this a faulty starting point?

The foundation of the humanist worldview is the glory of humanity. Humanists start with themselves when forming their worldview. They do not acknowledge a higher authority, morality, deity or transcendent moral code. Instead, they affirm that man can carve his own destiny, looking to no one for guidance or dependence. They claim that nature, not God, is the source of all things. Unfortunately, they fail to recognize that humanity is not glorious at all. In fact, humanity is sinful and fallen. Humanity is also finite. How foolish for people to call themselves their own lords, when another created them and sustains them each moment.

¹ *Humanist Manifesto II*, American Humanist Association (1973), <http://www.americanhumanist.org/about/manifesto2.html> (accessed July 27, 2006).

B. Where do Christians start? Why is the Christian starting point correct?

On the other hand, Christians begin by acknowledging God as the Lord and Creator of all. We recognize that men are completely unable to achieve anything without Him. Consequently, we reverence His Word and look to it as the starting point of our worldview. We do not create our own standards, our own philosophies or our own truth because that would be foolishness. We begin with God because we know that He is the beginning of things and that man is nothing without Him.

C. According to this manifesto, religion can impede independence and human progress. What else does the manifesto claim may impede progress?

The manifesto says that politics can be restrictive, much like religion. Political ideologies that function like religion, requiring obedience, loyalty or adherence to an authoritarian code also can impede human progress.

D. How do the humanist authors of this document suggest people make ethical decisions?

The Humanist Manifesto II says that all ethics are independent of religions or ideologies. Ethics are relative to specific situations. Ethics come from human experience, need and interest. Responses to ethical situations should be based upon intellectual reasoning coupled with compassionate human emotions.

- E. As we learned in *Christian Worldview I*, the first question and answer of the *Westminster Larger Catechism* says, “What is the chief and highest end of man? Answer: Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.”² Contrast this with the meaning of life proposed in the Human Manifesto II.

According to the Humanist Manifesto II, the meaning and goal of life is different for each individual, based upon the goals we individually create for ourselves. In other words, we set goals for our lives, and the meaning of life is found in reaching those goals. The meaning of life is also found in the pursuit of happiness and success. For the humanist, there is no afterlife, and current existence is all about achieving selfish goals.

On the other hand, Christianity bases the meaning of life on a transcendent being. The purpose of life is to shift glory and honor away from the self onto another, who is worthy of praise. In so doing, humans find true happiness. We *enjoy* Him forever. This is more than a fleeting, empty, earthly happiness. It is a deep, eternal enjoyment of the holiness and being of God.

2. King David committed adultery with a woman named Bathsheba. When he learned that she was pregnant, he arranged for her husband to be killed at war. Guilty of these sins, David poured out his repentant heart to God in Psalm 51. Who did David say he sinned against? Why?

David acknowledged that he sinned against God only (verse 4). Despite the fact that he hurt and killed others, he knew that those acts ultimately violated God. He had broken God’s commandments, thinking that he could cover his sinful acts. He had lived in close communion with the Lord, but his sin had caused him to reject this communion for lustful pleasures.

3. After David pleads for forgiveness, he asks that God would help him to serve others. What two things did he ask of God in verses 12-13 and verses 18-19?

With a forgiven heart, David wants to express his thankfulness to God by serving others. He asks that he would be able to teach other sinners how to make their hearts right with God. Then he asks that the Lord would prosper Zion and Jerusalem that the walls would be built up so that the people would sacrifice to the Lord in righteousness. Then his people will be able to better please God and praise Him for his mercies and blessings.

² *Westminster Larger Catechism*, [Center for Reformed Theology and Apologetics](http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/larger1.html), n.d., <http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/larger1.html> (accessed July 31, 2006).

4. Verses 16-17 qualify the kind of sacrifices that will be offered in verse 19. Explain how David qualified the sacrifices.

When David said that God does not “take pleasure in burnt offerings,” he wasn’t suggesting that people stop giving burnt offerings. On the contrary, he was qualifying the type of burnt offerings people should give. David knew that sacrifices and burnt offerings given out of habit or pride or routine don’t please the Lord. Rather, sacrifices given out of love and repentance, “broken and contrite heart(s)” please God. So, after he has taught his people to turn their hearts back to God, he asked that God would bless their cities with peace and safety so that they could offer burnt sacrifices to Him out of clean hearts.

5. How can an individual’s reconciliation to God bless the whole community?

When a person is restored to a right relationship to God, he/she goes out to encourage others to do the same. If the person is in a position of leadership, like David, then he/she can have a great influence over many people, calling many to repentance and faith. Those who do not become Christians are also influenced to live in morality and peace through the example and influence of the individual who is restored to God.

6. Where does verse 17 say moral transformation begins? What is the relationship between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and this verse?

This verse says transformation begins with a humble heart of repentance before the Lord. The realization of wrongdoing, confession and repentance pleases God and brings true transformation. A person can obey some moral codes outwardly, but the inner motive and heart of the person will always be guilty. A non-Christian can live his/her whole life without actually killing another person. In this way he/she obeys a moral code. However, it is impossible for a person to live his/her whole life without murdering another person in his/her heart. Only the Holy Spirit within the heart of a person can purify the heart and cleanse from sin.

7. A. Is it possible for members of a community to become moral people without being converted to Christ?

Unconverted people can never be truly moral.

B. Is it possible for members of a community to follow moral laws without Christ?

Apart from Christ there is no true goodness and righteousness, and certainly no amount of obeying laws can save a person. Even if a husband or wife never runs away with another man or woman, he/she is still guilty of adultery in the heart through lust and unfaithful thoughts. Even if a person never shoots another human being, he/she is still guilty of murdering in the heart through critical thoughts and judgment and name-calling. That is why members of our community can follow some moral laws, but without Christ they cannot ever be truly moral.

C. Why do Christians influence their communities to live in morality?

Christians are still called to influence their communities to live in morality. Christians can appeal to the law of God written on the hearts of all men. Every person has a conscience that knows what is immoral and what is good. Communities that continue in immorality decay into places of great chaos, ugliness, danger and evil. However, Christians can be a preserving influence to slow the spread of sin.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Virtue:** moral excellence, right thinking and action
2. **Ethics:** moral beliefs or principles
3. **Totalitarian:** a dictatorship; a governmental state where one political party or person maintains total control over every aspect of the citizens' lives
4. **Hedonism:** the unrestricted, self-indulgent pursuit of pleasure

KEY CONCEPTS

1. When America's Founding Fathers declared that we have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, they did not mean that we have the right to hedonistic pleasure, as much of the world believes today. Instead, they meant that we have the right to pursue true happiness that stems directly from virtue.

2. “Only the Christian worldview offers redemption from sin, giving power to overcome the single most powerful obstacle to becoming virtuous: the rebellious human will.”
3. It is impossible for a person to be “good” without God because true goodness comes from the Holy Spirit. That is why the first way a Christian should influence his/her community is through sharing the Gospel with others. However, without salvation, a person can be influenced to maintain “moral” laws. In other words, a community can be influenced to uphold fidelity, marriage, work ethic, justice, peace, etc. through social expectations and governmental laws.

Lesson 7

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CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORKPLACE

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “When God placed the first couple in the Garden of Eden, he assigned them the first JOB description: WORK the earth and take CARE of it (Gen. 2:15).”
2. “Even in PARADISE, then, in the ideal state of innocence, WORK was the NATURAL activity of HUMAN BEINGS.”
3. “The world God originally CREATED was soon marred by the FALL, and work is now under a ‘CURSE,’ as theologians put it.”
4. “The implication is that because of the Fall, both of the central TASKS of human life—making a LIVING and raising a FAMILY—are fraught with PAIN and DIFFICULTY.”
5. “Redemption enables us to RESTORE the original meaning and PURPOSE of WORK.”
6. “It [redemption] gives us the POWER to carry out the task we were CREATED for—to develop CULTURE and CIVILIZATION.”
7. “Indeed, in our WORK, we cooperate with GOD in the task of redemption, helping free the WORLD from the effects of the FALL.”
8. “Scripture does, however, WARN against seeking WEALTH as an end itself or using OPPRESSION and CRUELTY as a means for AMASSING it.”
9. “Old Testament PROPHETS warned that WEALTH easily leads to SPIRITUAL complacency and even DISOBEDIENCE.”

10. “Ultimately, of course, we do not OWN anything; we are only STEWARDS of the things God has ENTRUSTED to us. It is GOD who owns ALL things.”
11. “The underlying principle is that private PROPERTY is a GIFT from God to be used to establish social JUSTICE and to care for the POOR and the DISADVANTAGED.”
12. “Yet the POOR are never reduced to passive recipients of CHARITY; the able-bodied are required to WORK in exchange for BENEFITS.”
13. “Luther wrote, we see that ‘the ENTIRE WORLD [is] full of SERVICE to GOD, not only the churches but also the home, the kitchen, the cellar, the workshop, and the field of the townsfolk and farmers.’”

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Read the Bible verses listed below, and choose the one that matches each biblical truth.

1. C God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to work and to take care of it.
 - a. Genesis 1:1
 - b. Genesis 1:31
 - c. Genesis 2:15
 - d. Genesis 2:18
2. A Due to the sin of Adam and Eve, work became difficult and troublesome.
 - a. Genesis 3:17-19
 - b. Genesis 3:14-15
 - c. Genesis 3:10
 - d. Genesis 3:22-24
3. D If a person does not work, he/she will not eat.
 - a. Proverbs 2:6
 - b. Ecclesiastes 12:14
 - c. James 2:26
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 3:10
4. C Lazy people who refuse to work crave that which will likely bring death.
 - a. Exodus 12:16
 - b. Nehemiah 4:17
 - c. Proverbs 21:25-26
 - d. Romans 7:22-24
5. A People can find enjoyment in their work if they know the Lord.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 2:24-25
 - b. Proverbs 14:22-23
 - c. Exodus 34:9-10
 - d. Psalm 77:11-13

6. C When we work, we must work as if God is our boss.
 - a. Ephesians 2:8-10
 - b. 1 Corinthians 4:11-13
 - c. Colossians 3:22-24
 - d. Luke 10:1-3

7. B We must work in order to support ourselves and to help the needy.
 - a. Ephesians 2:8-10
 - b. Acts 20:34-35
 - c. Galatians 2:7-9
 - d. Philippians 1:5-7

8. C Christians are diligent workers to be an example to the world and to avoid being dependent upon others.
 - a. Hebrews 1:9-11
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
 - d. 2 John 1:7-9

9. D Money is not necessarily evil, but the *love* of money leads to evil.
 - a. 1 Peter 5:1-3
 - b. Acts 8:19-21
 - c. Matthew 20:14-15
 - d. 1 Timothy 6:9-10

10. C The Christian's treasure is not gold or jewels but spiritual blessings stored up in heaven.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 2:20-22
 - b. Proverbs 28:19-20
 - c. Matthew 6:19-21
 - d. Ephesians 4:27-28

SHORT ANSWER

1. Why did the Reformers refuse to make a sacred/secular dichotomy of work?

The Reformers wanted to draw attention to the meaning and purpose of all work done to God's glory. Instead of calling some vocations "spiritual" and others "earthly," the Reformers pointed out that a Christian can work as an act of worship and obedience (a spiritual task) whether in the church, the home, the office, the kitchen or the field.

2. What did Eusebius say about the full-time religious worker?

Full-time religious workers represent the "perfect form of the Christian life" while laborers in secular fields have only "a secondary grade of piety."

3. How is a dichotomy between sacred and secular work influenced by Greek philosophy?

Greek philosophy relegated everything material and physical to a position of disdain. The material world represented evil and imperfection while the intellectual and spiritual world represented goodness and perfection. As a result, manual labor was seen as a low pursuit while the fields of philosophy, scholastics and spirituality were high pursuits.

ESSAY

1. Some people think of a perfect world without sin as a place where we can recline in hammocks eating grapes and watching waves roll onto the shores. However, what do we know about the every day life of Adam and Eve in the perfect Garden of Eden?

From the beginning, humans were created to work. In Genesis 2:15, God instructed man to work in the garden. He was to cultivate the garden, caring for the plants and animals. Even in Paradise, the ideal state of purity and innocence, people worked. The work of Adam and Eve was not drudgery, it brought them great joy.

2. Explain how work changed after the Fall.

After Adam and Eve's disobedience, God cursed work for man. Adam's work cultivating the earth became full of toil and hard labor. There were weeds, droughts and rocky soil. Adam sweat and strained and labored to support his family. Eve was cursed with pain and danger in childbirth. Things that were first given as a gift (work and family) became filled with burdens and suffering.

3. A. Now that work has been cursed, is it possible for Christians to enjoy their work? Why or why not?

When a person's heart is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, he/she can work as unto the Lord. No longer is work drudgery; it has purpose and meaning because it is done as an act of worship that pleases God and brings joy and fulfillment to the Christian.

- B. Do Christians still experience the effects of the Fall upon work? Reference at least one passage from the multiple choice section of this lesson.

Christians still suffer from the effects of the Fall. Work can still be great toil. Things don't always go right, despite our hard work. Sometimes businesses fold, sometimes we get laid off, sometimes children are stillborn or women suffer greatly in delivery. Even despite these difficulties, there is still deeper meaning in the Christian's work because he/she has another home, an inner peace and spiritual fruits that develop from the trials of hard work. Scripture passages referenced may vary.

4. How does Psalm 24:1 affect the Christian's perspective on work and property ownership?

Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." If everything belongs to God, then there is no place for greed, abuse of resources or laziness. We are like stewards of a king, merely taking care of what belongs to another. When we work, we do so to please the master by cultivating and improving his property. Scripture doesn't deny private ownership (for instance, the commandments on stealing and coveting); however, a Christian doesn't hoard money and earthly possessions. Christians are not attached to the things of this world, for they are nothing more than means to an end—ways of worshipping God and means to serve others. We each own things so that we can provide for ourselves and those who are less fortunate. We each work at a job to please the Lord through our work.

5. How does the Bible say we should treat the poor? Does the current welfare system follow biblical principles for caring for the poor? Use at least two Scripture passages in your answer.

The Bible instructs Christians to remember the poor and to provide for their physical needs (Isaiah 58:7 and Matthew 25:35). However, Scripture also instructs the poor to work for their own food, pay off their debts and provide for their families. In Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22 the Israelites are commanded to leave the corners of their fields unharvested so that the poor could come and gather. Poor people still had to work for their food. They still had to labor in the fields to gather food to provide for their families. In this way, they still maintained their dignity and self-respect. In contrast, the welfare system gives poor people hand-outs at no cost. The poor are patronized and encouraged to be lazy. They do not have the self-respect gained from knowing that they provided for their own.

6. Briefly contrast Adam Smith's definition of work with the Protestant work ethic.

In the Protestant work ethic, work is an act of worship. Whether one works as a garbage man or a pastor, one does it to the glory of God. People work hard and take pride in their work as a means of providing for their families, giving to the poor and cultivating the earth. The Protestant work ethic views all things as God's property and all Christians as His stewards, working to cultivate the property of the master. Adam Smith, on the other hand, believed that work was a way to fulfill self-interest. He rejected a greater purpose, higher calling or religious meaning in work. Instead, he encouraged every man to ruthlessly get ahead, using ingenuity and economic opportunity for personal gain. He believed that economy could thrive, not by the character and work ethic of its citizens, but through every man pursuing his personal plan to achieve wealth.

7. How can the workplace harm family and community life?

In today's society, there is often pressure to "climb the corporate ladder" by working overtime, dedicating personal time to work and showing radical loyalty to a company or corporation. In many families both father and mother would rather stay late at work than go home to spend time as a family. Consequently, the American family is suffering. Many children are being raised by school teachers and day-care workers rather than parents, and divorce rates have sky-rocketed. Obsessed with success and materialism, people have begun to see their coworkers as a second family. Some workers even prefer their workplace to their own family. Fewer and fewer people spend time investing in their families or their communities, and fewer and fewer people maintain relationships that are true friendships rather than business partnerships.

8. Read Matthew 5:14-16. How can you apply this passage at work?

Answers may vary. The attitude and work ethic of a Christian on the job influences coworkers and shows Christ to them. Christians on the job are honest, hard-working and obedient, not complaining or gossiping. Christians can also use relationships from work to share the Gospel. For many Christians, the workplace is the only place where they meet unbelievers. Encourage your student to try to find ways to build friendships with coworkers so that they can share the Good News.

9. A. All vocations have value for a Christian, and God calls His children to work in many different fields (whether as a police officer, garbage man, janitor, cook, etc.). How can you work to the glory of God?

Answers will vary.

- B. In what ways do you see your work (or the work you will do in the future) contributing to God's good purposes in your community or family?

Answers will vary.

10. Write your own work ethic. Explain how you work, why you work and who you work for. Use Scripture to support your work ethic.

Answers will vary.

11. How should Christians view wealth? Use the following passages in your answer: 1 Timothy 6:10; Luke 18:18-30; Job 42:10-12.

There is nothing inherently wrong with wealth. In fact, throughout Scripture, there are people of God who are very wealthy. For instance, after the Lord tested Job and took away his riches, the Lord restored his wealth twofold (Job 42:10-12). It is the *love* of money that Scripture warns against (1 Timothy 6:10). Loving money makes it impossible for a man to love God because greed and godliness cannot dwell together in the heart of a man. Every Christian should work hard to provide for himself and others and to care for the needy, but Christians should beware of amassing wealth, for there are many temptations that accompany wealth. Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven. That is because rich men are more tempted to attach themselves to the things of this world. Like the rich young ruler who could not give up what he had, many rich people are tempted to cling to their wealth rather than trust the Lord (Luke 18:18-30).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Protestant work ethic:** the Protestant philosophy of work; all work is sanctified if it is done for the glory of God and in obedience to His Word
2. **Steward:** a person who manages another person's property

KEY CONCEPTS

1. God placed humans on the earth to care for and develop it. This means that work is commanded by God and thus has intrinsic spiritual meaning. *Every* type of work has meaning because every type of work can be used as an act of worship and obedience.
2. Work is not as easy and enjoyable as it should be. After Adam's fall into sin, work became a burden. However, Christians can have joy in their work knowing that they are bringing glory to God.
3. All men—rich or poor—need to work in order to support themselves and care for those who are less fortunate. The poor should not be given hand-outs; instead they should be encouraged to labor to provide for their families so that they maintain their self-worth and dignity.

Lesson 8

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GOVERNMENT GOVERNED BY GOD

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1. Cicero said, “Law is not the PRODUCT of HUMAN thought, nor is it any enactment of peoples, but something ETERNAL which RULES the whole UNIVERSE.”
2. Sir William Blackstone said, “The law of NATURE dictated by God Himself...is binding in all COUNTRIES and at all TIMES...No HUMAN laws are of any VALIDITY.”
3. “For more than two centuries, the AMERICAN experiment has provided a dramatic illustration of the way BIBLICAL principles successfully sustain both ORDER and LIBERTY.”
4. “Whereas biblical PRINCIPLES were once considered the AUTHORITY that undergirds the LAW, now they disqualify a LAW.”
5. “The Court placed the isolated INDIVIDUAL, constructing his or her own sense of MEANING, at the center of gravity for CONSTITUTIONAL law.”
6. “If no appeal to TRANSCENDENT AUTHORITY is permitted, then the justices [of the Supreme Court] become the SUPREME AUTHORITY.”
7. “The Court decreed that it has the SUPREME AUTHORITY to define CONSTITUTIONAL liberties and ESTABLISH their scope, an arrogant grab for POWER that would have horrified the Founders.”
8. “Once the ENLIGHTENMENT began to deny the reality of DIVINE creation and revelation, the basis of LAW was eroded.”

9. “We want FREEDOM from RULES and transcendent moral PRINCIPLES, but we hate the moral chaos that ensues.”
10. “The CHRISTIAN worldview provides the most RELIABLE standard for determining the public GOOD and encouraging responsible personal BEHAVIOR.”
11. Augustine said, “We do out of LOVE for GOD what others do only because they are FORCED to by law.”

IDENTIFY

In your own words, define the terms below.

1. Sphere sovereignty:
Basically, sphere sovereignty is the belief that God must be sovereign in all spheres of life. Every area or “sphere” of society is under God’s authority and subject to His law. Individuals, kings, governments, schools or families cannot dominate all other spheres because everyone is subject to God’s rule.
2. Separation of powers:
The Founding Fathers of America determined that no one branch of government would possess ultimate power, but that three branches of government would hold each other accountable. These three branches are the judicial, legislative and executive branches.
3. Direct democracy:
Direct democracy is a democratic system where “the voice of the people is the voice of God.” In this form of government, whatever the majority decides becomes the law, without looking to any higher authority or transcendent moral code.
4. Pragmatism:
This is the philosophy that whatever works must be right. There is no overarching truth or moral authority, only practicality and utilitarianism.
5. Deconstructionism:
Deconstructionism was originally a method of interpreting literature. Rather than attempting to search for the author’s intent, this method of literary criticism searched for hidden meaning in the language of social construction. Eventually deconstructionism was applied to law. Officials no longer read legal documents, like the Constitution, searching for the original meaning of the texts. Instead, they twist the meaning of words to match hidden social agendas.

6. Restorative justice:

Restorative justice is a form of criminal justice that emphasizes restoring people who have committed offenses to society. Restorative justice seeks to repair broken relationships, restore communities and rehabilitate offenders. This includes “promoting the rights of the victims in the legal process, encouraging offenders to reconcile with their victims, and requiring offenders to pay restitution to their victims.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. What does it mean to live *coram deo*?

The term “*coram deo*” means before the face of God. To live before the face of God is to consciously remember one’s direct accountability to God without an intermediary from the church or the government.

2. On what Bible passage did the Founding Fathers of America base their idea of separation of powers? What does this passage teach?

The Founding Fathers based the idea of the separation of powers on Isaiah 33:22. This passage says that God is our judge, our lawgiver and our king.

3. In the case of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, how did the U.S. Supreme Court redefine the concept of “liberty”?

Liberty was no longer defined as the freedom of the individual to live in safety in a society governed by laws that protect the common good. Instead, this case defined liberty as the right of every individual to determine his/her own meaning and moral code, without thought for the common good.

4. In *Lee v. Weisman*, what did the Supreme Court call unacceptable intolerance?

In this case, a junior-high-age girl took a rabbi to court for his religiously ambiguous prayer at a school ceremony. The girl was upset that she had to respectfully listen to the prayer because she didn’t agree with the religious perspective of the rabbi. The court decided that allowing the rabbi to pray was “intolerant.” Therefore, any belief in a higher power was deemed “intolerance.”

5. How is the Supreme Court’s power increased by its view of intolerance?

If all higher powers and transcendent laws are rejected because they are intolerant, then the Supreme Court becomes one of the few remaining authorities. But the Court doesn’t answer to anyone because higher powers are intolerant. Answering to no one, the ruling of the Court is the ultimate authority.

6. What is the result when people do not voluntarily act morally and obey laws?

When people do not hold themselves to moral standards, the government is forced to create more and more laws to hold people in check. For instance, instead of assuming that people will have the decency to speak respectfully to peers of the opposite sex, the government creates more and more restrictive sexual harassment laws. People become more and more suspicious of each other's motives, and authorities impose more and more regulations, expecting that personal moral codes will not guard actions.

7. What did the Founding Fathers do to protect America against the dangers of a direct democracy?

The Founding Fathers designed the American government to be a republic. In a republic, the desires of the people are filtered through agents elected by the people (senators, representatives, judges and the president). The expectation of the Founding Fathers was that elected officials would be moral and wise individuals, held accountable to the people through elections. If an official is immoral or unwise, democracy depends upon the judgment of the people to elect a different more moral and wise candidate to replace the corrupt one.

ESSAY

1. How does restorative justice relate to the three categories of the Christian worldview: creation, Fall and redemption?

Creation tells us that there is a holy God who is the basis of the transcendent, absolute moral code. He is the standard of justice. As a result, all human law is based on divine law. The Fall explains the presence of sin and crime in our culture. When someone commits an illegal act, he/she sins against God, breaking His law and damaging the creature/Creator relationship. The victim is hurt, the community is affected and the culprit is damaged as well. As with all sin, crime affects all areas of life and all people. Redemption is the only hope to restore situations damaged by crime. Restorative justice seeks to redeem broken situations by restoring them to their created purpose through healing the victim, the community and the culprit.

Whenever possible, this involves recognizing the rights of the victim through the court process, administering appropriate punishments to the perpetrator (including requiring apologies and community service) and arranging meetings between the criminal and the victim for apology and restoration. Throughout this process, the goal is to restore the culprit to a healthy relationship with his/her community.

2. A. How did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. justify his decision to disobey the law in Birmingham?

Dr. King believed that there are two types of laws: just and unjust laws. He said that people have a moral responsibility to obey just laws and a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. Dr. King felt that racism and segregation were surely unjust. Therefore, he felt obligated to peacefully resist laws of segregation. As a result, he was thrown in jail.

B. Do you agree or disagree with his reasoning and his actions? Explain.

Answers will vary.

3. Explain what happened with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Why does the text say this decision would have “horrified the Founders”?

The RFRA was passed unanimously in the House of Representatives and received only three negative votes in the Senate. It was also signed by President Clinton. Nevertheless, the Court rejected it, saying the RFRA was unconstitutional. Thus, not only did the Court’s decision reject the free practice of religion, but it also overruled a nearly unanimous decision by the leaders of the people.

The Founding Fathers would have been horrified because they intended our government to be ruled by the will of the people, filtered through elected leaders. They did not intend the court to take supreme authority or to reinterpret the law. Furthermore, the Founding Fathers would have approved the RFRA because it reflected the religious freedom they intended for our country, as outlined in the American constitution.

4. On the job or in public places, how have you seen an increase of selfishness and individualism in society? Have you witnessed the negative impact this has upon our culture?

Answers will vary.

5. How can Christians help to restore our legal and political system?

Christians can help through responsible participation, informed debate and dialogue. Christians can help to uphold the current just laws by living peaceful, respectful and obedient lives of productivity. Christians can regularly pray for our leaders, help the needy and support organizations that aim to protect religious liberty. Christians should also vote, join political and civic groups or even run for public office.

6. What are the four consequences of the loss of moral authority in the law?

Taken from the italicized headings in the text: First, the loss of moral authority in the law removes restraints on individual behavior. Second, the loss of moral authority in the law means government is reduced to utilitarian procedures. Third, the loss of a moral basis for law means we can no longer engage in moral debate. Fourth, the loss of moral authority in the law means we have forfeited the rule of law and reverted to arbitrary human rule.

7. A. According to your reading, why do tyrannical leaders (particularly communist and totalitarian governments) persecute religious believers so fiercely?

Essentially, tyrannical leaders want total, unquestioned power. Christians are obedient to government, and they are peaceful and responsible citizens, but they cannot be blindly obedient citizens because they answer to a higher authority. Christians are obligated to disobey laws that violate the moral code of God as described in Scripture. They answer to their consciences, before they do to a government. Selfish, power-hungry leaders see this as a threat to their own authority. In a mad grab for more authority, they want to oppress or even stamp out Christianity.

B. Can you think of any contemporary countries where Christians are persecuted like this?

The following is a list of countries where Christians are currently (at the time of this publication) persecuted for their faith. This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change: North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Somalia, Maldives, Bhutan, Vietnam, Yemen, Laos, China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Eritrea, Comoros, Pakistan, Egypt, Myanmar (Burma), Azerbaijan, Morocco, Brunei, Libya, Iraq, Cuba, Djibouti, India, Sudan, Nigeria (North), Tajikistan, Sri Lanka, Russia (Muslim Rep), Tunisia, Qatar, Nepal, Indonesia, Turkey, Algeria, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Mauritania, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Belarus, Colombia (Conflict Areas), Oman, Jordan, Syria, Mexico (South), Philippines (South), Kenya (Northeast).

8. Carefully read and consider the quote below from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail":

Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I-it" relationship for an "I-thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence, segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and awful. Paul Tillich said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression "of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness"? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to ace the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.¹

A. According to Dr. King, what is the difference between a just law and an unjust law?

According to Dr. King, just laws uplift human personality and are equally applied to all citizens, regardless of age, race, gender or class. On the other hand, unjust laws degrade human personality and are unfairly and inconsistently applied to citizens.

B. How would *you* define a just and an unjust law?

Answers will vary. Basically, just laws follow the justice and morality of God's law, while unjust laws violate biblical morality.

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *The Harper Single Volume American Literature*, ed. Donald McQuade, Robert Atwan, Martha Banta, et al. 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 2487.

- C. What were some examples of unjust laws in Dr. King's day? What are some unjust laws today?

Answers will vary; the following are some examples: Dr. King mentioned racial voting laws and segregation laws among the unjust laws of his day. Today, the legalization of abortion and no-fault divorce are unjust laws because they do not obey a higher moral order. Your student may list other examples as well.

9. Carefully read the following quote by Robert G. Ingersoll:

The Bible is not a moral guide. Any man who follows faithfully all its teachings is an enemy of society and will probably end his days in a prison or an asylum. What is morality? In this world we need certain things. We have many wants. We are exposed to many dangers. We need food, fuel, raiment and shelter, and besides these wants, there is, what may be called, the hunger of the mind. We are conditioned beings, and our happiness depends upon conditions. There are certain things that diminish, certain things that increase, well-being. There are certain things that destroy and there are others that preserve. Happiness, including its highest forms, is after all the only good, and everything, the result of which is to produce or secure happiness, is good, that is to say, moral. Everything that destroys or diminishes well-being is bad, that is to say, immoral. In other words, all that is good is moral, and all that is bad is immoral. What then is, or can be called, a moral guide? The shortest possible answer is one word: Intelligence. We want the experience of mankind, the true history of the race. We want the history of intellectual development, of the growth of the ethical, of the idea of justice, of conscience, of charity, of self-denial. We want to know the paths and roads that have been traveled by the human mind. These facts in general, these histories in outline, the results reached, the conclusions formed, the principles evolved, taken together, would form the best conceivable moral guide. We cannot depend on what are called "inspired books," or the religions of the world. These religions are based on the supernatural, and according to them we are under obligation to worship and obey some supernatural being, or beings. All these religions are inconsistent with intellectual liberty. They are the enemies of thought, of investigation, of mental honesty. They destroy the manliness of man. They promise eternal rewards for belief, for credulity, for what they call faith. This is not only absurd, but it is immoral.²

- A. Why is Ingersoll's moral guide faulty? What does he not understand about human nature?

Ingersoll calls intelligence the best moral guide. He says that imposed religious moral codes limit liberty and "mental honesty." Furthermore, they basically emasculate mankind because they promise eternal rewards, rather than earthly rewards. However, Ingersoll fails to recognize that human intelligence is tainted by sin. He doesn't see that human selfishness becomes oppressive to mankind. When we are driven by our needs and wants, sin inevitably dominates our motivation. A person left to discover his/her own moral guide will ignore God's transcendent morality and will fall to the allure of sin.

² Robert G. Ingersoll, "The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll." *What Would You Substitute for the Bible as a Moral Guide?* <http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/ingersoll.htm#WSBFMG> (accessed August 22, 2006).

10. Read Psalm 72. How is the king in this psalm different from our leaders today? How can this psalm guide us as we pray for our government?

In the Old Testament, Israelite kings were placed on the throne by God to represent Him to His chosen people. America is not a monarchy or a theocracy (a land ruled directly by God). Americans are not God's "chosen people," but we can still pray for the characteristics of goodness this king possessed. We can pray that God would endow our governmental leaders with justice and righteousness according to God's law. We pray that our leaders will be enabled to effectively help the needy and stop oppression so that the people are free to live peaceably and so that other nations learn from our example. Leaders can also be a source of blessing to their people and other nations when they rule righteously. We should pray that our leaders will be wise and follow God's standard of justice and leadership.

11. On a separate piece of paper, write an imaginary letter to a leader or a political candidate, and list guidelines and principles that you expect him/her to follow while in leadership.

Answers will vary.

12. Have you ever been accused of being intolerant or closed-minded because of your Christian beliefs? If so, describe the situation. How did you respond? After studying this chapter, how will you respond to similar situations in the future?

Answers will vary.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Despotism:** the acts or the rule of a leader with total authority; tyranny, dictatorship
2. **Jurisprudence:** the philosophy and science of law

KEY POINTS

1. Christians are obligated to obey the laws of the land, unless these laws violate the law of God. If a law is unjust or immoral, then Christians are obligated to respectfully disobey it.
2. If a higher transcendent law is not recognized by those in power, then those authorities will see their own power as the transcendent law—this is the formula for tyranny.
3. Christians can help to restore political and governmental structures by informed debate and dialogue, prayer, obedient and responsible living, joining political and civic groups, voting and even running for political office.
4. Successful democracy depends upon the morality of the citizens and the integrity of elected officials.

Lesson 9

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SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY ARE NOT OIL AND WATER

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1. “If human beings have EVOLVED by material, PURPOSELESS causes, then there is no basis for believing in a GOD who CREATED us and revealed moral truths.”
2. “Many INTELLECTUALS today assume that SCIENCE is the source of all genuine KNOWLEDGE.”
3. “C.S. Lewis warned that the rise of SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM would lead to the ‘ABOLITION of man,’ for it denies the reality of those things central to our HUMANITY: our sense of right and wrong, of purpose, of beauty, of God.”
4. “Their ETHICAL understanding has not kept pace with their brilliant DISCOVERIES.”
5. “Christians ought to argue that SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM is INCOHERENT and self-contradictory, for scientists must exempt themselves from the very FRAMEWORK they prescribe for everyone else.”
6. “The task for CHRISTIANS is clear: to EXPOSE the FLAWS in scientific naturalism.”
7. Isaac Newton “firmly believed that SCIENTIFIC study of the world would lead straight to the GOD who CREATED that world.”
8. “At issue is the WORLDVIEW claim that life is the product of IMPERSONAL forces versus the claim that life was DESIGNED by an INTELLIGENT AGENT.”

9. We need to “encourage Christian YOUNG PEOPLE to go into SCIENCE as a profession and to demonstrate in practice the viability of a BIBLICAL framework for SCIENCE.”
10. “God calls us to ‘demolish ARGUMENTS and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of GOD’ and to ‘take captive every THOUGHT to make it OBEDIENT to CHRIST’ (2 Cor. 10:5).”

IDENTIFY

In your own words, define the terms below.

1. Scientific naturalism:

Scientific naturalism is the philosophy or worldview that the physical universe is all that exists. This philosophy says that there is no spirituality, no subjective imagination and no emotional realm. There is only what can be measured and physically experienced.

2. Voluntarism:

Voluntarism is the Christian theology that changed the perspective on science in the Middle Ages. Voluntarism “taught that rational order is not something inherent *in* nature but is imposed *on* nature by God's will and design.” Thus, scientists were compelled to go out and physically experiment with ideas rather than postulating ideas in writing or discussion.

3. Ex nihilo:

This term means “out of nothing.” It refers to God creating the universe out of nothing—there were no pre-existing materials that God used to create the universe. He simply spoke the world into being by the power of His Word.

SHORT ANSWER

1. Why is Darwinism so popular today?

Darwinism is certainly not a proven theory, nor is it founded upon undisputed facts. Basically, Darwinism is a worldview that denies God. It says that nature is all there is and that man answers to no higher authority or moral law. Thus, it excuses all sorts of immoral human behavior.

2. How did Copernicus’ faith compel him to continue studying a heliocentric view of the galaxy?

As a Christian, Copernicus believed that God created the world with order to reflect His own perfection, order and beauty. The scientists of Copernicus’ day thought that the galaxy revolved around the earth. Copernicus had a hard time accepting this because the mathematics of that theory were too convoluted, and He was convinced that God would choose to create the galaxy with the most understandable and orderly mathematic principles. The simplest and most orderly theory of the galaxy’s orbit was a heliocentric view, where the planets all revolved around the sun.

3. Which Disney movie revived animism? How did this movie promote animism?

The animated film *Pocahontas* promoted the ancient nature-worshipping religion of animism. In the film, Pocahontas says, “every rock and tree and creature has a life, has a spirit, has a name.” She deifies all natural living and non-living things with this statement.

4. Why did C.S. Lewis believe that scientific naturalism would lead to “the abolition of man”?

Lewis recognized that scientific naturalism denied the humanity of people, reducing them to nothing more than intelligent animals, amoral and soulless. Lewis said that there are certain things that are central to humanity—morality, religion, beauty and meaningfulness. Scientific naturalism destroys all these things, reducing them to the realm of myth.

5. How did Lewis contrast the wise men of old and modern scholars?

Lewis said that the wise men of old used to try to determine how to “conform the soul to reality.” And they believed that the answer lay in the pursuit of “knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue.” On the other hand, modern scholars have a much more self-centered pursuit. They seek to determine how to “subdue reality to the wishes of men.” Because their premise is entirely selfishly motivated, their solution is equally selfish. They do nothing more than garner arguments to excuse immoral behavior.

ESSAY

1. A. How did David Hume seek to disprove religion?

David Hume rejected Christianity and all religions. He rejected everything imaginary, mythical, emotional or spiritual. He claimed that only those things which can be diagrammed, mathematically proven and experimented upon are real. Everything else is a mythical farce, an illusion of the human mind. David Hume wanted to do away with religion because he believed that science stands for empirical fact while religion stands for fantasy.

- B. How did Daniel Dennett attempt to persuade readers to embrace “dangerous Darwinism”? Do you think that these men (and others like them) had hidden sinful motives? If so, what were their motives?

Daniel Dennet has tried to do everything he can to abolish religion and replace it with objective science. Dennet calls his book *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*, but he believes that we should embrace the “dangerous” propositions of Darwinism. He argues that Darwinism destroys “traditional moral, metaphysical, and religious beliefs.” Here he betrays his ultimate purpose. Like Hume and other scientific naturalists, Dennet’s underlying motive was to rid himself of moral accountability. These men have given themselves over to their sinful desire to be morally autonomous; the hidden motive behind their science is the desire to pursue sin without guilt.

2. The text points out that scientific naturalism is “inconsistent and incoherent” in two main ways. Explain these two ways.

There are two major inconsistencies with scientific naturalism. First, the scientists who believe this theory do not apply their scientific theory to themselves. They claim that all living beings are nothing more than “mechanisms operating by natural causes.” They claim that everyone and everything randomly acts according to natural causes and for natural purposes. However, the scientists who conduct the rational experiments necessary to determine this theory must not be acting randomly. If these scientists were doing random, meaningless actions, then how could we trust their experiments? Do they imagine themselves outside the realm of random natural causes, or are their experiments part of the meaningless, random natural occurrences of the universe?

Second, these scientists assume that every idea, thing or occurrence in the world is nothing more than the result of random atomic collisions. Thoughts are the result of random electrical impulses in the brain. Weather is the result of random warm and cold atoms colliding. Everything in the world can be explained this way, they claim. However, if everything in the world is meaningless and random, then there can be no truth. If there is no truth, then how can these scientists prove their own theories? As stated in the text, “For if an idea is simply the product of particles bumping around in our brains, then it is neither true nor false but merely a natural phenomenon.”

3. Contrast each of the four Christian assumptions about the world with the alternative worldview mentioned in the text.

First, Christians know the “physical world to be real, not an illusion.” This belief provides the Christian motivation for studying and seeking to understand the physical world. In contrast, the Eastern mindset rejects the physical world as a counterfeit reality that cannot be studied and/or understood.

Second, Christians know “nature is good, but not divine.” Christians appreciate the world as the creation of God’s hand. We steward and subdue the earth, appreciating its beauty and benefits, but we do not worship it. In contrast, many pagan religions believe that objects, plants and animals from nature are divine. People who practice these religions think of the sky or the sea or a lion as gods to be worshipped rather than creations of God.

Third, Christians believe “nature is orderly and predictable.” Christians believe nothing happens by accident, fate or happenstance; everything is predictable, beautiful and orderly to reflect the characteristics of God. As a result, Christians study science confident that they will find the patterns left by God’s hand. On the other hand, many ancient cultures viewed the world as a mysterious, dangerous and unpredictable place. As a result, their scientific study stopped short.

Fourth, the Christians believe in the need to experiment in order to learn more and more about God’s world. Unlike some medieval worldviews, Christianity does not believe that everything about the world can be discovered by philosophizing or writing theories. Instead, Christians revel in going out and touching the elements, observing nature and experimenting with the world.

4. What happened in Danny Phillips's class that compelled him to approach the school authorities? How can we learn from his example in the way he handled the situation?

Danny's class watched a video that began with the assumption that the world originated with winds sweeping random molecules together. Danny knew that the school was supposed to teach evolution as a theory, not a fact. He did not appreciate this video's assertion that life happened purely by chance. Rather than disrespectfully arguing with his teacher or fussing at the administration, Danny respectfully approached the school board and thoughtfully explained that he believed the video should be discontinued because of its doctrinaire position on evolution. His was an unbiased presentation because he did not represent the opinions of a group. He acted alone, without hidden motives. He even found another video that he suggested to replace the one his class had viewed. Christians can follow Danny's example, respectfully seeking to influence the sphere in which they are placed. We can thoughtfully and convincingly deny the accepted assumptions of scientific naturalism, and we can offer other ideas and other solutions.

5. Do you think it is a good idea for Christians to work in scientific fields? Why or why not?

Christians should be involved in scientific fields because the Christian faith is the best basis for good science. Christians approach science as the study of God's creation. All of this creation is orderly, beautiful and purposeful. Christian scientists aren't afraid of experimentation, discovery and theories because they know that good science will support faith. They know that science and faith are not enemies; they go hand-in-hand. Christian scientists are not bound by creature worship, mythologies or superstitions, nor are Christians bent on using science to excuse immorality. Christians are obligated to extend Christ's lordship over all of life, including science. Christian scientists can have a profound impact upon the world because the truths they report and the worldview they hold filters down into American classrooms, museums, political discussions and even pop culture.

6. Many people have noticed holes in the theory of evolution. Others have doubted the theory because of the lack of evidence. Even the founder of the evolutionary theory, Charles Darwin, had some doubts about his own theory. Read the quote below from Darwin's book, *The Origin of Species*, and answer the questions that follow:

Some of them [flaws of the evolutionary theory] are so grave that to this day I can never reflect on them without being staggered; but, to the best of my judgment, the greater number are only apparent, and those that are real are not, I think, fatal to my theory.

These difficulties and objections may be classed under the following heads:—Firstly, why, if species have descended from other species by insensibly fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? Why is not all nature in confusion instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined?

Secondly, is it possible that an animal having, for instance, the structure and habits of a bat, could have been formed by the modification of some animal with wholly different habits? Can we believe that natural selection could produce, on the one hand, organs of trifling importance, such as the tail of a giraffe, which serves as a fly-flapper, and, on the other hand, organs of such wonderful structure, as the eye, of which we hardly as yet fully understand the inimitable perfection?

Thirdly, can instincts be acquired and modified through natural selection? What shall we say to so marvelous an instinct as that which leads the bee to make cells, which have practically anticipated the discoveries of profound mathematicians?

Fourthly, how can we account for species, when crossed, being sterile and producing sterile offspring, whereas, when varieties are crossed, their fertility is unimpaired?¹

A. Explain the four main doubts Darwin had about the theory of evolution.

First, Darwin wondered why there are no transitional forms on the planet. For instance, if man started as a monkey, then why do we not see any half-monkey, half-man creatures walking around? Instead, he noticed that all species are distinct and “well-defined.”

Second, Darwin could understand how evolution could produce a simple organ like the giraffe’s tail, but he doubted that evolution could produce such a wonderful and complex organ as a human eye.

Third, (closely related to Darwin’s second doubt) Darwin wondered how evolution could produce profoundly complex instincts, such as the instinct of a bee to build cells in its hive. There is great mathematical genius involved in creating these cells.

Fourth, Darwin noticed (as we discussed in an earlier chapter) that crossing species results in sterility, not the creation of new species. Species tend to deteriorate as they are inter-mixed.

B. Today, Darwin’s doubts still have not been answered. Why do you think evolutionists continue to hold to the theory of evolution?

Evolutionists continue to accept Darwinian evolution because the only other option is to accept the existence of the Creator. A Creator means moral accountability and humility before a being that is greater. In their sinful nature, so many men would rather believe an unrealistic, unproven theory than submit to God. In their sinful nature, people see submission as a sign of weakness and unintelligence. It is only by God’s gracious gift of the Holy Spirit that we are able to turn from our self-centered lives, repent of our sins and turn to Jesus Christ for salvation. Clearly, the hearts of those who deny Christianity have not been filled with the Holy Spirit. They cannot understand why anyone would accept Christianity because their minds are darkened, and their eyes are blinded.

7. A. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Who was Paul’s audience?

The 1 Corinthians passage mentions that Paul’s audience were simple people. The Corinthians were not highly educated or extremely influential. They were average citizens, probably much like you and me. And yet, Paul admonishes these simple Christians to fight the powers of darkness through demolishing arguments of the world and “taking captive every thought.” He was speaking of these average men and women taking on the world of ideas and worldviews.

¹ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: PF Collier & Son, 1909), 178-179.

- B. In this passage, how do Christians wage war? How can you be a part of this battle?
(Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.)

Answers will vary for the last question. Encourage your student to think of ways to “demolish arguments” and to “take captive every thought.”

8. Read Colossians 2:6-9. Based upon this passage, why do you think it’s important for Christians to renew their minds with Scripture and sharpen their doctrine?

Though Paul’s writing was specifically referring to the false teachings of groups such as the Gnostics and asceticists, the principle he taught applies to us today. Christians are attacked by false religious doctrines from cults and other religions, but Christians are also attacked by the false worldly teachings of science and materialism. The teachings and doctrines of the world are deceptive. If we as Christians do not know the truth of the Word and why we believe what we believe, then we will be easily swept up in false teaching. For instance, if a Christian does not study to know Christ’s deity, then he/she will easily believe a Mormon who says Christ is just a prophet of God. Likewise, if a Christian does not know why we believe the world was created by God, then he/she will find faith shaken in a science class at a secular college.

Of course, Christianity is more than arguments and cold teachings. Our faith doesn’t just affect our intellects; it molds our hearts. Yet, the renewing of our minds through knowledge and understanding of the Word is absolutely necessary to strengthening and growing in our faith.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Natural selection:** the evolutionary teaching that the strongest and fittest organisms, which can adapt to their environment, will survive, while the weaker ones will be eliminated
2. **Scientific naturalism:** the belief that there is no Creator or supernatural element in the world; the world as explained by objective knowledge and scientific laws
3. **Empirical:** relying solely on observation and experimentation using the five human senses

KEY POINTS

1. Darwinian evolution and scientific naturalism stand opposed to the Christian worldview and the truth of the Creator. However, if we are firmly rooted in Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible, we can resist these anti-Christian teachings and continue to spread the truth of God to the world.
2. Christianity is not the illogical enemy of science; conversely, science grew out of the Christian worldview.
3. Despite the fact that evolution is unproven, inconsistent and often illogical, many non-Christians insist it is the truth. For these men and women, the issue is not necessarily one of science; it is one of morality. They seek a worldview that will excuse their behavior and leave them morally unaccountable.
3. Through science, we can appreciate the majesty of God and understand that the complexities of nature can only be explained by the existence of a transcendent Creator.

Lesson 10

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ART TO THE GLORY OF GOD

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “Art affects us at the DEEPEST level of the SOUL.”
2. The arts “can shape our THOUGHTS, move our EMOTIONS, enlarge our IMAGINATIONS.”
3. “The ARTS are also an important way to UNDERSTAND God and his CREATION.”
4. “The basic JUSTIFICATION for art is in the doctrine of CREATION. Moreover, when God CREATED the world, he cared enough to make it BEAUTIFUL.”
5. “In SCRIPTURE we find commands to make the temple BEAUTIFUL and to make it ring with MUSIC. God wants us to use our best ARTISTIC skills in the worship of him.”
6. “It’s true that at various points through the centuries CHRISTIANS have had to stand against art in various forms—not because they were AGAINST art itself, but because they opposed its MISUSE.”
7. “Luther said, “the gift of LANGUAGE combined with the gift of SONG was given to man that he should proclaim the WORD of GOD through MUSIC.””
8. John Calvin said, “Because SCULPTURE and PAINTINGS are gifts of God, I seek a PURE and LEGITIMATE use of each.”
9. “Christianity alone has the resources to RESTORE the arts to their PROPER place, for Christianity is a worldview that supports human CREATIVITY yet does so with appropriate HUMILITY.”

10. “The DEGRADATION of classical art and music has caused a PARALLEL degradation of TELEVISION and popular MUSIC —but even here, in what seems to be a moral wasteland, Christians can bring RENEWAL and REDEMPTION.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. What does a musician do at a performance of “4-33”?

A pianist sits at a piano with music open before him/her for four minutes and thirty-three seconds without playing a note before closing the music and leaving the stage.

2. How does Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* boil down the moral dilemmas of the ages?

This novel boils down the moral dilemmas of the ages to this statement, “If there is no God, then everything is permitted.”

3. What does *Soli Deo Gloria* mean?

Soli Deo Gloria means to God alone be the glory.

4. What is the difference between consonance and dissonance?

Consonance is the pleasant, harmonic sound created by using 2:1 ratios in musical compositions. Dissonance is atonal music created by using clashing notes from Arnold Schoenberg’s 12-tone scale.

5. What is Cubism?

Cubism is the artistic style that patterns visual art after mathematical formulas and geometric shapes.

ESSAY

1. A. How does the opening story of the television producer illustrate the power the arts can have on our lives? How can a Christian use this power to the glory of God?

The fictional movie producer at the beginning of the chapter is morally floundering. He is longing for some sort of meaning and purpose in his life, but he doesn’t even consciously recognize this longing. The music he hears while he is driving expresses something that he feels so deep inside that he didn’t know it was there. The music unlocked longings he didn’t know he had. The music expressed his mourning over his estranged relationship with his mother; it expressed his longing for meaning and purpose. It stirred spiritual longings within him. Sounds, images, words and sensations can express deep human emotions and can lift human minds to transcendent themes.

B. How can a Christian use this power to the glory of God?

Answers will vary. There are almost countless ways a Christian can use art to glorify God. The following are some examples: Christians can use the arts to point to the truths and beauties of God. A painting can depict His beauty, wrath or justice. A song or a dance can express worship to Him. A play can depict the ravaging effects of sin and the healing power of grace. A poem or short story can influence the moral perspectives of an audience. Even a puppet show can teach children the stories of the Bible and the truths of Scripture.

2. From page 446, explain the two ways artists reacted to scientific modernism.

When modernistic science began to explain the world as nothing more than a physical, scientifically deducible mechanism, people began to consider everything emotional, subjective or immeasurable as unreal. Art was dissected, evaluated and analyzed until it was nothing more than a mathematical pattern. All the imagination, beauty and emotion of art were stripped away.

Some artists reacted by trying to fit art into scientific and mathematical formulas. They created abstract art with geometric shapes and boxy architecture. They made art that is measurable and definable, but lacking feeling and expression. Other artists reacted by refusing to conform their art to scientific ratios. Instead, they claimed that art cannot be explained with earthly words. To them, art came from another world, and artists were the messengers of another world. The text explains that these artists viewed art as “superior” to science. Musicians turned their music from the traditional tonal scale of pure sound and harmony to a dissonant scale of unpleasing sounds. Dance, sound and sculpture became so esoteric and bizarre that only the “enlightened people” could understand its message.

3. Art can explicitly or implicitly teach Christian themes. Can you explain these two functions of art and provide examples for each?

Explicitly, art can blatantly state its purpose is to teach Bible stories or biblical truths. For example, a play can tell the biblical story of Ruth or a movie can show the events of Revelation. Hymns and sacred poetry are another example of art explicitly used to teach Christianity. Art can also be used to implicitly express Christian themes. For instance, a symphony, written to the glory of God, can express the beauty, harmony, truth and glory of God. A short story can show immoral characters reaping the consequences of their actions and moral characters leading fulfilling lives.

4. As Christians, why should we care about the arts?

The arts can be used as a means to appreciate God and His creation; they are a means of communicating the Gospel and biblical truths. Artists are able to use their art to point others to praise God, express truth and influence culture. Throughout history, music, literature, dance and poetry have had a great influence upon culture. Because of the impact of the arts, Christians should care about art, enjoy it, cultivate it, use it and influence it.

Moreover, God cares about the arts because He created the world and all of its beauty, rhythm, functionality, color and expression. He made the world artistic. In commanding Adam and Eve to subdue the earth, He commanded them to use every aspect of the world—including the arts—for His glory. When God communicated His Word to us, God used a variety of art forms, including poetry, historical writing, stories and beautiful word pictures. God not only made the world artistic, He commanded us to use the arts, and He used the arts to reveal Himself to us. For all these reasons, Christians should care about art.

5. A. Art can be abused and misused. How could Christians use art for idolatrous purposes?

Christians can abuse art through idolizing it. Icons and images can be worshipped or trusted or personified in a way that takes worship away from God. In some places, icons are “venerated, kissed and addressed in prayer.” The first and second commandments command Christians to worship God alone and to abstain from idols. Christians should be careful because there is often a temptation to turn a good gift into an idol.

B. Why should Christians be cautious about how they use art for entertainment?

Christians can also misuse art through using it for sinful entertainment. Sometimes art can be full of lewdness or sinful themes. For instance, movies can be full of vulgarity and taking God’s name in vain. Plays and music can desecrate the sanctity of life or sex or religion. Poetry and novels can be full of false teaching and immorality. There is a fine line between analyzing art with sinful themes and uncritically accepting the worldly messages communicated through art. Christians should always be careful to choose their entertainment wisely and to be analytical viewers, readers and listeners.

6. What is anti-art? Give some examples.

Anti-art is art that rejects all artistic standards. Anti-art often involves no skill or talent, such as John Cage’s performance where he sat at a piano for several minutes without playing anything, Andy Warhol’s reprints of Campbell soup can labels, “musical” recordings of traffic noise or a urinal as a piece of art.

7. As we know, the arts can be used to honor God. However, God forbids idolatrous art and images. Consider the quote below from John Calvin concerning art and images:

Whenever a man makes any kind of shape and says that this is like God, he is spoiling God's glory with a lie (Exodus 20:4)...Moses said: "You saw no form of any kind the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman" (Deuteronomy 4:15,16). Moses points out that only God's *voice* was heard. There was no visible shape. All who try to give a shape are insulting him... There were certain occasions when God did show himself by signs, but these were of a very special kind. In fact they reminded those who saw them that he was beyond their understanding. When the law was given, people saw cloud and smoke and flame. These were signs of his glory, but most certainly signs that were not to be copied by man. In the gospels, the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove, but then he disappeared. This reminds us that God is invisible. Man, who is himself a created being, cannot give godhead to clay, stone, wood, or even gold or silver. Isaiah shows how foolish it is to chose one piece of metal or wood and call it a god and not the piece next to it (Isaiah 44:12-17)...It is quite wrong to think that one may worship God in the image and not the image itself. This argument is even used by the heathen. They say of their idolatry that they do not worship the image but what it represents... They claim that they do "service" to the images but do not worship them. This would mean they were servants of idols. This is clearly NOT what God planned when he made mankind.¹

- A. Did God ever reveal Himself in images or forms? If so, give at least two examples (your examples may come from Calvin's selection or your own biblical knowledge).

In Scripture, there are various times that God revealed Himself briefly in some visible sign or symbol. For instance, God appeared as a dove at Christ's baptism. God also appeared as a cloud or smoke and as a burning bush. Of course, the best physical manifestation of God was Jesus Christ Himself. Your students may think of other examples.

- B. How would you caution Christians who attempt to imitate visible signs of God?

God occasionally used a visible sign to reveal Himself, but He never intended Himself to be forever embodied in a visible symbol. He is a Spirit that cannot be explained, contained or pictured. Furthermore, the temptation of man is always to seek a visible sign of God that we may worship. Because the heart of man tends toward idolatry, Christians should be careful not to make idols.

- C. How does Calvin caution Christians about the art we may create?

It is dangerous to create visual representations of God. God never intended Himself to be remembered by a specific visual symbol. That is why He appeared as a symbol and then disappeared quickly. Furthermore, Christians should be careful to avoid making idols out of artists' work the way that icons and statues became idols in the past.

¹ John Calvin, *Biblical Christianity* (London: Grace Publications, 1997), 26-28.

8. Calvin Seerveld, professor, author and philosopher, writes concerning the Christian's appropriate attitude toward art:

We must come to see the unwisdom of having run as far away from plastic art and gritty literature as our sanctified legs can run. Although some will be saved as if whisked through a sheet of fire, without a cultural product to their name (I Corinthians 3:12-15), anyone who prophesies to the Christian community that its sons and daughters may safely wrap up and bury their God-given talents of artistic cultivation in a hole in the ground, will have to face the angry judgment of the Lord revealed in Matthew 25:14-30.

The scriptural imperative comes to us who profess to be a communion of the saints to take up as a people of God, our creational cultivating task in art with a professional earnestness fit for the times, if we would be faithful children of the Lord. And the practice of artistry must have some priority among us, given the cultural wiles of the Evil One in our highly developed, mass-communicating civilization. We may not be content with believers of native talent who paint pastoral scenes with amateur craftsmanship to cover the wallpapered spot behind the sofa. Art is even more devastatingly serious than décor. We may also not be content with rustic scenes and picturesque landscapes. The devil will easily let us Christians have a few nostalgic meadows: he is scrounging for the hearts of men and women in North America [and the entire world of course], including the youth of the church, especially in the city life of technology where the centers of human cultural power and mass-communication media are. Where the cultural action is, its most current marketplace, that is the very place where the Holy Spirit must be called into forceful play. That is where young Christian artists must be encouraged in the name of the Lord to pour their talents, bending steel, composing melodies that fill the air waves, filming the complexities of our tensed, hidden lives, using the grit of sand and glass and pigment in compositions to expose the meaningless waste of sin around us and to show the life of exciting joy present in our modern world when the law of the Lord is obeyed.

Do not misunderstand me: this is not a "Go Ahead" in art on all fronts, period. One is called to practice art as believers only if that art practice gradually shows Yahweh revealed in Jesus Christ as judging/blessing Lord of the universe. If art does not do this in its artistry, the Scriptures say, "Cut it out!" But Christian artistic activity is fighting the fight of faith on one of the most significantly formative battlefields of our modern life. The reality of sin accents the need for our reconciling this most sensitive area of human life back to the Lord, who made it possible...²

A. How does Matthew 25:14-30 apply to the use of artistic gifts?

In this passage, Jesus tells a parable about several servants who were each given an amount of money. They were supposed to steward this money while their master was away. Each servant used his money to gain more for the master, but one servant simply buried his amount. The master came back and rebuked the servant for not using the money to the best of his ability. In the context of art and artistic abilities, this passage reminds us that God bestows certain talents upon us. He expects us to use these gifts to work in His kingdom. We are to use our talents for His glory. If a person is blessed with artistic ability, but neglects these abilities, God is not pleased. Gifts and abilities come from the hand of God; we do not have the luxury of casting them aside because God expects us to use them for His purposes.

² Calvin Seerveld, *Rainbows for the Fallen World* (Downsview, Ont.: Toronto Tuppence Press, 1980), 35-36.

- B. Why does Seerveld urge artistic Christians to develop art that is more than home décor and landscapes?

Our culture has become increasingly complex, and the spiritual needs of the world have become equally as complex. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with painting landscapes or writing cute little tunes. Seerveld isn't necessarily condemning these things; he is calling Christian artists to pursue art with deep meaning and purpose. If Satan uses art to draw people away from God and harden their hearts, then we must be just as cunning, using art to soften hearts and call people to the Lord. We must aggressively engage in the arts just as the devil is aggressively engaged in the arts. Moreover, since the Lord has gifted some of us with artistic skills, He surely wants those to excel in the arts, moving beyond simple watercolors to stirring and meaningful art, which communicates a message of truth.

9. Read Exodus 31:1-11 and Exodus 35:34. God gave Bezalel artistic talents, but what else did God give him? Why is it important that he have both of these gifts? What two gifts did God give Oholiab? How did God command that Bezalel and Oholiab use their gifts?

Scripture says that Bezalel was filled with Spirit of God. He had many artistic abilities, but he was also a godly man. He was called to lead the people in making the temple, and his godliness was an example to them. Oholiab was also artistically gifted, and we learn from verse 34 of Exodus 35 that Oholiab also had the ability to teach others. God wanted both of these men to lead the people in the building of many items to adorn the tabernacle. Bezalel and Oholiab had to possess great artistic skill to be able to carve, cut and craft things for the tabernacle, but all those abilities would have been meaningless if these skilled laborers did not love God. The tabernacle was to be a place of worship and a house for the presence of God. The craftsmen who made it had to do their work as an act of worship as an example to the rest of the people of Israel.

10. Read Exodus 35:4-36:7. Who else was called to give items and use skills for the building of the tabernacle? What was the attitude of the people as they brought their gifts and talents (see verse 36:3)?

Moses commanded the whole Israelite people to bring anything they had—gold, linen, wood, bronze, jewels, oil and spices—for the construction of the tabernacle. They were also called to offer their gifts and talents to the Lord. If any person had an ability to weave, carve or construct, that person was also called to use his/her talent for the making of the tabernacle. Moses commanded the people to bring their gifts out of their freewill. Some translations say that the people were to bring gifts if their “hearts stirred within them.”

11. Eventually what happened when the people brought gifts (see 36:4-6)? How can Christians today imitate the attitude of the Israelites in this passage?

The Israelite people were so full of love for the Lord that their hearts compelled them to give and give and give. They worked and sacrificed and gave as unto the Lord until finally Moses had to tell the people to stop giving because they had too much! Imagine if the people of the church today were to give like that! As Christians, we too can search our hearts and give love offerings to the Lord. We can give money and gifts to the church and the needy, but we can also give our time and talents for the work of the kingdom of God. Though not every Christian is an artist, every Christian has talents from the Lord, and we can all use them to the glory of God.

12. How have the arts affected your life as a Christian, either positively or negatively?

Answers will vary.

13. If you are an artist, what can you do or what have you done to glorify God through art?

Answers will vary.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Dissonance:** a harsh, unharmonious group of tones, often sounding incomplete or unfulfilled
2. **Aesthetic:** related to the appreciation of beauty or good taste

KEY POINTS

1. Art has a unique ability to evoke emotion, shape thoughts and opinions and influence culture—for good or for bad.
2. Christians are obligated to use art as a means of glorifying God through worshipping His name, communicating the Gospel and pointing the world to the need for a Savior.
3. Christians should be thoughtful and prudent about their consumption of popular art, such as movies, music and literature because this art is often filled with themes and messages that are deceptive and do not glorify God.
4. Particularly with respect to visual art, Christians must be careful not to allow art to slip into idolatry.

Lesson 11

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WHATEVER IS NOBLE, WHATEVER IS PURE

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “The call to REDEEM popular CULTURE is surely one of the most difficult CHALLENGES Christians face today.”
2. “But while most of us realize how DANGEROUS it is to expose ourselves to IMMORAL content, we often fail to realize that the FORM of popular culture affects us just as much—not only WHAT is said, but also HOW it is said.”
3. “These forms REQUIRE virtually no INTELLECTUAL discipline or EFFORT.”
4. “Popular culture is like a NARCOTIC : Over time it can actually IMPAIR the BRAIN’S capacity.”
5. “Attention to the SPIRITUAL realm requires an entirely different set of SKILLS and SENSIBILITIES than do the easy distractions of POP culture.”
6. “Thus, pop culture (even CHRISTIAN versions of it) may ERODE the skills and DISCIPLINES needed for a robust SPIRITUAL life.”
7. “There is harm, however, in making a steady DIET of pop culture, because it encourages an unreflective, EMOTIONAL response to LIFE instead of disciplined THOUGHT and ANALYSIS—which can lead, in turn, to a SIMPLISTIC spiritual life.”
8. “When we create Christian POPULAR CULTURE, we must take care not simply to insert Christian CONTENT into whatever style is currently on the market. Instead, we should cultivate something distinctly Christian in both CONTENT and FORM.”
9. “The way to REVERSE the degradation of pop culture is once again to LINK art to TRUTH.”

10. “There are PRACTICAL steps all of us can take, beginning with disciplining our PERSONAL habits to say NO to the WORST of popular culture.”
11. “Ultimately, to be a REDEMPTIVE force in popular culture, we must ENCOURAGE Christians to go beyond being CRITICAL and start being CREATIVE.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. Read the following passages and explain how they relate to the call of Christians to influence popular culture.

- A. Genesis 1:26:

At creation, God gave unto men the calling to rule all things—creatures and all the earth. This includes culture. If we are called to rule over culture, we cannot passively allow the wicked to take culture down a path of unrighteousness. Instead, we must influence culture, preserving it from perversion.

- B. Matthew 5:13-16:

Jesus proclaimed to the multitudes that Christians are the salt of the earth, the light of the world and a city on a hill. We cannot hide our light or let our salt lose its saltiness; instead, we are to use every opportunity to point to Christ. We can involve ourselves in the arts, influence pop culture and even create pop art that speaks of the Gospel and points to God.

- C. 1 Corinthians 10:31:

As Christians, we have an ulterior motive in all we do. Christians don’t just listen to music for the sake of listening to music. We don’t just vote for the sake of voting or work for the sake of working. We don’t simply consume pop culture or mindlessly create pop culture. Rather, we do all things to glorify God. We think and plan and boycott and promote and creatively act in order to bring glory to God. This should always be our purpose in our involvement in popular culture.

2. How do the following verses guide our consumption of popular culture?

- A. Romans 12:1-2:

Worldliness encourages lazy thinking and mind-numbing entertainment. When people’s minds become dull, they blindly accept the immoral messages of pop culture. Christians, on the other hand, are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Our minds are renewed through the Word of God, which changes our thoughts, molds our wills and shapes our worldview. If we are intellectually sharp from the Word, then we cannot mindlessly consume pop culture. Instead, we will test it, constantly seeking to learn if it is approved and if it aligns with the will of God.

B. Philippians 4:8-9:

This Scripture admonishes believers to think on things that reflect the beautiful attributes of God—His goodness, purity, righteousness, loveliness, etc. We are to fill our minds with things that are excellent and noble and right. If we are consuming pop culture that doesn't reflect these things, we should reevaluate our entertainment.

3. How could Christians influence each of the following mediums of pop culture?

(Hint: Try to think creatively from the perspective of an artist, a producer, a consumer, a parent, a teacher, a voter, an organization, etc.)

A. Television: **Answers will vary. Students should apply biblical concepts to pop culture, transforming the medium and the content. This may involve everything from boycotting a movie, to writing a song, to teaching modesty in a Sunday school class, to critiquing pop culture in an online blog.**

B. Music:

C. Movies:

D. Magazines, books, newspapers or any other print media:

E. Radio (including talk radio or morning shows):

F. Clothing:

G. Advertisements:

ESSAY

1. Why did Martha refuse to work on *Angel's Attic*?

Martha believed that the themes of the show misrepresented God and His angels. If the public claimed to believe in angels, she wanted to show them what angels really were. *Angel's Attic* portrayed angels as people who had recently died; they fought among themselves and complained about God's orders. God was an out-of-touch boss who made ridiculous demands, and the angels only got things accomplished through bending His rules. The show was shallow and misrepresented the truth about the spiritual realm.

2. In your own words, define popular culture. How is it different from folk art? List some examples (either from the text or from your own knowledge) of folk art and of pop culture.

Pop culture is not rooted in cultural tradition or creative human expression; it does not have a meaningful heritage. Instead, it is mass-produced to appeal to fads, public whims and sensational impulses—all for the sake of making money. Pop culture sells fast and spreads quickly. It doesn't involve deep reflection, developed taste or education. Instead, it numbs the senses and dulls the mind.

On the other hand, folk art (folk culture) is an artistic form that arises from the everyday life of a people group. Sometimes folk art starts off as a necessary tool or a food or an item made from materials distinctive to a particular region; eventually this food or a tool or item is developed into an art form that is respected in a particular culture. For instance, fairy tales began in Europe as tales told to children in order to scare them into obedience. Eventually these tales developed their own rules and themes and characters until an art form was developed. The text also cites examples of square dancing, spirituals and tall-tales. Popular culture, on the other hand, does not express the experience of a particular group of people, it has little substance or ethnic ties, and thus it can be imposed upon any culture. Examples of pop culture are video games, comic books, pop music, movies, romance novels and sitcoms.

3. Explain the difference between Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984*. If you had to live in one of these worlds, which do you think would be worse?

Writing out of the fears of his time, Orwell's book depicts the possible results of a world taken over by communism. This would be a world where people were not allowed to read or think. In this world, information, creativity and expression would be censored by the government. On the other hand, in Huxley's world everything is permissible, but people no longer have the desire to pursue their intellectual and creative freedoms because they have been dulled and lulled by mindless music and movies and information-overload.

Answers to the last question will vary. The text makes the case that Huxley's world is worse because there are no "bad guys" forcing the public into ignorance. In Huxley's world, the public willingly accept their own ignorance. They reject books, learning, analysis and knowledge, choosing instead to fill their minds with silly entertainment.

4. What does it mean to say that the medium is the message? How does this principle apply to the difference between pop culture and high culture?

The way in which a message is communicated can be more important than the actual message. For instance, a person can try to sing a baby to sleep with lyrics that speak of sleepiness and dreaming, but if this message is communicated through screaming hard rock music, it is unlikely that the baby will fall asleep.

Pop culture is often presented through simplistic mediums that require little talent. For instance, many movies are packed with special effects in order to distract from a trite plot; many novels are sensational in order to offer readers immediate tantalizing images rather than deep character development. A lot of pop music has a pounding beat and catchy tunes rather than masterful musical composition. Colson calls pop culture “cotton candy” because it tastes good for a moment, but it has no real substance. It doesn’t take effort, exposure, skills or developed taste to appreciate pop culture. On the other hand, fully appreciating high art requires a trained listener, an educated reader and critical analysis.

5. How could a steady diet of popular culture affect a person? Is it wrong to occasionally enjoy pop culture?

Often pop culture is full of music, movies, books and magazines that contain foul language, materialistic themes, immorality and violence. Obviously, constant, uncritical exposure to these themes can have a profoundly negative influence upon a person. The second way pop culture can influence a person is less obvious. Pop culture is designed for mass appeal, imitating empty fads and tempting the baser inclinations of people. It encourages short attention spans, emotionalism and sensationalism, flippancy and instant gratification. On a steady diet of pop culture, a person may eventually grow intellectually dull, losing interest in well-crafted music, literature, art, dance, etc. This person may neglect to develop knowledge of truths, may shrug his/her shoulders at current events and may become lazy and dull with mindless entertainment. A steady diet of pop culture may also cause a person to lose the ability to feed his/her soul. This damages the spiritual life. Prayer and Bible study require focus, attention and critical thinking. Over-exposure to pop culture causes us to lose the ability to think deeply, focus and reflect. A steady diet of pop culture keeps one constantly entertained and diverted, rather than penitent and prayerful.

The text points out that occasionally enjoying pop culture isn’t bad. Sometimes reading a simplistic novel is relaxing and listening to amusing little tunes can lighten the spirit. It is a steady diet of pop culture that can negatively influence a person morally, spiritually and intellectually.

6. Read the following quote and respond to the questions that follow:

... the Reverend Greg Sakowicz, a Roman Catholic priest, mixes his religious teaching with rock’n’roll music. According to the Associated Press, the Reverend Sakowicz is both associate pastor at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg (a suburb of Chicago) and a disc jockey at WKQX. On his show, “The Journey Inward,” Father Sakowicz chats in soft tones about such topics as family relationships or commitment, and interposes his sermons with “the sound of Billboard’s Top 10.” He says that his preaching is not done “in a churchy way,” and adds, “You don’t have to be boring in order to be holy.”¹

¹ Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Viking, 1985), 93.

Because of the pervasive influence of pop culture upon American individuals, many churches and religious leaders of the day are adapting the message of Christianity to fit pop-culture trends. After reading the above quote, can you think of other ways popular culture has influenced the worship or the teaching of contemporary American churches? Do you think this is a positive or a negative thing, or both?

Answers will vary.

7. What does it mean to say we must “link art to truth?”

True truth is rooted in the being of God. Truth is beauty, goodness and justice, mercy, righteousness, wrath and holiness. Art should reflect truth, and this does not reject scientific, factual hypotheses. In fact, facts only exist because there is a God in the heavens who *is* truth and fact. The whole world is rooted in Him. Colson encourages readers that the first thing Christians should do in the arts is reclaim art from the realm of immorality and restore it to a place of worship. From the text, “We must challenge the scientism that reduces truth to what can be known only by the scientific method and argue for the first plank in the Christian worldview: creation. The world is the handiwork of a God who is himself Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Thus, beauty is as objective and real as the scientists’ particles of matter. The first step in redeeming popular culture, then, is to craft a biblically based view of the arts.”

8. As Christians attempting to redeem pop culture, what is wrong with simply “insert[ing] Christian content into whatever style is currently on the market”?

Often the medium of pop culture is flawed. When this is the case, pasting a Christian logo over the top of it doesn’t redeem the art. If the pop culture fad for teenage girls is immodest shirts with flirtatious logos on the front, imitating these shirts with “Christian” labels sends the wrong message. Similarly, if the rage in music is heavy metal with mosh pits in the front of concert halls, it hardly follows that Christians should scream praise lyrics while concert-goers punch and kick each other at the foot of the stage. The text also cites examples of Christian romance novels that border on steamy—but all the characters “get saved” in the end. This method says there is nothing distinctive about Christians or their entertainment and engagement in pop culture. Instead, it says that we are just like everyone else; we follow along with the culture, simply creating our own “Christianized” version.

9. Why does the text suggest boycotting certain things in popular culture?

There are some things in popular culture that directly oppose Christianity. There are songs that blaspheme the name of God. There are movies and television programs with a homosexual agenda. There are clothing companies whose advertisements border on soft-core porn. To purchase these products is to support them. To boycott them is to make a statement against the immorality they promote. Boycotts do not necessarily shut down companies and organizations that promote evil. But, even if companies are not forced to change their policies and practices, a boycott makes a statement for righteousness. If these boycotts are explained and conducted respectfully, they can be used to witness to the world. Boycotts can tell the world that Christians support wholesome cultural art and the pursuit of artistic expression, but we oppose art and entertainment that discourage virtue.

10. Read the following quote from theologian H. Richard Niebuhr, regarding culture and restoration through Christ:

The good nature of man has been corrupted and his culture has become perverse in such a fashion that corrupt nature produces perverse culture and perverse culture corrupts nature... To mankind, with his perverted nature and corrupted culture, Jesus Christ has come to heal and renew what sin has infected with the sickness unto death. By His life and His death He makes plain to man the greatness of God's love and the depth of human sin; by revelation and instruction He reattaches the soul to God, the source of its being and goodness, and restores to it the right order of love, causing it to love whatever it loves in God and not in the context of selfishness or of idolatrous devotion to the creature... Mathematics, logic, and natural science, the fine arts and technology, may all become both the beneficiaries of the conversion of man's love and the instruments of that new love of God that rejoices in His whole creation and serves all His creatures... Everything, and not least the political life, is subject to the great conversion that ensues when God makes a new beginning for man by causing man to begin with God.²

A. Without Christ, how does man affect culture and culture affect man?

Because man's nature is sinful, he creates sinful culture. Eventually, culture becomes so perverse that it influences man. Back and forth, man affects culture, and culture affects man.

B. What do you think Niebuhr means when he speaks of the conversion of man's love?

Man's love being converted means that he no longer loves popular culture in an idolatrous manner. Nor does he seek selfish gain. Instead, he searches after the things of God because his heart has been made right with God. When man's heart has been restored to love God, he pursues all things related to life and humanity and culture out of love for God. All things become the "beneficiaries," the "instruments" of the Christian's love for God.

² H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Collins, 1951), 211-215.

- C. According to this passage, what is a true “new beginning” for man? What is this “new beginning” called in John 3?

When a man is right with God, he begins life anew. Jesus calls this being born again. A person must be reborn to become a Christian. Because people’s hearts are dead in sin, the Holy Spirit must breathe new life into them, renewing them to fellowship with God.

12. Professor and author Neil Postman wrote a book critiquing pop culture titled *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Read the following quote from his book:

Television does not extend or amplify literate culture. It attacks it³... Ventriloquism, dancing and mime do not play well on radio, just as sustained, complex talk does not play well on television. It can be made to play tolerably well if only one camera is used and the visual image is constant—as when the President gives a speech. But this is not television at its best, and it is not television that most people will choose to watch. The single most important fact about television is that people watch it, which is why it is called “television.” And what they watch, and like to watch, are moving pictures—millions of them, of short duration and dynamic variety. It is in the nature of the medium that it must suppress the content of ideas in order to accommodate the requirements of visual interest; that is to say, to accommodate the values of show business.⁴

- A. Why do you think Postman says it is the nature of television to “suppress the content of ideas”?

Postman points out that television is a visual medium; thus, it does not lend itself to verbal or textual analysis, or indeed any analysis. Instead, television presents short clips and fast-moving images to fascinate the eye. Thus, Postman argues that by its very nature, television is an inferior medium for communicating important ideas.

- B. Do you agree or disagree?

Answers to the last question will vary.

³ Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Viking, 1985), 84.

⁴ Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Viking, 1985), 92.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Avant-garde:** art that pioneers a new form or technique; often pushing the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm within definitions of art/culture/reality

KEY POINTS

1. Pop culture is mass-produced “art” which doesn’t necessarily reflect the distinctive cultural practices of a people group. It is created to appeal to the masses through fads; thus, it is not high art or folk art.
2. Occasionally enjoying some forms of pop culture is permissible. However, popular culture is often filled with immoral, frivolous and wasteful themes. The medium through which most popular art is communicated does not always encourage developed thinking, analysis, creativity or virtue. As a result, a steady diet of popular culture is like a steady diet of junk food; it will harm your spiritual, intellectual and moral health.
3. With caution and spiritual wisdom, Christians should seek to influence popular culture. Christians can influence culture through critiques, boycotts and creative engagement in the arts. Christians can actively participate in the creation of popular culture, improving its mediums and then communicating truth and beauty through them.

Lesson 12

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HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

1. “Christians who understand BIBLICAL truth and have the COURAGE to live it out can indeed REDEEM a culture, or even create one.”
2. “The Christian worldview is more CONSISTENT, more RATIONAL, and more WORKABLE than any other belief system.”
3. “No WORLDVIEW is merely a theoretical philosophy. It is intensely PRACTICAL, affecting the way we LIVE our lives, day in and day out, as well as the way we INFLUENCE the world around us.”
4. “God can use acts of faith and faithfulness to HEAL the ugliest wounds and RECONCILE the deepest conflicts between PEOPLE and even between NATIONS.”
5. “But the wounds of WAR are not healed by MATHEMATICAL analysis and STATISTICS. The real healing must come in a very different way.”
6. “The only real solution is SPIRITUAL: It is FORGIVENESS, REPENTANCE, and making RESTITUTION, actively pursuing good for our former enemy. Only CHRISTIANITY provides the power to transform the world.”
7. “How now shall we live? By embracing God’s TRUTH, understanding the PHYSICAL and MORAL order he has created, lovingly contending for that TRUTH with our neighbors, then having the COURAGE to live it out in every walk of life.”

SHORT ANSWER

1. Why wasn't Kim Phuc permitted to continue studying medicine? Why did she comply with the requirements of the government?

The government used Kim as a propaganda tool against the Vietnam War. The government took Kim away from her studies, forcing her to work as a secretary in a governmental office so that she would be readily on hand. Kim complied because she knew that the government could hurt her family if she rebelled.

2. Kim was raised in what religion? Briefly explain how she became a Christian.

Kim Phuc was raised to practice the Cao Dai religion. This is an Eastern religion that mixes religions and spiritual practices. She loved to read and spent many hours in the local library where she found a copy of the New Testament. She had learned about Jesus in the Cao Dai faith, but what she read about him in the New Testament was different. She questioned her faith in the Cao Dai religion and began praying to Christ and attending a Christian church. Eventually, she became a Christian when she placed her faith in Jesus Christ, turning from the religion of her youth.

3. On Veterans Day, how did her Christian faith witness to the people who heard her and met her? Do you think she could have responded the same way if she were still part of the Cao Dai religion? Why or why not?

Kim Phuc had the opportunity to speak to a group of Americans at a Veterans Day celebration in Washington, D.C. From her podium, she offered forgiveness to the Americans who had hurt her so many years before. When the man who claimed to have dropped the bomb on her village asked to meet with her, she embraced him and forgave him. Only Christians truly have the ability to forgive others for only they have truly been forgiven through the blood of Christ. As a Christian, Kim knew the depth of her own sin against God, so she knew the depth of God's forgiveness! What else could she do but extend that forgiveness to others? She became a living testimony to the healing power of Christ and the radically unique message of Christianity.

4. Based on chapter 45, what is the true test of a worldview?

The true test of a worldview is its ability to heal, restore and reconcile conflicts between people, between nations and between God and humanity.

5. How would you respond to the question, "How now shall we live?"

Answers may vary but should reflect the concepts covered in this course. According to Colson, we must live "by embracing God's truth, understanding the physical and moral order he has created, lovingly contending for that truth with our neighbors, then having the courage to live it out in every walk of life."

ESSAY

1. A. What does it mean to say that Robert McNamara was a technocrat?

As a technocrat, Robert McNamara believed that a technical solution could solve any problem—from assembly-line efficiency to spiritual struggles. He believed that rational, cerebral solutions could explain and rectify any problem.

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- B. How did he try to apply this philosophy to the conference with the Vietnamese?

When he and his colleagues met with Vietnamese officials to seek resolution after the war, discussions and debates dragged on for hours. The Americans present at the conference falsely assumed that frank discussion and logical evaluation of the past would resolve any hard feelings. However, they failed to account for the spirituality of resolution. They trivialized the depth of human wounds created by the war.

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- C. Why was this conference unsuccessful?

They weren't expecting emotions, cultural clashes and irresolvable differences in perspective because they were expecting rational discussion and mathematical resolution. At the conference, neither side extended forgiveness, and neither side wanted to admit fault. With no true restoration or redemption, they reached an impasse. Unable to compromise or even communicate with the Vietnamese, the Americans returned disappointed and exhausted.

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2. A. In your own words explain how a worldview is practical and not just a “theoretical philosophy.”

Your worldview is the way you look at natural and supernatural life, the things you believe about life's big questions. What you believe influences how you work, think, play, create, vote and worship. Everyone has a worldview, whether explicit or assumed. The Christian worldview works, but all other worldviews fail to fit reality. People who live out non-Christian worldviews suffer the consequences of a false view of life.

- B. Have the *Christian Worldview I* and *Christian Worldview II* courses influenced or changed your worldview? If so, explain.

Answers will vary. Feel free to share your student's answer with CBI.

3. A. When Joseph was a young man, his brothers sold him into slavery. Years later, Joseph was reunited with his brothers. Read how he responded to them in Genesis 45. How is Joseph's story similar to Kim Phuc's?

Both Joseph and Kim were wronged by others in their youth. They both suffered greatly in their trials, and they both learned to trust God in the midst of their suffering. God raised them both to positions of influence where they were in the public's eye. And, when confronted with their "enemies," they both embraced them and forgave them.

- B. How are their responses to their "enemies" similar? What was the motivation for Joseph's response in verses 4-11?

Joseph explains that he looks beyond the actions of men to see God's hand behind everything—even sinful actions. Joseph knew that God was sovereignly planning all things for His purpose; He had determined what would happen to Joseph, and He worked it for Joseph's good and for the good of Israel. Knowing this, Joseph could say to his brothers that he forgave them because, though they meant to harm him, God meant to use it for good.

- C. In these courses, we have learned to redeem and influence culture. How are Joseph and Kim's testimonies examples of redeeming culture?

Joseph showed amazing faith in things not seen when he declared that he forgave his brothers because God was in control. Joseph's testimony is an example to us. If we emulate his submission and faith in God, the world will see the power of grace and the fear of God. Kim's testimony likewise is an example to us. She softened her heart to the Lord, and because she was humble and submitted to Him, she was able to forgive. Testimonies like Kim's and Joseph's affect the world; they are the most powerful displays of a Christian worldview influencing culture.

4. Read Ephesians 5:1-21. Consider the environment in which God has placed you. How can you personally make “the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil”?

Answers will vary.

5. In order to have an effective witness in the world, it is necessary that you be an imitator of God. Consider verses 1-12, and explain any areas of your life where you are failing to imitate God.

Answers will vary.

6. In verses 19-21, what four confirmations of the Spirit’s presence in a Christian’s life does Paul describe? What would this look like in your life?

Paul explains that a person who has the Spirit in his/her life will speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, praise God, sing and make music to Him, giving thanks to God for everything in the name of Christ and submit to other believers out of reverence for Christ. Personal insights will vary.

7. Francis Schaeffer was a very influential Christian author, teacher and philosopher in the twentieth century. He worked, taught and lived in a community called L'abri, a place for people curious about Christianity or Christians searching to know how they could influence the world for Christ. It was in this community that he gave the following chapel speech. Read a selection from the speech below:

As a Christian considers the possibility of being the Christian glorified..., often his reaction is, "I am so limited. Surely it does not matter much whether I am walking as a creature glorified or not." Or, to put it in another way, "It is wonderful to be a Christian, but I am such a small person, so limited in talents—or energy or psychological strength or knowledge—that what I do is not really important."

The Bible, however, has quite a different emphasis: With God there are no little people.

One thing that has encouraged me, as I have wrestled with such questions in my own life, is the way God used Moses' rod, a stick of wood.¹

The giver of judgment became the giver of life. It was not magic. There was nothing in the rod itself. The rod of Moses had simply become the rod of God. We too are not only to speak a word of judgment to our lost world, but are also to be a source of life.²

Consider the mighty ways in which God used a dead stick of wood. "God so used a stick of wood" can be a banner cry for each of us. Though we are limited and weak in talent, physical energy and psychological strength, we are not less than a stick of wood. But as the rod of Moses had to become the rod of God, so that which is me must become the me of God. Then, I can become useful in God's hands. The Scripture emphasizes that much can come from little if the little is truly consecrated to God. There are no little people and no big people in the true spiritual sense, but consecrated and unconsecrated people. The problem for each of us is applying this truth to ourselves.³

- A. Why does Schaeffer believe that Moses' rod is an encouragement to contemporary Christians? Recall the Exodus account of Moses and his rod (if you need to refresh your memory, skim the first half of the book of Exodus), and write at least two ways the rod functioned as a giver of judgment and a giver of life.

Moses' rod was nothing more than a stick of wood used by a shepherd. It wasn't magical or special. It had no special abilities. The only thing that set the rod apart was that God chose to use it. God used the rod at different times throughout the lives of Moses and Aaron, and eventually the rod was kept in the ark of the covenant to be remembered as a symbol of God's work caring for the Israelites. Moses used the rod to bring judgment upon the people of Egypt through the plagues. Later, Moses held the rod high in the air to gain victory for Israel over their enemies in battle. In both of these instances, the rod simultaneously brought deliverance to Israel and judgment to the enemies of God. The rod was used to bring healing water from a rock, and from its dead wood sprang buds of life (a picture of Christ's resurrection).

¹ Francis Schaeffer, "No Little People" (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 13.

² Ibid, 16.

³ Ibid, 17.

B. In what ways are you like Moses' rod? Do you think God can use you in a lost world?

As Christians, we all start out as dead and useless as a piece of wood—until the hand of God uses us. We become tools to show His power, love and judgment. On our own, we are little, but in the hand of God, we become much. It doesn't matter where we live, who we are or how weak or talented we believe ourselves to be. There are no big or little Christians; God chooses to use us all.

C. Why does Schaeffer say, "There are no little people and no big people in the true spiritual sense, but consecrated and unconsecrated people"? According to Ephesians 5:1-21, what does it mean to be a consecrated person? What should your life look like, and what should your life not look like?

Schaeffer points out that all people are the same in that we are all sinners in need of grace. There are no superior Christians and inferior Christians. We are all one in the body of Christ, and we all serve one purpose: to be used by God to bring Him glory.

Christians are consecrated (or set apart) to God when He redeems our hearts from sin. The true spiritual difference between people is not the categories of "average" and "extraordinary," but of redeemed or not. Ephesians 5 reminds believers what it means to be consecrated to God. Believers are set apart from the world to imitate God by avoiding sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk, coarse jesting, partnering with disobedient men or doing fruitless deeds of darkness, drunkenness, debauchery and foolishness. In the place of these things are consecrated deeds of light and spiritual fruit. The consecrated person lives a life of love, sacrificing everything to God, giving thanks, showing goodness, righteousness, truth, wisdom and submission, exposing the deeds of darkness, speaking in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and making the most of every opportunity.

KEY POINTS

1. “If we adopt a false worldview, we will inevitably find ourselves going against the grain of the universe, leading to consequences we cannot live with—as millions of Americans are discovering.”
2. “If, however, we order our lives in accord with reality, we will not only find meaning and purpose but also discover that our lives are healthier and more fulfilled.”
3. Christianity is the only true worldview and the only path to God and heaven. When believers live out the grace and truth of their faith, the world sees and hears a powerful message of true forgiveness and love. This is how God chooses to use people to witness for Him.
4. There are no big or small Christians; we can all be used by God for His purposes. All believers are consecrated to God, and all believers can be assured that they are held in God’s hand, and He will use them as He sees fit. This may mean being placed in the public eye like Kim Phuc or Joseph, or it may mean quietly ministering in a small community.

Lesson 13

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CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW IN REVIEW

SHORT ANSWER

1. In your own words, define worldview.

Worldview is a philosophy of life, a way of looking at the world and all of life. Every person has a worldview, a “sum total of...beliefs about the world.”

2. A. What three questions guide the development of any worldview?

Every worldview attempts to explain where we came from, what has gone wrong with the world and how can it be fixed.

- B. How are these three questions answered from a Christian perspective?

Christians answer these questions through the grid of creation, Fall and redemption.

3. How do Darwinism and naturalism destroy the value of human life?

Evolution and naturalistic philosophy say that the world is one cosmic accident, and life is nothing more than the result of a chance occurrence. In this worldview, there is no personal creator, no meaning to life and no transcendent rule for life. Humans are nothing more than complex animals. Thus, they have no inherent worth.

4. Explain how the Christian worldview supports science.

Christianity is the basis for science because science is nothing more than the study of God’s creation. The Creator is the One who determines the laws of the universe and the purpose of each creature. Furthermore, the Creator endows the creation with reflections of His being and attributes so that all of creation sings praise to His name. Thus, in the study of science, we learn more about God.

These truths are proven by the fact that true science only proves the veracity of God’s Word. True science never disproves Scripture. There are several scientific proofs from the text that your student may choose to use in his/her answer.

5. A. What is utopianism?

Utopianism is the belief that evil originates in societal structures rather than in the hearts of people.

- B. Why is utopianism a false and dangerous worldview?

Utopianism says that if societal structures are destroyed, peace and perfection can reign. However, this worldview is actually very dangerous because it destroys people's discernment and defenses against sin. People no longer understand evil. Eventually, they turn to a despotic leader hoping that he will defend them against evil.

6. Every worldview attempts to explain how the world can be redeemed, and how the human dilemma can be fixed. In part four of the text, you learned about several worldviews that attempt to explain how the world can be redeemed. Name these counterfeit redemptions.

In part four, the text explains how consumerism, liberation ideology, sex, science, embracing despair and new age religion attempt to offer redemption. These are the main categories discussed in part four. However, your student may find more subcategories from these chapters. Check to make sure all answers come from the chapters.

7. Through your studies in *Christian Worldview I* and *Christian Worldview II*, which Scripture(s) have built your faith and transformed your mind? Quote the verse or verses here, and explain how they have impacted your spiritual life.

Answers will vary.

ESSAY

1. The Christian religion and worldview is based on serving and worshipping God. Wilhelmus à Brakel, an influential theologian in the 17th century, sums this up well:

The Foundation of Religion

First, the foundation of religion is the character of God. The works of His omnipotence and benevolence are indeed reasons to stimulate man to serve God; however, they are not the basis for such service. This foundation is the very character of God. God possesses within Himself all glory and worthiness to be served, even if there were no creature. No creature could have its existence, except it be of Him and through Him. By its very existence the creature is obligated to God's majesty to exist for the purpose of serving God, having its origin in Him and existing by virtue of His influence. If this creature is rational, then God, because He is God, obligates him who has been placed directly under his Creator to honor and serve God and devote his entire existence to Him. The character of God eternally obligates the creature, and therefore also man, to this. "Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you" (Jeremiah 10:7); "Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you" (Psalm 119:90-91).

The Form or Essence of Religion

Secondly, the form or essence of religion consists of man's knowledge, recognition, and heart—felt endorsement of this binding obligation, which is to live unto God at all times and in all things with all that he is and is capable of performing. This is so because He is God and by virtue of His nature this is His worthy due. For this reason he willingly devotes and sacrifices himself unto God, surrendering himself to the service of God. He does so because He is his God, it is his obligation, and it constitutes his felicity. "O Lord, truly I am your servant; I am your servant" (Psalm 116:16); "One will say, 'I belong to the LORD'; still another will write on his hand, 'the LORD's'" (Isaiah 44:5).

The Regulative Principle of Religion

Thirdly, essential to religion is the revelation of God's will as the regulative principle according to which man, as a servant, must engage himself. It has not been left to man to determine the manner in which he would serve God, for then he would stand above God. Anyone who engages himself in this way exalts himself above God and displeases the Lord in all his activity. "They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men" (Matthew 15:9).

Rather, the Lord Himself establishes for and reveals to man the regulative principle, indicating what He requires man to do and in which manner He wishes this to be accomplished. Should not a people seek unto their God? "... To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn" (Isaiah 8:20); "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

The Practice of Religion

Fourthly, the essence of religion consists in an active agreement with, and execution of the will of God. All that God wills, the servant of God also wills, because the will of God is the object of his desire and delight. He rejoices that God desires something from him and that God reveals to him what He wishes to have done. This motivates him to perform it whole-heartedly as the Lord's will. "...doing the will of God from your heart" (Eph. 6:6).¹

- A. Based on Brakel's quote, what is the basis or foundation for religion? Why would a human worship and serve God?

The foundation of religion is the character of God. Without God, no person would exist. All people owe their existence to the Creator, and this Creator is worthy of our worship. Furthermore, God is not only our Creator, He is also omnipotent, full of holiness and beauty. Therefore, we worship and serve God because He "possesses within Himself all glory and worthiness to be served."

- B. What is the form or essence of religion?

The form or essence of religion is knowledge, recognition and submitted consent to worship and serve God. The person who lives out of religious conviction wholly dedicates himself/herself unto the Lord, publicly telling all those around that he/she belongs to God and worships Him.

¹ Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, n.d., <http://www.biblecentre.net/theology/books/crs/1/1-Index.html> (accessed Sept. 25, 2006).

C. According to Brakel, what is the regulative principle of religion?

The regulative principle says that people only serve God as He commands them. They cannot add to His commands, determining how they desire to serve Him. Brakel explains that it is proud to go outside of God's explicit commands for service and religious activities. It is not up to a human to decide how to serve God. Rather, God Himself reveals His will and establishes how a person is to serve.

D. According to this passage, what is the connection between the practice of religion and the will of God?

In practicing faith, people of religious conviction should do so only according to the will of God. Because servants of God carry out His purposes, they must know His will in order to execute it.

2. Read the quote below from professor, author and theologian Gene Edward Veith, Jr.:

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, observed Luther, we ask God to give us this day our daily bread. And He does give us our daily bread. He does it by means of the farmer who planted and harvested the grain, the baker who made the flour into bread, the person who prepared our meal. We might today add the truck drivers who hauled the produce, the factory workers in the food processing plant, the warehouse men, the wholesale distributors, the stock boys, the lady at the checkout counter. Also playing their part are the bankers, futures investors, advertisers, lawyers, agricultural scientists, mechanical engineers, and every other player in the nation's economic system. All of these were instrumental in enabling you to eat your morning bagel.

Before you ate, you probably gave thanks to God for your food, as is fitting. He is caring for your physical needs, as with every other kind of need you have, preserving your life through His gifts. "He provides food for those who fear him" (Psalm 111:5); also to those who do not fear Him, "to all flesh" (136:25). And He does so by using other human beings. It is still God who is responsible for giving us our daily bread. Though He could give it to us directly, by a miraculous provision, as He once did for the children of Israel when He fed them daily with manna, God has chosen to work through human beings, who, in their different capacities and according to their different talents, serve each other. This is the doctrine of vocation.

To use another of Luther's examples, God could have decided to populate the earth by creating each new person from the dust, as He did Adam. Instead, He chose to create new life through the vocation of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. God calls men and women together and grants them the unfathomable ability to have children. He calls people into families, in which—through the love and care of the parents—He extends His love and care for children. This is the doctrine of vocation.

When we or a loved one gets sick, we pray for healing. Certainly God can and sometimes does grant healing through a miracle. But normally He grants healing through the vocations of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lab technicians, and the like. It is still God who heals us, but He works through the means of skilled, talented, divinely equipped human beings.

When God blesses us, He almost always does it through other people. The ability to read God's Word is an inexpressibly precious blessing, but reading is an ability that did not spring fully formed in our young minds. It required the vocation of teachers. God protects us through the cop on the beat and the whole panoply of the legal system. He gives us beauty and meaning through artists. He lets us travel through the ministry of autoworkers, mechanics, road crews, and car dealers. He keeps us clean through the work of garbage collectors, plumbers, sanitation workers, and the sometimes undocumented aliens who clean our hotel rooms. He brings people to salvation through pastors and through anyone else who proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost. The fast-food worker, the inventor; the clerical assistant, the scientist; the accountant, the musician—they all have high callings, used by God to bless and serve His people and His creation.

Though Christians believe that God is active in the world, and though a little reflection demonstrates that He is active in human vocations, it is also true that the Devil is active in the world. On paper things should go well, with people helping one another and promoting the goals of peace and happiness that everyone claims to seek; but sin spoils everything. Many people in the world do not get their daily bread. Many parents abuse—or abort—their children instead of caring for them. Many husbands and wives are at each other's throats instead of being the "one flesh" that God called them to in marriage. Many politicians exploit, deceive, and tyrannize their people instead of protecting their interests. There are cops who abuse their authority, teachers who do not teach, doctors who kill their patients instead of healing them, pastors who distort God's Word.

People sin in their vocations, and they sin against their vocations. And in not being aware of what their vocations are—and that there is a spiritual dimension to work, family, and involvement in society—they are plagued by a lack of purpose, confused as to what they should do and how they should live and who they are. At a time when, according to the polls, people's major preoccupations are work and family, there has never been a greater need to recover the Christian doctrine of vocation.

It is odd that such a liberating, life-enhancing doctrine has become all but forgotten in our time, passed over in our seminaries, sermons, and Bible classes. But the doctrine of vocation makes up an important part of the spiritual heritage that contemporary Christians have, unfortunately, cut themselves off from and are in such great need of recovering. It is more than an understanding of work, more than the slogan that we should do all things for the glory of God, more than a vague theological platitude. The teachings on the subject by the old Reformation theologians are remarkably specific and realistic, giving practical guidance for how this doctrine can be lived out in the real, fallen world. But more than that, the doctrine of vocation amounts to a comprehensive doctrine of the Christian life, having to do with faith and sanctification, grace and good works. It is a key to Christian ethics. It shows how Christians can influence their culture. It transfigures ordinary, everyday life with the presence of God.²

- A. According to the above quote, how does God choose to provide for our needs, populate the earth, heal the sick and bless us? How does this affect your motivation and attitude?

God chooses to use other people as His tools. He provides for our needs through the work of others. He fills the earth with people through mothers and fathers. He heals the sick through medicine and the care of physicians. He blesses us through relationships and gifts from other people. God is the One who provides the daily bread, but He does so through people.

With the knowledge that you are the tool of God's hand, your life has purpose and meaning. You don't toil without reason; you don't serve without cause. You don't live or work or play in vain. You do all those things as an instrument of God, a part of His broader plan and purpose.

² Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*, n.d., <http://www.monergism.com/threshold/articles/onsite/christiancalling.html> (accessed September 21, 2006).

B. How does the above quote relate to the Christian worldview?

The belief that all things occurring on earth are from God's hands working through people is the basis for the Christian worldview. This knowledge affects what we believe about all of life; it represents the sum total of our beliefs about the world. Thus, it is a worldview. This means that everything we do has meaning and purpose—everything. Our work, study, voting, child-rearing, worship, leisure, socializing—everything we do is used by God. Though a farmer raised the food we eat, we thank God for providing it. Though a doctor prescribed the pills that healed our sickness, we thank God for making us well. Though we work and toil all day and carry on our lives, we know that He is using us just like He used the farmer and the doctor.

REFLECT

1. Of all the false worldviews we studied in this course, which has influenced you the most in the past? Analyze this false worldview from a Christian perspective and explain the steps you will take to avoid falling into its trap again.

Answers will vary.

2. Do you have a plan for implementing what you have learned in *Christian Worldview I* and *Christian Worldview II*? Record ways you can start to live out of a Christian worldview and influence the sphere in which God has placed you.

Answers will vary.

3. In each area below, identify two or three things you can do to help you implement what you have learned.

A. Items I will study:

B. Areas in my life I will begin changing:

C. Personal spiritual disciplines I will begin:

D. People to whom I will minister and/or evangelize:

E. Areas in which I will serve in my church and/or community:

F. Christians who can mentor me/serve as an accountability partner as I grow:

KEY POINTS

1. There are competing worldviews by which people live, but only Christianity provides a worldview that makes sense with reality. However, “it is not enough to know that a Christian worldview is more consistent, more rational, and more workable than any other worldview. We need to find ways to let that worldview work in us if it is going to be as effective as God intends.”
2. God could instantly supply the needs of the world, heal the sick, end suffering and convert people to faith in Christ. However, He chooses to use us to accomplish these ends as we apply our Christian worldview, as we worship and as we serve Him. We are privileged to be God’s agents of mercy, provision and love. We can only do this through the power of the Holy Spirit and by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
3. Sin affects all of life; there is no sphere of creation that has not been tainted by sin. However, God is sovereign in every sphere of life as well. There is not one place where the Christian can lay aside his/her religion and become “secular.” Thus, faith affects all of life. The calling of Christians is to live in submission to and worship of God everywhere and at all times.