

“Which Pair Of Sunglasses?” Developing A Biblical Worldview

“You see the world through rose-colored glasses.” This well-known figure-of-speech, which dates at least as far back as 1861 at Oxford, refers to those who consistently interpret the world positively—even to a fault. It is as if someone has a pair of glasses which gives everything a rosy tint.

It might be harder to grasp this idiom than it was a few decades ago when sunglasses of various colors was the norm. They might be blue, red, yellow, green, or brown.

This old figure of speech and these fashion statements for the eyes help us get a sense of what we mean by the word “worldview”. It is the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual interprets and interacts with the world. Whatever worldview a person has is very much like colored sunglasses which gives everything in sight a particular hue.

In 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 Paul sets forth, what might be, the classic biblical teaching on worldview. In this passage he affirms the following:

- The instruments Paul utilizes for life change are those which bring down the last spiritual and intellectual defenses erected in hearts against knowing God in an intimate and saving way.
- Paul says that the true minister of God seeks to help others and themselves leave the fortress of unbelief and come unto the place of obeying Jesus Christ. This involves, in other words, ceasing to see the world through the glasses of selfishness and/or other religions and coming to think and view things in a way that follows Jesus Christ.

Another helpful text related to worldview is Psalm 119. Here we find out that viewing all of existence and how we are to live through the lens of God’s wisdom, His truth, brings His blessing (3), protects us from sin (9, 11), helps us deal with affliction (67, 71), makes us wiser than our enemies (98) or even my teachers (99); it gives more understanding than even many people who have been around for years and years (100), gives guidance for the best direction to go in life (105), and brings great joy (111), just to name a few.

Immanuel Kant first coined the term “worldview,” more specifically the German *Weltanschauung*. Colson and Pearcey ([How Now Shall We Live](#), 13) write that a worldview is “the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions.”

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

What are the key elements in any worldview? Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey (How Now Shall We Live?) identify four. First, what one believes about the origin of the world and mankind which has impact upon who we are. Did God (or more generally an intelligent designer) create the world with purpose or did it arise merely by chance with no intentionality? How this question is answered will not only be the most important factor in any worldview, it will also largely determine how a person approaches the remaining three elements. The biblical worldview espouses that the world was created by the infinite personal God and that He not only made mankind in His image, but He also made all things with purpose.

Genesis 1:1: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:26a: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

Second, what, if anything, is wrong with the world? Some, who believe the world has arisen by chance with no intelligence behind it, will respond that nothing is wrong. After all, it is simply the way it is, it is evolving. Or, they might say that since the material world is all there is and, as such, we must protect it no matter what (it is all we have), people might be the problem. Just get rid of people and we will solve the world's problems. Others answer that lack of self-esteem, lack of liberty, lack of education, or countless other options make up the problems of the world. God's special revelation makes it clear to us that the problem with the world is that mankind sinned and, as such, all the world is twisted such that nothing functions as it was originally and fully intended to function and all creatures and creation have been impacted by sin and evil.

Romans 5:12: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—
Romans 8:19-21: For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. [20] For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope [21] that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Third, all worldviews deal with the solution to the world's problems. For example, if the problem is lack of education or freedom, then education and freedom must be provided. On the other hand, if, as the Bible teaches, the problem is that people have not wanted to listen to, believe in, follow, and honor God (i.e. sin), then the solution is that we must listen to what God has revealed to us about the remedy. We must pay attention to His Word and, more specifically, we must follow His directions for redemption and how that redemption must impact us. Our solution is centered around and focused upon Jesus Christ.

Mark 10:45: For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Finally, worldview also deals with how a person is to respond to or live out what they believe. The Bible makes it clear that God's grace changes how a person thinks, relates to God, relates to others, it drastically transforms their ethics.

Titus 2:11-12: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

If a Christian is to view the world the way God does and to follow His directions, then it is very important that he/she come to know what the Bible teaches. After all, as the Apostle Paul affirms, this is how competency and preparation for following God will take place. Consider what he writes in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

So, a great place to start in putting on the God-colored sunglasses through which we see and interpret life is by reading and studying the Bible.

Here are discussion questions:

1. All worldviews ultimately come underneath three main headings: Theism (God is, has created, and is intimately, continually involved in the world), Atheism or Naturalism (There is no God, all that exists is that which we see and is here by chance, without purpose), and Deism (God exists and created, but is not intimately involved in the world now). Think of as many religions (e.g. Hinduism; Islam, etc.) and Approaches to life as you can (“Hey, I just believe in science.” Or, “Hey, I just want to have fun.”) and see if you can determine how they deal with each of the four key aspects of a worldview.
2. In what way(s) do you need to improve your worldview? Which aspects of a biblical worldview do you need to work on the most? How might you address these needs?
3. Look at the following letter-to-the editor of a local newspaper and see if you can determine: (a) How the woman who wrote this most likely approaches each of the four worldview areas? (b) How would you classify her worldview as a whole?

I went to go visit the tree being disputed at the intersection of Taft Hill Road and Vine Drive, the one which Xcel Energy is supposed to take down in order to relocate power lines so that the roundabout can be constructed. I have mourned the loss of the old trees already destroyed so that this ‘progress’ could take place. Now it comes down to one tree. To many people, the life of a tree may not be a big deal. But apparently it is to the person who lives there, and it certainly is to me. I stood there reverently in front of it this morning, crying quietly at the thought of another life being lost. It stands so beautifully, with full and lush leaves, so very tall and graceful. The serenity I felt in its presence rooted me to

“Foundational to the development of a Biblical worldview is understanding the teaching of the Bible as it relates to every aspect of human life and interest.”

-T. M. Moore, “To Understand God’s Word: When is Our Worldview Truly Biblical?” Breakpoint Web Site May 11, 2004

the spot. I have no idea whether it is somehow aware, in its way, that it has been sentenced to die, or that there are those who cry at the thought of that. I think of trees as our teachers and am reminded of great teachers in the past who were sentenced to die because of our ignorance. I am grateful that it has touched my life while it is still alive. May the spirit and wisdom of this tree live on long after it is gone from our sight.”
(Saturday June 30, 2007, “Pray For A Tree,” A8)

4. What difference(s) does a person’s worldview make? Why would you say it is important to consider and strengthen our biblical worldview?